HOME WORKS!
The Teacher Home Visit Program
2014–15 Implementation Evaluation Report

Prepared for
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HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program is a non-profit organization whose mission is to bring together teachers and families to partner in their children’s education. HOME WORKS! trains teachers in low income, underperforming schools to serve as agents of change, who work to transform the way that families engage with schools and support their children’s learning. Teachers and other school staff visit families in their homes twice over the course of the school year and host family engagement events in the school setting to foster positive, productive home-school connections. The program goals are to build trusting, quality relationships between parents and teachers and to promote the adoption of effective parenting practices that will help children succeed academically. The program targets increases in parent and teacher engagement as a mechanism to improving students’ daily attendance, classroom behavior, and academic achievement.

HOME WORKS! funds evaluations of its programs to assess implementation quality and effectiveness. For the 2014–15 school year, the program contracted with an outside firm to conduct an implementation and outcome study that would assess the effectiveness of using teacher home visits as a tool to increase parental engagement in schools and to improve educational outcomes among children performing below grade level. The evaluation approach was guided by the following study questions:

- How many students and families were reached through HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program? How many teachers and school staff were actively engaged in conducting home visits with their students?
- How successful was the program in reaching high need students at risk for school failure?
- How well was the program implemented with respect to fidelity to the program model (i.e., two home visits, two family dinners)? What were the most important implementation challenges and successes identified by parents, teachers, and school administrators?
- How did HOME WORKS! impact parental engagement and parenting practices in the home (e.g., expected roles, parenting efficacy, learning expectations, orientation toward school, parent-teacher relationships, etc.) that promote student learning and school success?
- How did HOME WORKS! impact academic performance, school attendance, and behavior of students who received home visits, as compared to non-participating students?

The present report summarizes results from the implementation portion of the study. The report documents the home visit process across districts and school buildings, assesses teacher and parent perceptions of the home visit experience, and identifies implementation strengths and challenges that may inform future program replication and evaluation efforts.

The HOME WORKS! Program Model

HOME WORKS! Teacher Home Visit Program is an adaptation of the Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project (PTHVP)—a Sacramento-based teacher home visit training organization that trains teachers in districts across the U.S. to conduct home visits with families (The Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project, http://www.pthvp.org). The standard HOME WORKS! model involves two teacher home visits and two in-school family dinners to promote parent and family engagement in schools. The standard program model is typically implemented by classroom teachers in early childhood education and elementary school settings and includes each of the components described in exhibit E1. HOME WORKS! also has several model variations that share a core emphasis on establishing parent-teacher learning partnerships, but that differ with respect to program structure, components, and populations of focus. The present report focuses on the standard program model and the eleven schools that implemented the model during the 2014-15 school year.
Exhibit E1. HOME WORKS! Standard Program Model

Two Staff Trainings
School staff attend two staff trainings to build capacity to engage parents in the learning process. Training content focuses on relationship building, academic support, and cultural competence. School staff attend refresher training each subsequent year of their involvement.

Two Site Coordinators
Site coordinators are hired from within each school building to serve as liaisons between schools and the HOME WORKS! organization to support and facilitate program implementation.

Two Family Dinners
Schools host two Family Dinners on each school campus to communicate to parents that their involvement is welcomed, valued, and expected, and to educate parents on how to support student learning.

Two Person Teams
Teams of two school faculty or staff members conduct home visits with families. Teams include a lead visitor who must be knowledgeable about the student’s academic performance (e.g., a classroom teacher or special education instructor), and second visitor who is any staff person employed by the school.

Two Teacher Home Visits
The first home visit is used to build positive relationships and to open lines of communication between teachers and families. The second visit is intended to educate parents about school expectations and parental roles in supporting children’s academic success, to review students’ academic progress and set goals for future achievement, and to give parents information and resources they can use to help support their child academically.

School, Teacher, and Family Participation in HOME WORKS!

Schools implementing the HOME WORKS! model commit to a five-year implementation timeline, and must agree to engage at least 50% of their classroom teachers in home visits to receive funding support. This minimum expectation was recently lowered to require that only 25% of teachers participate beginning in the 2015-16 school year. Teachers and other school staff are expected to attend two trainings and to conduct visits with families in two-person teams over the course of the school year. The HOME WORKS! organization provides training, implementation support, and compensation to schools covering up to 50% of the extra service pay earned by teachers, depending on the total number of visits completed.

Teacher home visits were widely implemented across schools, grade levels, and classrooms, reaching 1,824 families of disadvantaged students enrolled in low income, Title I schools.

In 2014–15 the HOME WORKS! standard model was implemented in nine elementary schools and two early childhood centers across four Missouri school districts, serving children ranging in age from preschool to grade six. The participating districts included a mix of large urban, suburban, and small rural school systems located across central Missouri and the greater St. Louis area. All participating schools received Title I funding and served high concentrations of economically disadvantaged families, as indicated by the high percentage of children who were eligible for the federal Free Reduced Lunch Program. During the 2014–15 school year, these schools conducted 2,819 home visits with 1,824 families and their children, accounting for nearly half of all students enrolled (47%) across the eleven school sites.

Teacher and classroom participation rates and rates of family engagement within classrooms varied across school settings, impacting the number of students and families reached through the program. Three key factors influencing program reach included: teacher involvement and motivation, the approach to selecting students for visits, and the level of success recruiting and engaging families.

School staff participation in the teacher home visit program was voluntary. In all, there were 231 teachers and other school staff who actively participated in the teacher home visit program during the 2014–15 school year. Teachers accounted for over half of all participating staff (60%) and were the most common participant type, followed by special education instructors (10%), learning specialists (10%), teacher assistants (6%) and school counselors (3%).

Across all schools, there were 130 active HOME WORKS! classrooms whose lead teachers were formally trained and committed to conducting visits with families. This number represents about 73% of total classrooms in schools, and a potential pool of 2,746 student participants. The percentage of active classrooms ranged from about one-third of classrooms participating in one school (34%) to school-wide participation in four others (100%).
According to teacher surveys, the leading reasons that motivated teachers to participate in the program were the potential benefits for their students (94%), the anticipated impacts on teacher effectiveness (80%), and the encouragement of the school administration (76%).

Teachers used different strategies to identify and recruit families to participate in home visits. Notably, the 2014-15 study year was marked by a mid-year change that transitioned the program from universal implementation, where the goal was to engage all families within a classroom, to a more indicated approach, whereby teachers identified students for participation based on need or parent request. This shift in strategy acknowledged that teachers could not realistically reach all families in their classrooms, and instead, embraced a more targeted approach that prioritized students who were most at risk for academic challenges.

Teachers were instructed by the program to visit a minimum of 50% of students in their classrooms; however, the actual number of families visited was left to the teacher's discretion, and was often dependent on teacher time constraints and the success of outreach efforts to engage families in the home visit process. As a result, across active HOME WORKS! classrooms, there was considerable variation in the number and percentage of students whose families participated in the program. These percentages ranged anywhere from 30% to 90% of students in classrooms on average. For classroom teachers, the minimum number of visits completed ranged from a low of 1 home visit to a high of 59 visits, with an overall average of 18.9 visits per teacher. Interestingly, higher rates of teacher participation at the school level (i.e., more teachers agreed to participate in the program) did not necessarily translate into higher rates of student participation within classrooms. Overall, the amount of variation observed across schools and classrooms meant that few schools were similar with respect to implementation, despite adopting the same standard model. This variation has important implications for model replication. This also raises important questions for future evaluation work regarding who is most likely to benefit from the home visit experience, and what constitutes the optimal number of student and family participants within a school or classroom to maximize program benefits.

**Fidelity to the Program Model**

Another important focus of the implementation study was to assess implementation fidelity, or the extent to which the program “as implemented” conformed to the program “as planned”. Fidelity is important because stronger fidelity to the program model increases confidence that changes in outcomes can be attributed to program strategies. There were various elements of the HOME WORKS! intervention that defined fidelity to the model, such as the number of completed visits, participation at family dinners, and the location, length, and timing of visits.

Schools implemented all of the required HOME WORKS! model components, although strength of implementation and timing varied across schools, with many schools struggling to deliver the full intervention model to families (i.e., participation in first and second visits, and attendance at two family dinners).

Exhibit E2 documents the number and percentage of students and families who participated in different program components and highlights the challenge that schools encountered implementing the full intervention. Specifically, of the 1,824 families who participated in home visits, nearly half (45%) failed to receive a second visit, missing the academic component of the intervention. Seventeen percent of families participated in two visits and attended one family dinner; ten participated in two visits and attended both dinners, receiving the full “dose” of the program intervention.
Exhibit E2. Students who received second visits, two visits and attended one dinner, two visits and attended two dinners as a percent of those who received a first visit

The fidelity assessment also documented the percentage of completed first and second home visits that conformed to model criteria related to length, timing, and duration of visits and participation of the student. Exhibit E3 shows that, overall, schools were very successful ensuring that students were present during home visits, that visits were conducted in the homes of participating families, and that first visits lasted at least 30 minutes in duration. Schools were less successful implementing visits during the scheduled window within the school year, with 84% of first visits and 86% of second visits being completed on time. These percentages varied across schools. Teachers also struggled to extend second visits to the full 45-minute duration, with many staff indicating on teacher surveys that 45 minutes was unnecessarily long and imposed too much on family schedules. In response, HOME WORKS! has since reduced the 45-minute minimum requirement for second visits to 30 minutes beginning in 2015-16.

Exhibit E3. Percent of the first and second visits conducted with fidelity to the program model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fidelity Measure</th>
<th>First Visit</th>
<th>Second Visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>within target</td>
<td>across schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student presence:</strong> Students must be present at the teacher home visit</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>78-97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timing of visits:</strong> First visits should be completed before Nov 1 and second visits should be completed from Jan to March</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>57-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of visits:</strong> First visits should last at least 30 minutes and second visits should last 45 minutes</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>87-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location of visits:</strong> First and second visits should be conducted in the home</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>73-99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher Online Log, 2014–15

The fidelity assessment also provided important feedback related to the strength and timing of visit implementation. Importantly, it revealed that half of students and families received the academic component of the intervention through second visits. For one-third (35%) of those who received second visits, visits were scheduled within the last three months of the school year, limiting opportunities to meaningfully impact school behaviors and school outcomes. These findings suggest the need to explore reasons that implementation failed to occur as planned, and to potentially modify training and monitoring, or other aspects of the intervention design to ensure that students benefit from all core model components.

Parent Perceptions of the Teacher Home Visit Experience

The implementation study also attempted to capture parent perspectives on the home visit experience through parent surveys. Surveys were administered to parents of students in HOME WORKS! classrooms who did and did not participate in home visits. The survey measured a number of key constructs, including parents’ perceptions of barriers that prevented them from becoming more involved in their children’s learning, orientations toward teachers and schools, beliefs about their own roles and capacities to support their children’s learning, and activities that they engaged in at home to help promote their children’s school success.
The greatest perceived barriers that prevented families from becoming more engaged in their children’s learning were related to time and scheduling constraints.

The most significant barriers identified by families that prevented them from participating more actively in their children’s education were conflicts with work or home schedules (38%), having younger children to care for at home (31%), and not having enough time to devote to educational activities (30%). Parents reported being less impeded by personal barriers, such as not feeling comfortable at school, not feeling confident in their own ability to help, or not knowing how to become more involved.

More than 80% of families who received teacher home visits believed that their participation had improved their relationships with their child’s teacher, had taught them ways to support their children’s learning at home, and had helped them to become more involved in their children’s school life.

When asked to evaluate the benefits of the teacher home visit program for their family and child, parent responses were overwhelmingly positive. Parents were given a series of statements and were asked to indicate how true each statement was for them. Survey items were rated on a five-point Likert scale with response options that ranged from “very true” to “not true at all”. For all items, the majority of parents who received home visits saw a benefit from their participation in a number of different areas. More specifically:

- Ninety-one percent (91%) felt it was ‘true’ or ‘very true’ that home visits had improved their relationship with their child’s teachers.
- Ninety percent (90%) believed that home visits taught them ways to support their children’s learning at home.
- Eighty-seven percent (87%) felt that home visits made them feel more positively about their child’s school future.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) felt visits helped them become more involved in their children’s school life.
- Eighty-three percent (83%) felt more confident in their ability to help their children succeed.
- Eighty-three percent (83%) felt that home visits helped them feel more connected to their child’s school.

Parents also had opportunities in open-ended questions to share their personal feelings about the benefits of the teacher home visit experience. In their responses, parents emphasized the value of establishing a relationship with their child’s teacher, having opportunities for one-on-one parent-teacher interactions, being able to observe positive exchanges between their children and their children’s teachers, and sharing information with teachers about their child’s strengths, needs, and home life.

Teacher Perceptions of the Teacher Home Visit Experience

Teacher surveys and home visit logs were used to capture feedback from teachers and other school staff about their home visit experiences, including the beliefs they held about the involvement of families in the learning process, the challenges they encountered in making home visits, and their assessments of the HOME WORKS! program’s management and operations. The survey and teacher logs also captured teacher reports of the influence of home visits on instructional practices and the outcomes they observed among students and families reached.

The greatest challenges to participation identified by teachers were related to time and resource demands, and insufficient compensation for their time and effort.

Most teachers were positive about their participation in teacher home visits, although participants did perceive significant challenges to implementation, including challenges related to excessive time commitments, difficulties scheduling visits with families and coordinating visits with partners, difficulty convincing families to participate in the home visit process, and burden associated with reporting requirements. Teachers held favorable impressions of the amount of support and training they received through the HOME WORKS! organization to help them accomplish program objectives, but often felt that compensation was not adequate given the time and resource demands of participation.

Teachers reported positive impacts on the quality of their relationships with families as a result of the home visit experience and perceived improvements in student performance over the course of the school year.
Overall, teachers felt positively about their experiences conducting home visits and about the impact of home visits on their relationships with families. More specifically, on teacher logs completed after each home visit, teachers indicated that for more than 80% of the families they visited, home visits had ‘very much’ improved the quality of their relationships.

Exhibit E4. Teacher ratings of improvement in need areas among participating students

Some of the most compelling evidence of the effectiveness of home visits in addressing student needs was captured on items on teacher logs completed at the conclusion of the second home visit. For each student and family, teachers were asked to rate the degree of improvement observed in areas of need targeted by the program, including academic achievement, attendance, homework completion, classroom behavior, and parent communication and engagement. Teachers were only required to rate students who were experiencing challenges in each area and who had documented needs for improvement. For all students who received a second home visit, below grade level academic performance was the most common need identified, although academic needs were only noted for about one-third of all students (34%). Classroom behavior (20%) and issues with homework completion (15%) were the second and third most commonly identified needs, respectively, followed by attendance issues (7%) and need for improved parent engagement and communication (4%).

For students who were performing below grade level academically, teachers reported ‘some improvement’ or ‘strong improvement’ in academic performance among 86% of students who received home visits. Teachers also noted improvements among 73% of students exhibiting behavioral issues in the classroom, 66% of those who had trouble completing homework assignments, and 64% of those who had issues with tardiness or attendance. Teachers also reported increases in family engagement among 73% of families who they had identified as being disconnected from the school setting.

Summary

The HOME WORKS! implementation study assessed the delivery of the standard teacher home visit model across 11 preschools and elementary schools during the 2014–15 school year. The implementation study was the first evaluation effort to be informed by teacher logs documenting real-time information about the timing, quality, and content of teacher home visits, which could be used to assess the strength of home visit implementation across school settings. The implementation study was the first part of a two-part study that will explore the outcomes of the program on participants’ academic behaviors and performance, as compared to students in matched school settings that did not implement home visits this school year. This work lays the foundation for a more rigorous research study that will test the model’s effectiveness in promoting academic outcomes for students enrolled in high need, underperforming school systems.

Overall, findings from the implementation study offered evidence to suggest that HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program successfully strengthened parent-school connections in participating schools by helping teachers more meaningfully engage with the families of their students, and helping families feel more connected to the learning environment. The evaluation also uncovered a considerable amount of variation in how programs
were implemented across school settings, and how well programs were implemented with respect to fidelity to the program model. These findings have helped to identify issues related to training, program monitoring, and accountability that are now being addressed as part of larger continuous quality improvement effort initiated during the 2015-16 school year.
Introduction

HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program is a non-profit organization whose mission is to bring together teachers and families to partner in their children’s education. HOME WORKS! trains teachers in low income, underperforming schools to serve as agents of change, who work to transform the way that families engage with schools and support their children’s education and learning. Teachers and other school staff visit families in their homes twice over the course of the school year and host family engagement events in the school setting to foster positive, productive home-school connections. The program goals are to build trusting, quality relationships between parents and teachers and to promote the adoption of effective parenting practices that will help children succeed academically. Through the home visit process, teachers get to know the families of their students, share information about the child’s strengths and needs, and provide parents with tools and resources they can use to support home-based learning. The program targets increases in parent and teacher engagement as a mechanism to improve students’ daily attendance, classroom behavior, and academic achievement.

HOME WORKS! began operating in 2007 by partnering with a small number of districts and schools in the St. Louis area. The program has since expanded to include eight public school systems and one charter school across greater St. Louis and central Missouri. The program currently reaches students in 27 urban, suburban, and rural elementary schools, secondary schools, and early education centers across the state, using a variety of program approaches. The HOME WORKS! organization maintains a small managing staff, receives guidance from a Community Advisory Board with more than 20 members, and benefits from the collaboration and funding support of numerous community and corporate partners and program donors.

The HOME WORKS! organization places strong value on evaluation with an aim to ensure program quality and to provide evidence of the program’s overall effectiveness in achieving targeted changes in school outcomes. For the past four years of operation, HOME WORKS! has funded evaluations of its programs to assess implementation quality and program efficacy. This past year, the program contracted with an outside evaluation firm, Evaluation, Management, and Training (EMT) Associates, Inc., to conduct a process and outcome evaluation of the program as implemented during the 2014–15 school year, and to lay the foundation for future research involving a more rigorous randomized study to measure program impacts.

The present report summarizes results from the most recent evaluation of the teacher home visit model as implemented during the 2014–15 school year. The evaluation documents the home visit implementation process across districts and school buildings, assesses teacher and parent perceptions of the teacher home visit experience, and identifies implementation strengths and challenges that may inform future program replication and evaluation efforts. The present report does not include findings from the outcome component of the study due to unanticipated delays accessing district records. Results of the outcome analysis will be summarized in a subsequent report.
Understanding the Need for Parent Engagement

Educators and school policy-makers have pushed for school reform efforts to raise academic standards in underperforming schools, and to close the achievement gap for disadvantaged children. Yet indicators of school success show that within Missouri public school systems, as in other states, disparities in student achievement tied to family income and race persist. State data sources show that currently two-thirds of all Missouri fourth graders (65%) statewide fail to achieve grade level proficiency in reading, and roughly the same percentage (61%) perform below grade level in math. In federally-funded Title I schools that enroll lower income children, more than three-quarters (77%) of fourth graders are unable to read at grade level, compared to half (51%) of children in more income-advantaged schools. The proportion of students who fail to meet grade level standards in reading is highest among African-American children at 87% (KIDS Count Data Bank, 2013).

When children struggle to read at grade level early on they have poorer long-term educational outcomes, including lower reading proficiency in the secondary grade levels, lower rates of high school completion, and lower rates of college attendance. This is because children who struggle to read at grade level in the early elementary years face difficulty meeting academic demands as they move through school because they are unable to read and interpret educational content (Lesnick et al., 2010). These challenges are compounded by school behaviors, such as poor school attendance and behavioral issues that remove students from the learning environment. For example, state data show that 19% of all fourth graders enrolled in Missouri public schools systems are chronically absent from school, while 7% of all school-age youth are excluded from school each year for behavioral infractions (KIDS Count Data Bank, 2013).

As schools struggle to meet the educational needs of their students, educators have increasingly advocated for greater parent engagement and shared responsibility in promoting educational outcomes for children. Parent involvement in elementary and secondary education has become a critical component of education reforms to improve achievement in underperforming schools. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) defines parent involvement as “the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities” (NCLB, 2002). The provisions cover a range of activities including helping parents become full partners in their children’s education; building parent capacity to participate in learning activities; educating parents about educational standards; providing opportunities for involvement; and providing materials and training to help parents promote learning at home. The law required that all Title I schools adopt a formal parent involvement plan and sustain a high level of family engagement (NCLB, 2002)). The newly authorized Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) renews support for parent engagement programs that “lead to improvements in student development and academic achievement” (ESSA, 2015).

There is a large and growing body of evidence demonstrating that parent engagement can positively impact student outcomes, including academic achievement, student behavior, attitudes toward school, and school completion (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). In fact, parental involvement may have a stronger influence on children’s academic performance than school quality (Dufur et al., 2013). This makes sense given that students spend more than half of their time (53%) at home or in the community, while only 14% of their time is spent in the school learning environment (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). An extensive review of several decades of research suggests that parent engagement contributes to higher academic achievement, better attendance, increased motivation and self-esteem, and improved behavior such as lower rates of school suspension, decreased alcohol and drug use, and decreased instances of violence (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Other studies have shown that parent engagement is most effective when parents are involved in promoting their children’s development and engaging in learning activities in the home (Cotton & Wikelund, 1989).

Research on parent engagement supports the relationship between positive educational outcomes and parent engagement when seen as a voluntary set of parenting behaviors. However, there is less evidence demonstrating the impact of school-initiated parent engagement programs, although the research base is growing. One recent meta-analysis testing the efficacy of different forms of parental involvement programs in urban school settings did find that parental involvement programs overall were associated with stronger academic achievement, and that school-initiated programs produced positive effects, although gains were modest (Jeynes, 2012). Another national study of the federal Title I program serving low income students and schools found that school efforts to engage in outreach to parents of underperforming students were associated with reading and math achievement (Westat, 2001).
Family engagement can also be an important contributor to school improvement efforts that translate into academic success. For example, a large-scale, longitudinal study of an urban school improvement initiative has found that schools with more family and community support and engagement are more likely to realize gains in school performance and student learning than schools without similar levels of engagement and support (Bryk, 2010). Yet schools often struggle to find ways to build and sustain positive parent-teacher partnerships, particularly with families who are disconnected from the school community. Findings from the National Household Education Survey show that families with lower educational attainment, families living at or below poverty level, families with limited proficiency in English, and families of color all have lower rates of parent reported participation in schools, as measured by traditional indicators of parental involvement, such as attendance at school meetings, meeting with a child’s teacher, attending a school event, or volunteering in the school or on a school committee (Child Trends, 2013). Lower income families are believed to be as invested in their children’s learning as higher income families and want their children to succeed, but are less likely to engage in these more traditional forms of parent participation due to factors related to family and life context, personal beliefs about the knowledge and skills needed to support involvement in education, time and energy for involvement, and the presence of barriers such as transportation, conflicts with work schedules, health issues, or language deficiencies (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; Child Trends, 2013).

Despite evidence of the benefits of parent engagement for schools, a recent Gallop study involving a nationally representative sample of parents found that only 20% of parents were fully engaged with their child’s school. Fifty-seven percent of parents were indifferent and the remaining one-quarter (23%) were actively disengaged with the school their child attends (Yu and Hodges, 2015). Parents are most likely to become involved in their children’s education when they believe that they serve an important and necessary role, when they have a sense of efficacy that they can help their child succeed academically, and when schools and children invite them to participate and convey that their involvement is valued (Hoover-Dempsey & Sanders, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sanders, 2005). However, studies show that parents are often unfamiliar with the educational programs in schools or with teacher expectations for parent involvement. Similarly, teachers are often unaware of how parents want to become involved, parents’ goals for their children, or what roles parents play in helping their children learn outside at home (Epstein & Sanders, 2000).

Teacher home visits have begun to emerge as a promising school-initiated strategy for engaging families in the learning process and overcoming the types of barriers that prevent parents from becoming more involved in schools. However, most of the more rigorous research on home visitation has centered on the public health and early education fields with less available evidence concerning the effects of teacher home visits on elementary and secondary school outcomes. Qualitative studies have, however, successfully demonstrated that teachers and parents perceive strong benefits associated with the home visit process and that their perceptions of benefits hold over time (Meyer et al., 2011). Outcome studies of teacher home visit initiatives are also now beginning to emerge to fill the gap in research knowledge. In 2015, the Flamboyan Foundation released findings from its Family Engagement Partnership showing that students whose families received home visits were more likely to attend school and to meet or exceed grade-level reading proficiency than students who did not receive visits (Sheldon & Jung, 2015). The study also found that rates of absenteeism were 24% lower among students who received a home visit than those who did not. While suggestive, outcome studies of this type should not be confused with statistically rigorous program impact studies. The present evaluation aims to explore the implementation process for a similar teacher home visit initiative and to complement an outcomes analysis that will lay the groundwork for a rigorous evaluation of the impacts of the HOME WORKS! teacher home visit program on key elementary and secondary school outcomes.

**Evaluation Approach**

The current evaluation of HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program was designed to assess the effectiveness of using teacher home visits as a tool to increase parental engagement in schools and to improve educational outcomes among school-age children who are performing below grade level. The study was also designed to build knowledge of the factors that are most likely to affect program sustainability and model replication across other schools or districts. The evaluation approach was guided by the following study questions:

- How many students and families were reached through HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program? How many teachers and school staff were actively engaged in conducting home visits with their students?
• How successful was the program in reaching highest need students at risk for school failure?
• How well was the program implemented with respect to fidelity to the program model (i.e., two home visits, two family dinners)? What were the most important implementation challenges and successes identified by parents, teachers, and school administrators?
• How did HOME WORKS! impact parental engagement and parenting practices in the home (e.g., expected roles, parenting efficacy, learning expectations, orientation toward school, parent-teacher relationships, etc.) that promote student learning and school success?
• How did HOME WORKS! impact academic performance, school attendance, and behavior of students who received home visits, as compared to non-participating students?

The evaluation utilized data from a variety of sources, including school and classroom enrollment lists, records of completed home visits, and parent and teacher surveys. The specific data collection components are discussed in more detail below:

• **School staff participation and contact information:** For all schools implementing the standard program model, school contact lists were used to record staff names, position titles, grade levels, and class sizes within each school building. Information was compiled by site coordinators within each school and was submitted to the internal data manager. This information was used to determine levels of staff and classroom participation and to provide contact information to administer surveys to school personnel.

• **Records of family dinner attendance and parent/teacher conferences:** Site coordinators at each school were required to maintain records of student and family attendance at Family Dinners and document parent participation in parent/teacher conferences.

• **Teacher logs of completed home visits.** Teachers and school staff who completed first and second visits were required to enter information about each home visit into an online log within 24 hours of the scheduled visit date. The log provided detailed information about each visit including date, time, location, presence of family members, characteristics of the child, and subjective information about the visit, such as insights gained about the child’s strengths, needs, or home life. The teacher log is the first time that information on the completion of home visits was systematically captured and used for evaluation and compliance monitoring purposes. The pilot test of the online log this year was largely successful in enhancing the program’s ability to accurately document the home visit implementation process across participating school sites, however, the process of correcting data entry errors and inconsistencies in data reporting was resource-intensive.

• **Teacher surveys:** Online teacher and staff surveys were administered to all staff participating in the program to capture information on perceived program impacts and implementation challenges and successes. This report captures teacher perceptions about levels of engagement among parents in their schools, the home visit experience, the process of engaging families, the perceived impact of the program, and the barriers faced in implementing teacher home visits. The teacher surveys were voluntary, and were administered to 269 teachers and other school staff across 6 school districts and 14 school sites. A total of 169 teachers and other school staff responded to the online survey request representing 60% of all teacher and staff participants. Responses rates at the school building level range from 9% to 86%.

• **Parent survey:** Paper and pencil, scannable parent survey forms were sent home to parents of students enrolled in HOME WORKS! classrooms. Survey forms were pre-stamped, and pre-addressed for mailing directly to the evaluation firm to ensure confidentiality. Parents who choose to participate were eligible for incentives. Parent surveys were administered to a total of 2,011 parents of elementary school students and were returned by 341 respondents, for a 13.2% rate of return.

• **School records:** School records measuring student demographics, school attendance, disciplinary incidents, grades, and test scores were requested from school districts participating in HOME WORKS! during the 2014–15 academic school year to compare changes in school performance over time between participating and non-participating students. School records for most districts were unavailable at the time of this report and will be analyzed as part of the next round of analysis.
The HOME WORKS! evaluation was initially proposed as mixed-methods, quasi-experimental design that would articulate the relationship between classroom participation in the teacher home visit program and outcomes related to parent engagement and student performance. The evaluation approach was designed based on the assumption that formal Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) had been established with each of the participating school districts, and that data sharing agreements were in place that would enable the evaluation team to obtain school records for use in evaluating student-level outcomes. However, the process of working with districts on issues of student confidentiality delayed access to school records for analysis. These delays accessing student data necessitated shifting the outcome portion of the study to a later time. The present study is, thus, limited to a process evaluation that presents findings related to home visit program implementation, including measures of fidelity to the program model, and teacher and parent perceptions of program impacts.

Structure of the Report

The remainder of the report is organized into five sections. The first section describes the teacher home visit intervention model and its variants, and articulates the theory of change underlying the program design that helps to explain the relationship between teacher and parent engagement and improved school outcomes. The second section documents the number of students and teachers who participated in the program during the 2014–15 school year and identifies factors that influenced the number of students and families who were engaged in services. The third section documents implementation of core program components and measures the extent to which schools implemented the program with fidelity to program model. The fourth and fifth sections of the report summarize teacher and parent survey responses that highlight their perceptions of the home visit experience, including strengths, challenges, and perceived impacts. The report concludes with a summary of key implementation findings that are anticipated to impact program sustainability or model replication in other schools or districts.
The HOME WORKS! Program Model

The intent of HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program is to establish parent-teacher learning partnerships to connect parents and schools, and encourage families to engage in parenting practices that promote student learning and school success. The project directs interventions to students performing below grade level or students in families who are disengaged from the school community. The program works to cultivate trust, respect, and a shared commitment to learning among teachers and families. The program accomplishes this by adopting a strengths-based approach to engaging families that embraces the following key principles:

- All parents want the best for their children
- Families play a key role in a child’s life path
- All children can learn
- Learning creates opportunities
- Individual differences must be respected
- Open, honest communication is essential

The Teacher Home Visit Program is modeled on the Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project (PTHVP)—an existing home visiting training organization that collaborates with school districts across the U.S. to train teachers and other school staff to conduct home visits with families (The Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project, http://www.pthvp.org/). The HOME WORKS! program model adopts a similar program structure, but has evolved over time in response to local needs and contexts. The overarching goal of the program is to increase parent engagement as a mechanism to improve school performance. Parent engagement is formally defined as “a set of behaviors that parents intentionally and continuously practice that positively impact a child’s learning.” This set of behaviors includes: (1) engaging in two-way communication with the child, (2) maintaining a home environment that encourages learning, and (3) practicing two-way communication with the school. The exhibit below provides examples of specific practices that the program encourages families to adopt within the home environment.

**Exhibit 1. HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program Parent Engagement Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practicing two-way communication with their child to:</th>
<th>Maintaining a home environment that encourages learning by:</th>
<th>Practicing two-way communication with the school to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Make sure their child reads or is read to daily, including weekends, holidays, and vacations</td>
<td>• Providing a space where their child can focus on and complete homework</td>
<td>• Advocate for their child’s educational needs and success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make sure homework is completed on time</td>
<td>• Making sure their child attends school all day, every day</td>
<td>• Stay current on their child’s academic progress/level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate high expectations of their child (e.g. doing their best, appropriate classroom behavior)</td>
<td>• Having on-level reading material for their child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Talk about the value of education</td>
<td>• Showing love and support for their child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate future aspirations (e.g. post-secondary education, career goals)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop a sense of responsibility in their child for his/her education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theory Linking Teacher Home Visits with Improved Student Outcomes

The theory of change underlying the HOME WORKS! program model helps explain how teacher home visits and school-based family engagement events influence parent and teacher knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, and how these changes translate into improved school outcomes for children. The theory of change shown in exhibit 2 is an adaptation of a family engagement model developed and refined by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2010), which defines a series of steps in the family engagement process. This process begins with relationship and knowledge development that occurs when teachers meet informally with families in their homes, talk with parents about their children’s school progress, and offer guidance on how parents can promote children’s learning and school success.

The parent engagement model describes two paths stemming from the teacher home visit experience that contribute to improvements in student academic achievement. The first path involves parents, and focuses on the impact of the home visit on the family’s motivations to become involved, their beliefs about their own roles as partners in their children’s learning, and their confidence in their own ability to help children succeed. These changes in parent attitudes and beliefs may lead parents to adopt new parenting practices, including communicating more frequently with teachers, more actively engaging in home-based learning activities, and conveying educational aspirations to their children. Through role modeling, direct instruction, encouragement and reinforcement, parents influence children’s feelings about the importance of school, their motivations to learn, their belief in their own potential to succeed, and their ability to conform to school expectations through self-regulation. These changes in learning mechanisms, in turn, support student’s school achievement. The second path involves teachers, and focuses on the impact of the home visits on teachers’ understanding of students’ strengths, needs, and home challenges. The insights that teachers gain through their relationships with families may lead to changes in instructional practices that benefit student learning and support student achievement.

Exhibit 2. Theory of Change: How Teacher Home Visits Contribute to Improved School Outcomes

The HOME WORKS! Program Model

The standard HOME WORKS! parent engagement model is the standard model. During the 2014–15 school year, the model was implemented across 11 schools in 4 school districts. These programs collectively served 1,824
students and their families across 130 classrooms, and provided 2,819 home visits. The standard model is classroom-based and is typically implemented by teachers in early childhood education and elementary school settings. Schools that implement the standard model are expected to engage at least 50% of all classroom teachers and to encourage broad-based or universal involvement of students and families within those classrooms. The model includes the following components:

**Staff Training**
Teachers, school administrators, and other school staff who participate in teacher home visits are required to attend two staff trainings to build capacity to engage parents in the learning process. The first home visit trainings are scheduled in the spring or early summer to encourage teachers to initiate visits during the summer months. The second home visit training occurs before school starts in advance of second home visits. Returning teachers and school staff who have been trained and were previously active in the program are required to attend refresher training each year of their continuing involvement.

**First Home Visit**
Teachers conduct one home visit to each of their students in paired teacher teams. The first home visit focuses on building positive relationships and communicating effectively with parents. Teachers discuss the importance of school attendance and reading and talking to children each day. Teachers lay the foundation for creating a home environment that supports learning by sharing the tools, skills, and knowledge parents must use in the home for their children to succeed at school.

**Second Home Visit**
The second visit is intended to educate parents about school expectations, to discuss parental roles in supporting children’s academic success, to review students’ academic progress, and to set goals for future achievement. The goals of the second visit are to increase parenting efficacy as it relates to schooling, parenting confidence, and learning aspirations, and to give parents information and tools to increase their capacity to help their child academically.

**Family Dinners**
Schools host two family dinners held at the school site and invite parents to attend. The purpose of the family dinners is to communicate that parent engagement is welcomed, valued, and expected, and to reinforce educational practices that support student learning. The family dinners serve as another opportunity to cultivate positive relationships and orientations toward school. The first family dinner is scheduled early in the school year after first home visits have been completed; the second family dinner is scheduled after second visits have concluded.

**Site coordinators**
Site coordinators are selected from within each school site to serve as liaisons between the school and the HOME WORKS! Program Director. Site coordinators are compensated by the program to support and facilitate school-based program implementation, including monitoring staff compliance, coordinating family dinners, and facilitating data collection efforts.

**HOME WORKS! Model Variants**
The HOME WORKS! model has several variations that share a core emphasis on establishing parent-teacher learning partnerships, but that differ with respect to program location (school- and home-based versus home-based only), populations of focus (young children versus adolescents), intervention type (universal versus indicated) and program components. Variations are typically developed and tested as part of the operational program improvement agenda, and in response to perceived needs. Although the focus of the present report is on the experiences of schools implementing the standard standard model, three variations are discussed briefly below and in more detail in the appendices of the report:

**Parent-Teacher Learning Team (PTLT) Model**
The Parent Teacher Learning Team (PTLT) is a variation of the standard standard model that combines one teacher home visit with school-based parent engagement activities, including parent-teacher conferences and
classroom-based instructional sessions for parents and other family members. The PTTLT model was implemented by five classroom teachers at one elementary school site. The program served 27 kindergarten and third grade students and their families in 2014–15.

**Fellowship Model**

The fellowship model is a variation of the school wide model, which was introduced as a strategy to expand teacher home visitation to schools and districts where school administrators were not implementing the standard model. Teachers apply to participate in the program in pairs and conduct home visits with students in their own classrooms. Teachers meet regularly as part of a professional learning community to discuss implementation successes and challenges. The fellowship model was implemented by 26 teachers across 5 school districts and 10 school sites in 2014–15. Fellowship teachers collectively served 172 students and their families and completed at least 20 home visits.

**Secondary School Model**

The secondary school model is a variation of the standard model that has been adapted for secondary school settings. Unlike the more universal approach of the standard model, in secondary schools, a select number of students are identified for home visits based on indicated needs for academic or behavioral support. Home visits are conducted by paired teams of teachers and school counselors who are knowledgeable of the student’s academic performance. At the high school level, home visits are typically limited to 9th grade students with the intent of supporting school transitions. During the 2014–15 school year, four middle schools and two high schools implemented teacher home visits with their students. These programs collectively served 453 students and their families and provided a total of 459 home visits.

**Summary of Section Findings**

From the time that HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program was established in 2007, the program has continued to expand and evolve to meet the needs of its partnering school systems and to encourage participation of new schools and districts. In 2014–15, the standard implementation model was implemented across 11 schools in 4 school districts serving 1,824 preschool and elementary school age youth and families. This purpose of this first section of the report was to describe the components of the standard model, and introduce a theory of change that attempts to explain how strengthening teacher-parent relationships and parent engagement through home visiting translates into improved school attendance, classroom behavior, and school academic performance for students. The next section of the report describes how schools and school staff implemented the standard model with students and families during the 2014–15 school year, and how implementation varied across school settings.
HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program partners with low income, underperforming schools to transform the home-school learning dynamic by encouraging parents and families to become more engaged in the learning process. Since the program was founded in 2007, the number of participating districts and schools has expanded, as new programs are recruited to participate, and established programs become institutionalized within their school systems and no longer require external support. This section of the report describes the districts and schools that were actively involved with HOME WORKS! during the 2014–15 school year, and details the population of students, parents, teachers and other school personnel who actively participated in program activities. The section also examines the characteristics of participating students in relation to non-participating students, to determine how successful schools were in recruiting hard-to-reach families who are often disengaged from the school environment.

School Participation

The nine elementary schools and two early childhood centers that implemented the standard model in 2014–15 represent a mix of large urban and small rural school systems located across central Missouri and the greater St. Louis area. All school districts implemented the program at selected school sites rather than district-wide. The enrollment characteristics of participating schools are presented in exhibit 3. Two early childhood education (ECE) centers exclusively enrolled preschool-age children and nine elementary schools enrolled children from preschool or kindergarten through the fifth or sixth grades. Schools varied in terms of the size of their enrollment, representing a mix of very small (<200 students), medium-small (200 to <400 students), medium-large, and one very large schools (>600 students). All schools received Title I funding and served high concentrations of families living at or below poverty level (as suggested by the high percent of children receiving free or reduced price school lunch). Specifically, more than half of elementary schools in 2014–15 enrolled student populations where 100% of families were eligible for the federal Free/Reduced Lunch Program (FRLP). One elementary school enrolled a large proportion of English Language Learners (ELL) with limited proficiency in English. ELL students comprised 44% of the school’s enrolled student population and mostly spoke Spanish or Bosnian as their home languages. Schools also varied with respect to the racial and ethnic composition of their enrolled populations. More specifically, four schools were 90% or more African-American, two schools were 90% or more White, and the remaining five schools were racially and ethnically diverse, though the Hispanic population never exceeded 10% of the school populations.

Exhibit 3. Demographic characteristics of the enrolled student population in HOME WORKS! schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade Span</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>ELL</th>
<th>FRLP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1001</td>
<td>Pre K-5</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1002</td>
<td>Pre K-5</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Pre K</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3001</td>
<td>Pre K-6</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3002</td>
<td>Pre K-5</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3003</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3004</td>
<td>Pre K-2</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3005</td>
<td>Pre K-5</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001</td>
<td>Pre K</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4002</td>
<td>PreK-5</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), 2015 Building Enrollment
Note: Student enrollment information for PreK students (2001/4001) is not reported by DESE. Information was provided by individual school districts.
Teacher and Other School Staff Participation

Districts and schools voluntarily request to participate in HOME WORKS! or are recruited into the program through the HOME WORKS! organization. Districts who choose to partner with HOME WORKS! must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines expectations for their involvement. Minimally, schools must commit to a five-year implementation timeline, and must agree to engage at least 50% of their classroom teachers in home visits, or risk being eliminated from the program. HOME WORKS! provides non-cost training and a stipend for site coordinators, and compensates schools for up to 50% of extra service pay for teachers.

Teachers and other school staff conducted home visits in two-person teams that included the child’s classroom teachers. Schools conveyed differing expectations to their teachers and school staff regarding HOME WORKS! participation. While in some schools staff involvement was voluntary, in others it was a requirement of the school administration. Given that school staff participation was voluntary in most school settings, one of the key study questions for the evaluation was to determine how many teachers and school staff chose to conduct teacher home visits and how staff participation varied across school settings. The evaluation also focused on exploring some of the factors that may have motivated teachers’ decisions to become involved.

In all, a total of 231 teachers and other school personnel conducted first home visits with families during the 2014–15 school year across the 11 schools. This figure includes 19 ECE teachers and program staff and 212 elementary school staff. As shown in exhibit 4, regular classroom teachers accounted for over half of all participating staff (60%) and were the most common participant type, followed by special education teachers (10%), learning specialists (10%), school counselors (3%), and teacher assistants (6%). ‘Other school personnel’ comprised the remaining 11% of participants, and included non-instructional staff, such as administrators, interpreters, social workers, library aides, school nurses, home school communicators, and other specialized instructors (art, music, physical education).

Reasons for Participation

Teacher surveys administered at the conclusion of the 2014–15 school year were used to document some of the reasons that staff chose to become involved with the teacher home visit program. Respondents were presented with a series of statements about why they might choose to participate, and were then asked to indicate how much they ‘agreed’ or ‘disagreed’ with each statement. Response options ranged from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. As displayed in exhibit 5, according to survey findings:

- Almost all teachers and other school staff chose to participate (94% ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’) based on their belief that students would benefit from home visits.
- Teachers and school staff were also strongly motivated by the belief that home visits would help them work more effectively with the students in their schools or classrooms (80% ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’).
- Three-quarters of school staff agreed that their participation was influenced by a school administrator or other staff member who encouraged them to become involved (76% ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’).
and two-thirds (67%) chose to participate because their colleagues had already committed to the program.

- Three out of five (60%) teachers and school staff agreed that the opportunity to earn extra money was a factor in their decision.

Exhibit 5. Teacher motivations to participate in home visits (n = 129)

School staff also had an opportunity to identify any other reasons beyond those mentioned that may have influenced their decisions to conduct home visits with their students. Reasons often overlap, but of those who shared an open ended response (n = 127), the vast majority (81%) cited the opportunity to build relationships with the families of their students as the primary motivation their involvement. About one-quarter mentioned the importance of increasing parental involvement in schools more generally (23%). Twenty percent of respondents were motivated by the belief that home visits would provide a vehicle for improving student academic outcomes (e.g., improved academic achievement and classroom behaviors), and 5% felt home visits would help to engage their students in the learning process.

Teacher Participation Rates

Teacher participation rates varied considerably across school settings ranging from about one-third (34%) of all teachers in one school building to 100% of teachers or teachers’ aides participating across three others. The difference in rates of teacher participation was a key factor determining the number of students and families ultimately reached through the home visit program.

Exhibit 6 on the following page summarizes data showing the number of total classrooms housed within each school building, the number and percentage of ‘active’ classrooms, defined as classrooms that had a teacher who was trained through HOME WORKS! and who completed at least one home visit, the approximate number of students enrolled in active classrooms, and the number and percentage of students within active classrooms who received a home visit from the teacher. The number of students enrolled in active classrooms measures the pool of potential participants within each school who could have been contacted for a visit, although teachers were not required to contact every student in their classroom. The actual number of families who were contacted and invited to take part was not known, as this information was not formally documented for the 2014–15 school year. The number of students who received a first visit indicates the total number of students reached by the program since families must complete a first visit before a second visit can be initiated.

Exhibit 6. Teacher and classroom participation rates and number and percentage of students visited within active classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Total classrooms</th>
<th>HWI classrooms</th>
<th>HWI as percent of total classrooms</th>
<th>Students enrolled in HWI classrooms</th>
<th>HWI participants</th>
<th>Percent of enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>2,746</td>
<td>1,824</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1002</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About half of schools that implemented the standard model were very successful garnering the involvement of most of their teaching staff, while others had mixed success. Specifically, nearly two-thirds of schools (7 of 11) engaged more than 90% of their classrooms, with 4 schools obtaining 100% participation. Two of the 4 remaining schools had lower rates of involvement, but succeeded in meeting the 50% minimum participation rate, whereas 2 others failed to meet the minimum requirement. For these 2 elementary schools, only 6 of 13 classroom teachers (46%) in 1 school, and 13 of 38 teachers (34%) in another were actively involved. Overall, across schools, 130 of 177 total classrooms had a teacher who was active in the program, and enrolled a pool of more than 2,746 children who were potentially eligible to receive home visits. Two-thirds of students (66%) in this potential pool of participants, or 1,824 participants, ultimately received at least one home visit over the course of the school year.

The exhibit also reports the percentage of students and families within active HOME WORKS! classrooms who received home visits. This percentage also varied considerably across schools, averaging from 30% of all students to more than 90% of students in active HOME WORKS! classrooms. These student participation rates within classrooms can be used to gauge the teachers’ overall success in reaching out to and engaging the families of their students. Importantly, these figures also highlight the fact that three schools with extremely high rates of teacher participation (100%, 94% and 92%) had below average percentages of student and family participation within their classrooms (30%, 43%, and 51% respectively). Conversely, the school with the highest rate of student and family participation within classrooms (94%) also had one of the lowest rates of teacher participation school-wide (50%). This suggests that even when schools succeed in recruiting most of their teachers into the program, in some cases, by mandating their involvement, those teachers appear to have different levels of motivation and commitment to the program and experience different rates of success engaging the families in their classrooms.

Exhibit 7 reports the number of classroom teachers, excluding non-instructional staff, who participated by school site as either a lead or secondary home visitor. The table also reports the total number of visits completed by teachers, and the average, minimum, and maximum number of first visits completed. The information further highlights the amount of variation that was observed, both across schools and within schools, with respect to how actively teachers were involved in conducting home visits with families. For example, across schools, the average number of first visits per teacher ranged from 4 first visits in one school to 30.1 first visits in another.
The data on teacher participation also provides a sense of the overall workload required to universally implement the program classroom-wide. For example, the table shows that in 5 of 11 schools, teachers averaged more than 20 first visits with families and in some schools individual teachers completed more than 40 first visits. This workload is further compounded when taking into account second visits and visits conducted with other classroom teachers as part of a two-person team. This raises the question of what constitutes a reasonable expectation for teachers in terms of the number of families they can realistically serve, given the window for scheduling visits and the minimum time required for each visit. Teachers' motivations and ability to reach out to and successfully convince families to participate in a first visit plays an important role in influencing the number of students and families ultimately served by the program. This may have important implications for how schools make decisions concerning the voluntary or mandatory nature of school staff participation and how schools set targets for the number of children and families they hope the reach through the program.

Selection of Students and Families

Another factor that influenced the number of students and families reached across schools and classrooms was the approach used to identify families for participation. The HOME WORKS! model emphasizes outreach to families to build trusting parent-teacher relationships and more effectively engage families in the learning process. Teachers and staff training initially provided by HOME WORKS! encouraged teachers to reach out to as many parents in their classrooms as was feasible. This guidance was later revised in response to evaluation findings showing that high performing students were often disproportionately represented among participating families. The program model was subsequently redefined and the universal approach to selecting students was replaced with a needs-based model that prioritizes students at greatest risk of school failure. Teachers were provided a new set of criteria mid-year to identify students for home visits that included the following:

- Students performing below grade level
- Students with discipline problems
- New students or families without a positive teacher/school relationship
- Immigrant/ELL (English Language Learners) families
- Students missing 17 or more days (10%) of school
- Students with an IEP (Individualized Education Plan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Active Teachers</th>
<th>Total First Visits Completed</th>
<th>Average Visits</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3003</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3004</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3005</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4002</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher Online Log, 2014–15
This new strategy acknowledges that families who are already more engaged in their children’s learning may be more likely to accept an invitation to participate. By prioritizing high-need students, the program aims to ensure that program resources are targeted to high-need students who are presumably more likely to benefit from the intervention, while recognizing that time constraints may limit the number of families who teachers can reasonably serve.

Teachers who responded to the teacher survey were asked to identify the approach they used in practice to select the students and families for home visits. As shown in exhibit 8, the majority of respondents (86%) indicated that they had attempted to conduct home visits with all students in their classrooms in a manner consistent with the original model. Only 7% used criteria to prioritize a subset of students and families for participation, and the remaining 7% selected students on a first-come, first-served basis.

Although the majority of lead teachers attempted to visit all of their students, survey responses suggest that teachers did use information about the child to prioritize students with the greatest needs. Specifically, 25% of lead teachers first approached families whose students demonstrated below grade-level performance and 19% prioritized students who exhibited behavior or discipline issues (see exhibit 9). On two ends of a spectrum, 18% of lead teachers selected students based on limited parent engagement, and another 17% prioritized students whose parents proactively requested a home visit from the teacher. Teachers were somewhat less likely to prioritize students based on high rates of absenteeism (11%) or special education status (12%), and were least likely to select students based on their family income (5%). Less than 2% of teachers prioritized students based on immigrant status or language proficiency (i.e., ELL), which likely reflects the fact that most schools enrolled very few ELL students relative to the total school population.

### Exhibit 9. Factors Influencing the Selection of Students for Home Visits (n=87)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below grade level performance</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior/discipline issues</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents requested a visit</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited parent engagement</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with IEPs</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free/reduced lunch eligibility</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL/immigrant status</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher Survey, 2014-15

### Parent Refusals

Parent and family participation in the teacher home visit program is voluntary, although teachers are trained to persist when parents refuse an initial visit, as a strategy to engage hard-to-reach families. As shown in exhibits 10 and 11, lead teachers who responded to the teacher survey had very different experiences related to how frequently parents refused a visit. When asked to indicate how many of their parents and families had declined to participate when contacted, 20% had no families refuse, 44% had anywhere from 1 to 5 families refuse, and another 15% were refused by 6 to 9 families. The remaining 20% of teachers reported that 10 or more families of students in their classes, or more than one-third of families based on average class size, had declined the invitation for a home visit.

Teachers were asked to share in an open-ended format some of the most common reasons that families had given them for refusing to participate. Teachers (n=71) most often indicated that parents lacked the time for a visit or could not coordinate a time with the teacher that was convenient (58%). Teachers also noted that parents often felt uncomfortable having a teacher come to their home (18%), did not understand the need for a visit, or felt that
it was unimportant (8%). Teachers conveyed that some families were homeless or in transition and did not have a permanent residence where the visit could take place (6%), or had a history of negative interactions with the teacher or school, which made them disinclined to accept the home visit invitation (4%). About 21% of teachers indicated that families who refused visits did not offer any specific reason for the refusal.

Students and Families Reached

To improve school outcomes among students who are at heightened risk for academic challenges, HOME WORKS! partners with low income, Title I schools, and directs home visits toward youth with needs for enhanced parent and family support. The HOME WORKS! standard model aims to engage as many children and families as is feasible and to ensure that the population of students and families served is representative of the larger school population, and includes hard-to-reach students and families who are most disengaged from the school community.

During the 2014–15 school year, teachers and school staff involved with HOME WORKS! visited a total of 1,824 students and their families and completed 2,819 home visits. Nearly half (47%) of all students enrolled across schools implementing the standard model received at least one home visit from a teacher. Although schools and teachers were successful, overall, in reaching a substantial portion of the school population, differences in school implementation related to teacher participation and family engagement, meant that the proportion of students reached through the intervention varied considerably across school settings. Specifically, exhibit 12 shows that the percentage of the school population engaged in the program varied from 23% of the enrolled population in one school to more than 92% in another. In light of this pattern, an important question for the evaluation was to assess the characteristics of students served and to determine how successful teachers were in reaching highest need families that constitute the priority population.
Exhibit 12. HOME WORKS! participants as a percent of total school enrollment

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher Online Log, 2014–15

Exhibit 13 and 14 report the race and grade distribution of students who participated in the HOME WORKS! intervention. The majority of student participants were either African-American (49%) or White (38%), with multi-racial (7%), Hispanic or Latino (3%), Asian or Pacific Islander (2%) students and students of other races together accounting for about 13% of the population served. Early elementary school-age children comprised the largest proportion of participants (47%), followed by older elementary students in grades four through sixth (29%), and preschool and kindergarten age children (24%). Male students were slightly overrepresented in the participant population (52%) relative to female students (48%).

Exhibit 13. Race/Ethnicity of HOME WORKS! Students

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher Online Log, 2014–15

Exhibit 14. Grade Level of HOME WORKS! Students

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher Online Log, 2014–15

Exhibit 15 compares the characteristics of HOME WORKS! participants with non-participating students HOME WORKS! schools on core demographic indicators, including race, language proficiency, homelessness, and
special needs status. The purpose of the comparison is to determine how successful schools were in recruiting traditionally hard-to-reach students and families (e.g., families of color, homeless families, or families with language barriers) who are more likely to be disengaged from the school community.

Exhibit 15. Demographic Characteristics of HOME WORKS! Participants Relative to the Total School Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>ELL</th>
<th>Homeless</th>
<th>Special Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HW! Participants</td>
<td>Non-Participants</td>
<td>HW! Participants</td>
<td>Non-Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,272</td>
<td>45% White</td>
<td>11% Other</td>
<td>10% HW</td>
<td>3% NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>58% White</td>
<td>20% Other</td>
<td>3% HW</td>
<td>1% NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1002</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>34% White</td>
<td>19% Other</td>
<td>2% HW</td>
<td>&lt;1% NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>94% White</td>
<td>6% Other</td>
<td>6% HW</td>
<td>0% NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>96% White</td>
<td>&lt;1% Other</td>
<td>0% HW</td>
<td>&lt;1% NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3001</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>2% White</td>
<td>0% Other</td>
<td>1% HW</td>
<td>&lt;1% NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3002</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>0% White</td>
<td>100% Other</td>
<td>1% HW</td>
<td>1% NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3003</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>5% White</td>
<td>3% Other</td>
<td>5% HW</td>
<td>2% NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3004</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>59% White</td>
<td>5% Other</td>
<td>3% HW</td>
<td>1% NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3005</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>58% White</td>
<td>19% Other</td>
<td>53% HW</td>
<td>24% NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>18% White</td>
<td>15% Other</td>
<td>0% HW</td>
<td>0% NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4002</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>2% White</td>
<td>96% Other</td>
<td>&lt;1% HW</td>
<td>&lt;1% NP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School district records for kindergarten through 6th grade as reported by district research offices.

The results of the analysis suggest that, in aggregate, across schools, students whose families participated in teacher home visits were not significantly different from students whose families did not receive visits, based on the students’ race or special needs status. However, within four schools, Black students were significantly underrepresented within the participant population, and White students were overrepresented. Within one school (1001), homeless students were also underrepresented in the participant group, and in a second school (4001) special education students were underrepresented. In contrast, students from recent immigrant families where English was not the predominant language spoken were overrepresented in the HOME WORKS! participant group. This pattern was tied to a single school that enrolled the largest ELL student population and that most likely engaged in deliberate outreach to ELL families to help overcome barriers to involvement.

On teacher and school staff surveys, respondents were asked to gauge how successful they were at recruiting or engaging the highest need students and families in their classrooms. Most lead teachers perceived that efforts had been successful. More specifically, 40% felt that their efforts to engage high need families had been ‘very successful’, 47% felt efforts had been at least ‘somewhat successful’, 15% felt efforts were ‘not very’ or ‘not at all successful’, and the other 2% were unsure.

Summary of Section Findings

The analysis summarized in this section examines teacher, student, and family participation in the HOME WORKS! teacher home visit program, documents variation in participation rates across schools that influenced how many students and families were impacted, and attempts to explain why so much variation occurred across schools that were implementing the same standard model. Most of the observed variation in teacher and student participation was driven by three key factors that influenced the
program’s overall reach: teacher involvement and motivation to participate, or the number of teachers who were formally trained and committed to conducting home visits with their students’ families, student selection, or the way in which teachers identified and engaged in outreach to families in their classrooms, and student and family participation, or the number and percentage of families from within each classroom who teachers successfully engaged in program services. Differences in these factors meant that few schools were similar with respect to implementation.

Recognizing that a goal of the program is continue to expand and replicate the program in new schools and districts, these findings raise important questions for future study concerning what constitutes the optimal approach to school-wide implementation. Specific questions to pursue in future research and evaluation include: (a) what expectations should schools communicate to their staff regarding teacher participation, selection of students, and expected workload, (b) what mechanisms are being used at the school level to monitor implementation by classroom and to support teachers who may be struggling, and (c) given limited resources, which students and families are most likely to benefit from parent engagement interventions and how can these students and families be identified. The next section of the report expands on this discussion by examining teacher and student engagement in specific components of the program and focusing on which aspects of implementation define fidelity to the program model.
Home Visit Implementation

The third section of the report focuses on how schools and teachers implemented various program components to determine how well the program was implemented with respect to fidelity to the program model. Fidelity assessment measures the degree to which interventions are implemented as planned and the extent to which the program “as planned” is reflect in the program “as implemented”. Fidelity is important because stronger fidelity to the program model increases confidence that changes in outcomes can be attributed to program strategies. Given that the HOME WORKS! organization is pursuing more rigorous research to test the program’s effectiveness, adherence to the program model becomes even more essential. There are specific design elements of the program that school staff are expected to implement. These elements include the following:

- Completion of two visits
- Participation in family dinners
- Team configuration
- Student involvement in the visit
- Length and timing of visits

Information documenting the implementation of home visits was recorded by teachers and school staff in an online log that was completed within 24 hours of the conclusion of each home visit. The log provides detailed information about each visit including date, time, location, presence of family members, characteristics of the child, and subjective information about the visit, such as insights gained about the child’s strengths, needs, or home life. The development of the teacher log represents the first time that information on the completion of home visits was systematically captured and used for evaluation and compliance monitoring purposes.

Completion of Two Home Visits

The standard teacher home visit model is structured to include two visits to the student’s home. Each visit has a specific purpose and objectives. As described in a previous section of the report, the first visit is intended to build positive parent-teacher relationships, improve communication, cultivate positive family orientations toward school, and motivate parents to engage in their children’s learning. The second visit is intended to educate parents about school expectations, to discuss parental roles in supporting children’s academic success, and to review students’ academic progress. By design, families must participate in a first visit before receiving a second visit.

Exhibit 17 shows the total count of students whose families received a first visit, compared to the total count of students whose families received a second visit within each school site. Records from teacher logs completed across schools show that there were 1,824 students who received first visits after adjusting for data quality issues, such as duplicate entries, and 995 students who received second visits. Similar to patterns of teacher and student/family participation rates across programs, the implementation of second visits was uneven across school buildings. Specifically, 1 school completed second visits with less than 10% of families, 5 schools completed second visits with between 25% and 50% of their families, 2 schools completed second visits with between 50% and 75% of families, and 3 schools completed second visits with 75% or more. Overall, only a little more than half of students in HOME WORKS! schools (55%) received any second visit, thus, missing a core component of the intervention where teachers discuss students’ academic progress, and provide tools and strategies to promote learning in the home.
Exhibit 17. Count of students in HOME WORKS! schools whose families received a first and second visit

Family Dinner Attendance

A second core component of the standard model is the family dinners. Family dinners are hosted by schools twice throughout the school year to increase parent engagement and foster positive parent-teacher and parent-school relationships. Families of students who receive home visits are invited to participate as part of their involvement in the program. Families of students enrolled in active HOME WORKS! classrooms who have not yet agreed to a teacher home visit are also encouraged to attend. During the 2014–15 school year schools hosted a total of 22 family dinners with 2,640 teachers, students, parents and other family members in attendance at the first series of family dinners, and 2,046 individuals in attendance at the second. Dinner attendance at each event ranged anywhere from 35 attendees to more than 400. Exhibit 18 shows the total number and percentage of students whose families received at least one home visit and who also had at least one family member participate in the first and second family dinners. Overall, about one-third of students whose families had participated in at least one visit attended at least one of the family dinner events.

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher Online Log, 2014–15
Exhibit 18. Family dinner attendance within the school population, the number of attendees that were HOME WORKS! participants, and the percent of HOME WORKS! participants that attended the event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>HW Participants</th>
<th>Dinner 1</th>
<th>Dinner 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cumulative</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HW! Family</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001</td>
<td>1,824</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>376</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1002</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3001</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3002</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3003</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3004</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3005</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4002</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher Online Log, 2014–15

Home Visits and Family Dinners

The standard model defines the core components of the intervention as participation in two home visits and attendance at two family dinners. However, few students and families in actuality receive this full program “dose.” Exhibit 19 shows the percentage of students and families who participated in all four program components which constitutes fidelity to the program model. The first column shows the number of students in the school population who received at least one visit through the HOME WORKS! program, the second column shows that number and percentage of students from column one who also received a second visit (55%), column three shows the number and percentage who participated in two home visits and at least one family dinner (17%), and column four shows the percentage who received the complete intervention (10%). Exhibit 20 on the following page shows the percentage of HOME WORKS! participants who received all four program components by school. Again participation rates varied, ranging from a low of 0% to a high of 25%.

Exhibit 19. Students that received second visits, two visits and attended one dinner, two visits and attended two dinners as a percent of those who received a first visit.

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher Online Log, 2014–15
Home Visit Team Configuration

The teacher home visit model requires home visits to be conducted in paired teams that include a lead and second visitor. Teams should include the child’s classroom teacher in order for families to build relationships with school personnel who have daily interactions with the child, who are knowledgeable about the child’s academic strengths, needs, and progress, and with whom the parent will maintain ongoing communication about the child throughout the school year. The second visitor may be anyone who works within the school building, provided that they have participated in formal training. Schools were encouraged to include non-instructional staff, such as, office clerks, custodial staff, or cafeteria workers in the pool of second visitors to provide flexibility to build teams that were more representative of the families visited with respect to race, cultural, or income. Home visit teams were also authorized to include a third visitor when an interpreter was needed to work with families whose proficiency in English was limited.

Informal feedback from site coordinators and reviews of data entry forms suggest that most teams included a classroom teacher, although there were exceptions. For example, teams visiting families with multiple children often logged visits for all children in the household, regardless of whether or not the sibling’s teacher was a member of the team or in some cases whether or not the child was enrolled in the same school. In some instances, this was due to the fact that a sibling’s teacher was not active in the program. Several schools also authorized special education teachers to serve as lead visitors without including a regular classroom teacher on the home visit team. Once this pattern was brought to the attention of managing staff, the guidelines for lead visitors were revised to include special education teachers mid-way through the school year. Due to inconsistencies in data entry and reporting (e.g., classroom teachers did not always identify themselves as the lead visitor in home visit logs) and due to challenges accessing accurate information regarding students’ classroom assignment, it was difficult to determine the percentage of home visits that did or did not involve the classroom teacher as a team member. This may be a factor to consider when designing future teacher reporting tools.

Length and Timing of Visits

Teachers and other school staff were also given guidance on when during the course of the school year they should initiate first and second visits with their students and when visits should conclude. According to program guidelines, teachers should initiate first visits during the summer months, whenever feasible, and should conclude first visits within the first three months of the school year (prior to November 1). Teachers were instructed to initiate second visits beginning in January and to conclude all second visits by March prior to standardized testing. Exhibit 21 shows the distribution of first and second visits throughout the program year for schools implementing
the standard model based on completed visit logs. The data show that most teachers and school staff successfully implemented first visits within the targeted timeline (84%), although some first visits (16%) were implemented later in the winter and spring months. For second visits, teacher logs show that 86% of second visits were successfully completed within the targeted timeline, while 14% were completed after the cut-off in April and May. These percentages, reported by school site in exhibit 22, show that some schools were far more successful than others in implementing visits within the preferred window.

Exhibit 21. Timing of the first and second visits by month for standard model

![Chart showing timing of first and second visits by month](image)

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher Online Log, 2014–15

Although most second visits were implemented within the appropriate window (86%), more than one-third of second visits (35%) were actually completed within the final three months of the school year (March, April, and May). If the goal of second visits is to inform parents about school expectations, parenting roles, and students’ academic progress, timing visits this late into the school year may limit potential for visits to meaningfully impact school behaviors and school outcomes for the current academic year.

Exhibit 22. Timing of visits and length of visits for standard model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Percent First Visit before Nov 1</th>
<th>Percent Second Visit Jan-Mar</th>
<th>Average months between visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,824</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>5.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1002</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>5.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3001</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3002</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3003</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3004</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3005</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>5.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4002</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>6.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Completed visit logs were also used to calculate the amount of time that elapsed between visits as shown in exhibit 23. While the home visit training does provide guidance on when first and second visits should be implemented, it does not communicate specific guidelines concerning ideal spacing between visits to maximize program effectiveness. On average, the length of time between first and second visit was 5.2 months. For about 5% of families, however, visits were conducted within the same month or within one to two months of each other. The amount of time between visits varied considerably across schools often depending on how early programs began implementing the program during the school year.
Teachers and school staff were also given specific guidelines concerning the length of time that should be allocated to each visit. Specifically, first visits were expected to last a minimum of 30 minutes and second visits were expected to last a minimum of 45 minutes. Exhibit 24 shows that on average across programs, first visits were completed within 38.2 minutes, with 10 minutes being the shortest recorded first visit and 180 minutes being the longest. Second visits were completed within 44.6 minutes on average with 2 minutes as the shortest recorded second visit, indicating a no show, and 120 minutes as the longest recorded visit. Although the vast majority of teachers met or exceeded the minimum length of time required (98%) for first visits, more than a quarter of second visits (26%) fell short of the 45 minute target. This may indicate that 45 minutes is more time than necessary for staff to address second visit objectives with families.

As shown in exhibit 25 teachers and staff generally agreed (70%) that the amount of time spent with families, both in terms of the number and length of visits, was sufficient to accomplish programs goals (i.e., establishing relationships, promoting learning in the home). However, teachers were not asked if the expected length of visits was actually more time than was needed. This question should be given consideration in future planning.

Family Presence

Another expectation communicated to school staff was for the student to be present during the visit and engaged in the home visit process. In more than 90% of both visits, students were present at the time the teacher came to the home (Exhibit 26). For more than 80% of first and second visits the student’s mother was present, and for 34% of first visits and 42% of second visits the father was present. About half of first and second visits involved siblings and one-third involved younger siblings who had not reached school age.
Staff were also asked to provide their perceptions about their own level of comfort with the visit, their perceptions about the parent or family’s level of comfort, and their observations about the child’s level of engagement during each visit (Exhibit 27). Eighty-seven percent of home visitors indicated that they were ‘very comfortable’ conducting first visits and 90% ‘very comfortable’ conducting the second. Staff also generally perceived that parents and other families were also comfortable during visit. About 69% of teachers and staff indicated that if the student was present during the first or second visit the child was also very engaged.

Exhibit 27. Teacher perception of engagement and comfort at first and second visit (standard model)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable were you in doing this home visit?</td>
<td>1,686</td>
<td>1,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,473</td>
<td>921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87.4%</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable did the parents or other family members seem during the visit?</td>
<td>1,686</td>
<td>1,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,484</td>
<td>931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88.0%</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If student was present, how engaged was the student in the visit?</td>
<td>1,542</td>
<td>977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,061</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Location of Visit

The final aspect of program implementation that was tied to measurement of fidelity to the program model concerns the location where the home visit took place. The HOME WORKS! model places importance on conducting visits in the child’s home environment as a strategy to promote understanding of the family’s culture and home life, and to help the teacher assess conditions in the home that may support or limit a child’s opportunity for learning and school success. Although most first home visits were successfully conducted in the child’s home (88%), a small percentage of visits were held in other settings, including neighborhood restaurants (5%), public libraries (4%), and other locations, such as schools, public parks, emergency shelters, the parent’s workplace, or in the homes of a family friend or relative (Exhibit 28). Factors that may have led to holding visits outside of the home include parents’ discomfort with opening up their home, lack of suitable housing, and parent or teacher concerns about potential safety risks.

Summary of Section Findings

The analysis summarized in this section documents the way that schools implemented the program model and the differences that were observed between the program “as planned” and the program “as implemented”. Core components of the standard model include participation in both home visits and attendance at two family dinners. However, few students and families, in practice, receive this full program “dose”. More specifically, there were 1,824 students who received first visits over the course of the 2014–15 school year and 995 students who received second follow-up visits, representing about half (55%) of the entire home visit population. This suggests that half of all HOME WORKS! participants missed a core component of the intervention addressing school expectations, student academic progress, or parenting roles and practices that support learning goals. Only 10% of families participated in all four program components (two visits and attended two dinner events) and this percentage varied from 0% to 25% across school buildings.

While most second visits were timed to comply with program guidelines, one-third (35%) of all second visits were scheduled during the final three months of the school year (March, April, and May). If the goal of second visits is...
to educate parents about school expectations, to review academic progress, and to promote changes in parenting practices, timing visits so late into the school year may limit their potential to meaningfully impact school behaviors and school outcomes. First visits were expected to last a minimum of 30 minutes and second visits were expected to last a minimum of 45 minutes. Although the vast majority of teachers met or exceeded the targeted length of time for first visits, more than a quarter of second visits fell short of the 45-minute target. This may indicate that the time allotted for second visits is more than needed to fulfill second visit objectives.

These findings raise important questions for future study including (a) what factors contribute to low rates of completion of second visits, (b) how can the program either strengthen implementation or modify its structure to fulfill key objectives related to student academic performance and family engagement, given that so few students receive the full intervention, and (c) are there issues related to the timing of visits that may limit their impact on student performance. In turn, this leads to the more fundamental questions of whether two visits are the optimal number and what can or should be the focus of each visit.
Parent Perceptions of the Home Visit Experience

The HOME WORKS! evaluation also aimed to capture the perceptions of parents in schools served through the program to learn more about parenting attitudes and behaviors and to gather feedback on the home visit experience. Parent surveys were administered at the conclusion of the 2014–15 school year to families of students enrolled in HOME WORKS! classrooms, excluding classrooms in HOME WORKS! schools where teachers were not active in the program. Parent surveys measured key constructs related to parent engagement in learning that were believed to impact children’s school success. Specific constructs included parent-teacher relationships, school invitations for parents to become involved, parent-teacher communication, parental role construction, parenting efficacy, and parent engagement practices that support learning. The survey also documented parent perceptions of barriers to engagement and parent feedback on the home visit experience.

Parent surveys were distributed to 2,011 families of elementary school students and were returned by 341 total parents or caregivers, representing a 13.2% response rate. Among respondents, 122 (46%) received two home visits, 60 (23%) received one home visit, and 84 (32%) received no home visits. The inclusion of non-participating families in the survey sample allowed the evaluation team to explore differences between families who chose to participate in the program, and families of students in the same classrooms who were either never contacted, or who declined the first visit invitation. It was not possible to assume that families who chose to participate, and families who did not, were similar with respect to measured or unmeasured baseline characteristics, therefore, differences observed between groups were intended for descriptive purposes only.

Parent Perceptions of Parent-Teacher Relationship Quality

One of the most important objectives of the teacher home visit program was to build trusting relationships between parents and teachers to allow them to partner effectively in promoting children’s school success. Parents who completed the parent survey were asked to respond to a series of statements assessing their beliefs about their relationships with their child’s teachers, including the extent to which teachers listen to parents’ concerns, treat parents with respect, and want children to succeed. Survey items were rated on a five-point Likert scale with response options that ranged from “very true” to “not true at all”. Survey items were combined into a multi-item scale score representing the average parent response across items.

Exhibit 29 compares the percentage of parents who indicated that each statement was either “true” or “very true”, and compares mean scale scores for both participant and non-participant groups. Survey findings indicate that parents who participated in teacher home visits viewed their relationships with teachers more positively than non-participating parents, although the perceptions of all parents were highly favorable.

Parent-Teacher Communication

Parents were also asked to evaluate the quality of communication they had received from their children’s teachers, including the extent to which teachers updated parents on their child’s progress, notified parents if there were problems with their child at school, and shared information about the content of classwork. Survey items were rated on a five-point Likert scale with response options that ranged from “very true” to “not true at all”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicated ‘Very true’ or ‘True’</th>
<th>HW</th>
<th>NON</th>
<th>Parent-teacher relationship scale data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listened to my concerns</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treated parents with respect</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to help my child succeed</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: HOME WORKS! Parent and Caregiver Survey, 2014–15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exhibit 30 compares the percentage of parents who indicated that each statement was either “true” or “very true”, and compares mean scale scores for both participant and non-participant groups. Survey findings suggest that parents who participated in teacher home visits had more positive perceptions regarding the level of communication they had with teachers, as compared to non-participating parents, although ratings were high for both groups.

Exhibit 30. Parent perceptions of teacher-parent communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicated ‘Very true’ or ‘True’</th>
<th>HW</th>
<th>NON</th>
<th>Perceptions of parent-teacher communication scale data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Updated parents on their child’s progress</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notified parents if there was a problem</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared information about classroom learning</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HOME WORKS! Parent and Caregiver Survey, 2014–15

Invitations to Be Involved

Parents who completed the parent survey were also asked to share feelings about the extent to which they felt teachers and other school staff had made them feel welcomed at school by extending invitations for school involvement. These invitations to involvement have been shown through research to be important motivators for parents to become more actively involved in their children’s education. The parent survey measured parent perceptions regarding the extent to which teachers and schools had made them feel welcome, had invited them to be involved in school activities, and had attempted to schedule school activities and events to allow for parent participation.

Exhibit 31 below shows that parents who participated in teacher home visits were significantly more likely than non-participating families to perceive that teachers and school staff were making efforts to engage families by inviting them to be involved in the school.

Exhibit 31. Parent perceptions regarding invitations to school involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicated ‘Very true’ or ‘True’</th>
<th>HW</th>
<th>NON</th>
<th>Invitations to be involved scale data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Made parents feel welcome</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked parents to be involved in school activities</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled events so that parents could attend</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HOME WORKS! Parent and Caregiver Survey, 2014–15

Parenting Practices that Support Learning

An important function of the teacher home visit is to encourage families to adopt new parenting practices, such as reading with their children or helping with homework that will promote children’s school success. Parents were also asked to indicate how often they (or someone in the family) engaged in parenting activities that focused on supporting children’s academic success. These activities including talking with their child about the school day, reviewing their child’s homework, helping their child study for tests, reading with their child, keeping track of their child’s progress at school, or communicating with their child’s teacher. Survey items were rated on a five-point Likert scale with response options that ranged from “never” to “all of the time”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Group (n=167)</th>
<th>Non-Participants (n=78)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Group (n=165)</th>
<th>Non-Participants (n=77)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exhibit 32 compares the percentage of parents who indicated that each statement was either “true” or “very true”, and compares mean scale scores for both participant and non-participant groups. Survey findings suggest that parents who participated in teacher home visits engaged more frequently in parenting practices that support learning in the home than did families who did not participate in teacher home visits.

Exhibit 32. Parent self-reported frequency of engaging in home-based learning practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicated ‘All of the time’</th>
<th>HW</th>
<th>NON</th>
<th>Parenting practices that support learning scale data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with teachers</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have conflicts with work or home schedules.</td>
<td>253</td>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have younger children to care for at home.</td>
<td>255</td>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have enough time.</td>
<td>258</td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have transportation.</td>
<td>254</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know how to get involved.</td>
<td>252</td>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have trouble understanding the language.</td>
<td>254</td>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know how to help my child with school work.</td>
<td>255</td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t feel comfortable at school or in the classroom.</td>
<td>253</td>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HOME WORKS! Parent and Caregiver Survey, 2014–15

Parental Role Construction, Parenting Efficacy, and Educational Aspirations

The parent survey included additional items measuring constructs related to parent engagement that were expected to be impacted by the teacher home visit experience. These included items measuring parental role construction, or the extent to which parents believed it was their responsibility or role to support and monitor their children’s school work and school performance, parenting efficacy, or the parent’s level of confidence that they know how to help their child succeed in school, and educational aspirations, or the parent’s belief that their child will achieve success and continue with their education. For each of the items comprising these three scales, parent responses were overwhelmingly positive with over 95% of parents endorsing items as “true” or “very true”. Unlike the more relationship-oriented measures, there were no detectable differences in responses between HOME WORKS! participants and non-participants.

Barriers to Participation

Parents were also given a list of challenges that often prevent families from becoming more actively engaged in school activities, and were asked to indicate how true each statement was for them using a five-point Likert scale. Responses ranged from “very true” to “not true at all”. According to survey findings, parents perceived that the most significant barriers to involvement in their children’s school life were related to time constraints, such as conflicts with work or home schedules (38%), having younger children to care for at home (31%), and simply not having enough time to become involved (30%). Parents were far less likely to perceive barriers associated with parenting knowledge or attitudes toward school, such as not knowing how to become more involved with school activities (8%), not knowing how to help their children with school work (7%), or not feeling comfortable at school or in the classroom (4%).

Exhibit 33. Percent of parent respondents that indicated “very true” or “true” to indicate a barrier to engagement
Parent Perceptions of the Benefits of Teacher Home Visits

When asked to evaluate the benefits of the teacher home visit program for their family and child parent responses were overwhelmingly positive. Parents were given a series of statements and were asked to indicate how true each statement was for them. Survey items were rated on a five-point Likert scale with response options that ranged from “very true” to “not true at all”.

Exhibit 34. Parents perceptions regarding the impact of teacher home visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I felt like the home visit…</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Very True</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>Sort of True</th>
<th>Not Very True</th>
<th>Not True At All</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>…improved my relationship with my child’s teacher.</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…taught me ways to support my child’s learning at home.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…helped me to get more involved in my child’s school life.</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…helped me feel more connected to my child’s school.</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>165</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents who received either one or two home visits from their children’s teachers were also asked to identify the most important benefits for their child or family resulting from their participation in the teacher home visit program. Exhibit 35 summarizes responses for the entire sample of surveyed parents, as well as responses disaggregated by the number of visits the family received.

Exhibit 34 displays parents’ responses to each statement ordered from perceived greatest to least impact. For all items, the vast majority of parents who received home visits saw a benefit from their participation. More specifically:

- Ninety-one percent of parents felt it was ‘true’ or ‘very true’ that home visits had improved their relationship with their child’s teachers.
- Ninety percent believed that home visits taught them ways to support their children’s learning at home.
- Eighty-seven percent felt it that home visits made them feel more positively about their child’s school future.
- Eighty-four percent felt visits helped them become more involved in their children school life.
- Eighty-three percent felt more confident in their ability to help their children succeed.
- Eighty-three percent felt that home visits helped them feel more connected to their child’s school.

Parents who received either one or two home visits from their children’s teachers were also asked to identify the most important benefits for their child or family resulting from their participation in the teacher home visit program.

The most frequently mentioned benefits of the program were associated with its relationship-building aspects, as nearly one-third of all parents (32%) cited the opportunity to get to know teachers through one-on-one interactions as the most important program benefit. Parents saw value in the opportunity to share information with the teacher about their child’s strengths, needs, and home life (22%) and enjoyed observing positive interactions between the teacher and child (22%). Parents specifically noted the importance of interacting with teachers in an informal setting outside of school (17%), and having adequate time to talk with teachers without interruption (5%). A few parents also noted the value of working in partnership with the teacher to communicate to children that parents and teachers were “on the same page”.

Parents were somewhat less likely to identify explicit benefits associated with the academic objectives of the program. Thirteen percent of parents mentioned the benefit of hearing about their child’s progress in school and 8% cited benefits of being informed about how to support learning in the home. This percentage was slightly
higher among families who received both first and second visits (9% than among those who received only one (4%). A smaller percentage of families mentioned the importance of hearing positive feedback about their child (6%), receiving encouragement about their child’s progress in school (3%), learning about school expectations (4%), or receiving books and materials to promote reading at home (2%).

Exhibit 35. Parents perceptions of the most important benefits of teacher home visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Any Home Visit (n=183)</th>
<th>One Home Visit (n=52)</th>
<th>Two Home Visits (n=140)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship building (parent-teacher)</td>
<td>58 (32%)</td>
<td>24 (46%)</td>
<td>34 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship building (teacher and child)</td>
<td>40 (22%)</td>
<td>11 (21%)</td>
<td>29 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing information on the child strengths, needs, and home life</td>
<td>40 (22%)</td>
<td>9 (17%)</td>
<td>31 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with teachers in an informal setting</td>
<td>31 (17%)</td>
<td>11 (21%)</td>
<td>20 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about their child's progress in school</td>
<td>24 (13%)</td>
<td>7 (13%)</td>
<td>17 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding how to support learning at home</td>
<td>15 (8%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>13 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing positive feedback about their child</td>
<td>11 (6%)</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
<td>8 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having adequate time to talk with teachers</td>
<td>9 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>8 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the school day and expectations for their child</td>
<td>7 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easing transitions to school</td>
<td>7 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing encouragement</td>
<td>6 (3%)</td>
<td>4 (8%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving books and materials</td>
<td>6 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-teacher partnership</td>
<td>5 (3%)</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about school programs, activities, and resources</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9 (5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>9 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HOME WORKS! Parent and Caregiver Survey, 2014–15

Parent Recommendations for Improvements to Teacher Home Visits

Parents who responded to the parent survey were given the opportunity to share any recommendations they might have regarding how the teacher home visit program could be strengthened. Of those who responded (n=144), nearly half (46%) indicated that their experience with the program was positive, while another 19% were more neutral, but had no recommendations for program improvement. Among parents who offered concrete suggestions for program strengthening (n=51), nearly a quarter (24%) requested that teachers share more information about their children’s academic progress or suggest strategies for improving school performance. This finding reflects the fact that teachers are instructed in training not to address academic issues at the time of the first visit to avoid alienating families who may have had a history of negative experiences with the public school system. However, findings from an earlier section of the report indicate that only about half of participating families actually received the second home visit, which focuses on the student’s academic progress.

Parents also indicated the need for additional visits beyond the initial encounter (14%), the need for more time to be spent with families (10%), and the need for more teachers in the school to participate (8%). Specifically, parents mentioned that siblings often feel left out when their own teachers choose not to conduct home visits with their students. Eight percent of parents who responded believed that there was no clear advantage to conducting visits in the home, although many other families reportedly valued the opportunity to meet with teachers in more informal settings and identified this as an important feature of the program’s success. Other specific recommendations from families included more effectively engaging the student in the home visit, prioritizing highest need students, and using the home visit as an opportunity to identify families with needs for basic services.

Section Summary

Parent responses to the parent and caregiver survey provide important insights into parents’ orientations toward teachers and schools, their beliefs about their own roles and capacities to support their children’s learning, and the activities that they engage in at home to help promote their children’s school success. The section also
Teacher Perceptions of the Home Visit Experience

explored differences in these perceptions between participating families who received at least one home visit from a teacher and non-participating students in the same classrooms who did not. Overall, on measures of parents’ interactions with the school environment, including perceived invitations for school involvement, perceived quality of parent-teacher relationships, and levels of communication between home and school, parents who participated in teacher home visits had more positive attitudes and orientations toward school than parents who did not participate, although ratings for both groups were relatively positive. There were also small differences between participating and non-participating families on measures of parent engagement at home (e.g., reading to their child, talking about the school day). By contrast, on measures related to the parent’s perceived role in supporting their children’s learning and education, there were no observable differences between parents who participated in teacher home visits and families who did not. Both participating and non-participating parents almost universally believed that they were responsible for helping to ensure their children’s learning, felt that they made a difference in their children’s education, and held high expectations for their children’s future school success.

When asked about barriers to engagement, the most significant barriers that prevented families from participating in their children’s education were conflicts with work or home schedules (38%), having younger children to care for at home (31%), and not having enough time to devote to educational activities (30%). Parents were less impeded by personal barriers, such as not feeling comfortable at school, not feeling confident in their own ability to help, or not knowing how to become more involved at school. Parents also shared their personal feelings about the benefits of the teacher home visit experience. Parents emphasized the value of establishing a relationship with their child’s teacher, and specifically noted the importance of having one-on-one parent-teacher interactions, having opportunities to observe positive exchanges between their children and their children’s teachers, and sharing information with teachers about their child’s strengths, needs, and home life.

The HOME WORKS! implementation study also aimed to capture feedback from teachers and other school staff concerning their experiences conducting home visits with families, to learn about implementation successes and challenges, and to document teacher perceptions concerning the impact of home visits on family engagement and student learning. This section summarizes findings from two data sources: teacher logs that were completed within 24-hours of the conclusion of each home visit, and surveys of teachers and other school staff who were active in the program. The teacher survey assesses perceptions about levels of engagement among parents in their schools, the home visit experience, the process of engaging families, the perceived impact of the program, and the barriers faced in implementing teacher home visits. The teacher and staff survey was administered across all four school districts and each of the eleven schools that implemented the standard model. The survey was administered to 223 teachers, school administrators, and other school staff, and was completed by 129 respondents, representing a 58% response rate overall. Within schools, response rates ranged from 9% to 77%. Of the teachers who responded, 27% were new to the program in 2014–15, 59% were in their second or third year of participation, and 14% had been participating for four years or more.

Teacher Beliefs about Parents’ Capacity to Support Learning

The survey of teachers and other school asked school personnel to share their beliefs about the parents and families of their students, and more specifically, about the extent to which they believed parents were motivated to help their children succeed, had the capacity to positively impact their children’s learning, knew how to help with school work, and actively promoted learning activities in the home.
Responses reveal a perceived gap between teachers’ assessments of parents’ desires to help their children succeed, and their actual capacity to support learning in the home. For example, the overwhelming majority of teachers and staff ‘agree’, ‘strongly agree’, or ‘very strongly agree’ that parents of students at their school want to help their children succeed (99%) and can make a positive difference in their children’s education (99%). However, only 70% of staff and teachers agree that parents know how to help their children with schoolwork, or are involved in their children’s learning at home (70%).

When asked to identify the reasons they felt parents were not more engaged in their children’s learning, teacher perceptions varied across respondents (n=129). Time pressures and family demands were mentioned by more than half of teachers (54%) as major factors influencing a family’s ability to engage in school. Teachers also often perceived that parents’ lack of education (25%), insufficient knowledge of how to support their children’s learning (25%), or failure to prioritize education (20%) were major barriers to engagement. Other teachers felt that language barriers (6%), a parent’s own history of negative school experiences (6%), or family issues, such as homelessness or alcohol and other drug problems, were contributing factors. A very small percentage presumed that families were not more involved because they felt that educating students should be the responsibility of the school (3%).

**Teacher Perceptions about Implementation Challenges**

The teacher survey also asked staff to comment on the different types of challenges or barriers they encountered when attempting to conduct home visits with families. Teachers were presented with a list of potential challenges and were asked to indicate how significant each challenge was for them personally. Exhibit 36 lists these in order from most to least significant. The greatest challenges that teachers faced involved difficulty scheduling a convenient time for a visit and finding time to commit to the program. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (60%) viewed these issues as a ‘very’ or ‘somewhat significant’ challenge to implementation. Teachers also experienced difficulty convincing families to participate in both first (52%) and second visits (42%) and felt burdened by the amount of paperwork required by the program (32%). Paperwork burden refers to expectations from the program that teachers log information about each completed visit online for program monitoring, accountability, and reimbursement purposes. Teachers were also likely to perceive challenges associated with safety concerns (29%), parents not showing up for a visit (28%), or feeling that what they were doing wasn’t making an important difference (24%).

Exhibit 36. Teachers perceptions of challenges to implementing home visits (n=125)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>“Very” or “Somewhat Significant”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty scheduling a convenient time for a visit.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much of a time commitment.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty convincing families to participate in a first visit.</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty convincing families to participate in a second visit.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much paperwork.</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families’ distrust or reluctance to engage during the visit.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much distance to travel.</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns about personal safety.</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents not showing up for a scheduled visit</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not feeling like visits were making a difference.</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I firmly believe that some of our families’ life circumstances prevent parents from being engaged in their children’s learning. I have also heard parents mention that they do not know how to help their children with homework, especially in math since their children are being taught in a different way than they were.”

-Elementary teacher

“Many of the parents of my students work multiple jobs to provide for their children. They express a desire for their child to do well in school, but have little time to follow through with the work consistently. A smaller group of our parents seem to believe that the job of teaching and learning lies solely with the school itself.”

-Elementary teacher
Teachers and school staff were also given the opportunity to identify, in an open-ended response format, what they perceived to be the most substantial challenges to implementing the HOME WORKS! model. About a quarter of respondents (n=30; 24%) shared open-ended responses that supported previous data findings. The most commonly identified barriers included time constraints given competing work and family priorities (20%), difficulty scheduling visits with families (13%), paperwork burden (13%), and challenges coordinating with a partner. Challenges that were less frequently mentioned included safety concerns (10%), primarily in reference to civil unrest occurring at the time in the neighboring town of Ferguson, Missouri, difficulty convincing families to participate (7%), inconsistencies in program guidelines (7%), weather related challenges (7%), and time required to prepare learning bags that teachers deliver to families as part of scheduled visits (7%).

“Though a partner is important, it often made the scheduling of home visits more difficult and time consuming to find a time that worked for everyone.”
-Elementary teacher

“The whole Ferguson situation really hurt the enthusiasm of the teachers to do visits, especially when it was dark early.”
-Elementary teacher
Teacher Perceptions of Staff Support, Compensation, and Provision of Training

The teacher survey also aimed to capture teacher perspectives on issues related to program management and operations, including the adequacy of support provided by school administrators and school-based program staff, the adequacy of compensation provided to teachers for completion of visits, and the quality and adequacy of training delivered through the HOME WORKS! organization to prepare teachers for the home visit experience. School personnel who participated in teacher home visits were first asked about the role played by their school administrators and by onsite program coordinators in supporting their involvement in the program. More than two-thirds of school teachers and school staff (69%) felt that school administrators had promoted and encouraged participation in HOME WORKS! “very much”, while another quarter (25%) felt that administrators had supported the program at least “somewhat” (exhibit 37). More than three-quarters of respondents noted in a previous survey section that encouragement from school administrators had been an important factor motivating them to participate. School staff generally agreed that the support they received from the HOME WORKS! site coordinator in their school building had been ‘definitely’ or at least ‘somewhat’ adequate to support their program involvement (Exhibit 39).

Exhibit 37. Level of support from school administrators (n=128)

- Very much, 69%
- Somewhat, 25%
- Not very much, 6%
- Not at all, 1%

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher and School Staff Survey, 2014–15

Teachers and staff held mixed perceptions concerning the adequacy of compensation that they received for their participation. Thirty-seven percent indicated that compensation was “definitely” adequate, while 42% felt compensation was only ‘somewhat’ adequate. The remaining 22% felt that the reimbursement they received was either “not really” adequate or “not adequate at all” (Exhibit 39). Teachers who expressed concerns about compensation (n=29) generally felt that the reimbursement failed to cover time spent on administrative tasks, such as scheduling and preparing for visits, or completing paperwork, and did not adequately cover transportation costs they incurred driving to and from parents’ homes.

Exhibit 38. Adequacy of support from site coordinators (n=128)

- Yes, definitely, 70%
- Yes, somewhat, 25%

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher and School Staff Survey, 2014–15

Exhibit 39. Teacher perceptions concerning adequacy of compensation (n=128)

- Yes, definitely, 37%
- Yes, somewhat, 42%
- No, not really, 13%
- No, not at all, 9%

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher and School Staff Survey, 2014–15

“I spent a lot of extra time calling parents, coordinating with other teachers to go with me, driving and looking for the homes, filling out the form to get paid for the visit and attending training. I feel that after the pay was taxed through my paycheck, it was not worth the time I put into each visit. Especially when we were still responsible for the work load of just being a teacher.”

Exhibit 40. Teacher perceptions concerning adequacy of
Teachers were also asked about the adequacy of training they received prior to conducting home visits with families. Overall, the majority of teachers and school staff felt well prepared to engage in home visits based on the training they received. Eighty-five percent indicated that the HOME WORKS! training had ‘definitely’ prepared them to conduct visits with families, 9% indicated that training had ‘somewhat’ prepared them, and only 5% indicated that the training had ‘not really’, or ‘not at all’ prepared them for the experience (exhibit 40).

Those who felt the training had not fully prepared them for home visits (14%) were asked to comment on how the training could have been strengthened. Respondents offered a range of suggestions for supplementing or enhancing training content, which included:

- Providing examples of home visits that are more realistic representations of the experience (e.g., poor home conditions, safety risk, uncooperative parents);
- Addressing safety concerns
- Incorporating more content around cultural diversity
- Providing standard lists of questions and topics for home visits structured by grade
- Including parental testimonials regarding program impact in training materials
- Eliminating the second visit training to reduce redundancy.

Teacher Insights and Modifications to Instructional Practices

An intermediate outcome of the teacher home visit model is to create opportunities for teachers to learn more about the students and families they serve and to use this information to inform teaching practices. When teachers and other school staff were asked about any insights they may have gained through the home visit experience, survey responses indicate that more than 90% of teachers and staff believed that visiting families in their homes and communities had helped them understand more about their students’ culture and home life. Seventy-eight percent felt that home visits had provided them with new information they could use to inform their approach to teaching. Lead teachers were asked to share specific examples of how teacher home visits had influenced their instructional practices or their interactions with students or families (n =65; 74%):

- Twenty-eight percent of those responding felt that teacher home visits helped them cultivate a stronger understanding of their students’ strengths and needs, which enhanced the quality of their relationships and positively influenced their attitudes toward, and interactions with, students in the classroom;
- Twenty-two percent of teachers integrated information they had learned about their students’ personal interests and cultures into their instructional content to increase the interest and appeal of school activities, and to connect what students were learning in the classroom with the outside world. One teacher shared that students appeared to feel more confident and valued when teachers were able to reference something about a child’s home life that they had learned through the home visit.
- Eighteen percent of teachers indicated that they had modified their homework policies after learning more about their students’ home lives and about some of the barriers that might prevent students from completing assignments (e.g., limited space to complete homework, loud environments, and responsibilities caring for younger siblings). Specific examples of modifications included allowing more leniency when work was returned unfinished, setting aside time before and after class to help students complete assignments, and tailoring assigned tasks to better fit student needs.

“Staff training (n= 128)

- Yes, definitely, 85%
- Yes, somewhat, 9%
- No, not really, 5%

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher and School Staff Survey, 2014–15

“I was able to have an understanding of which parents were limited on time and resources to address student needs. I worked more one-on-one with those students, so I knew they were getting the lessons I was teaching. I was also able to pair students so that when I wasn't able to do one-on-one I had another student pair up and they would work together.”

“Understanding that some of them will receive no home support, I planned for re-teaching and extra practice built into the school day, as well as encouraging students to attend our after-school tutoring programs. These students improved their reading levels and test scores.”
Fifteen percent of teachers surveyed shared examples of how they had individualized classroom instruction based on the insights they had gained through teacher home visits. Examples included offering multiple versions of the same lesson or allowing students to engage in independent study. Six percent of teachers reported using supplemental forms of instruction, including teach-retain, extra practice lessons, and additional one-on-one instruction to assist students who were struggling academically. Another 6% of respondents incorporated more reading activities into the classroom and emphasized book lending, based on knowledge that children often had limited access to books or other reading materials at home.

Other changes shared by teachers included adopting new approaches to communicating with families (9%) and attempting to connect families with basic resources (5%) based on information about family needs gleaned through the home visit.

Teacher Perceptions about Specific Outcomes Targeted by the Program

The HOME WORKS! model aims to improve student’s school performance and academic behaviors by fostering quality parent-teacher relationships and encouraging families to continue the learning process beyond the school building. Teacher logs completed at the conclusion of each visit and teacher and staff surveys administered at the conclusion of the school year were both used to document teachers’ perceptions about the impact of teacher home visits on these key outcomes. Specifically, the teacher survey included a series of statements assessing the extent to which teacher home visits had produced improvements in parent-teacher relationships, parents’ attitudes toward school, levels of parent engagement, students’ attendance, classroom conduct, motivation and attitudes toward school, and academic performance among students whose families participated in the program. Teachers were asked to rate the extent to which they had observed improvements in each of these areas using a five-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from “a lot” to “not at all”.

Exhibit 41 reports teacher and school staff ratings of teacher home visit impacts ordered from greatest to smallest. Findings show that on average the greatest perceived impact was on the quality of parent’s relationships with teachers and other school staff (mean=4.09). This was followed closely by improvements in parents’ attitudes toward school (mean=3.90) and students’ academic performance (mean=3.41). Teachers also observed “some” to “a lot” of improvement in students’ classroom behavior (mean=3.64), students’ motivation and attitudes toward school (mean=3.57), students’ academic performance (mean=3.41), and students’ school attendance (mean=3.41).
Exhibit 41. Teacher perceptions of attitude and behavior outcomes (n=126)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I felt like teacher home visits improved...</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ relationships with the teachers and school staff.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ attitudes toward school.</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ behavior in the classroom.</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ motivation and attitudes toward school.</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ involvement in their children’s learning.</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ academic performance.</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ attendance.</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher and School Staff Survey, 2014–15

Teachers visit logs completed at the conclusion of the second home visit also captured teacher’s observations about the extent to which home visits had strengthened their relationships with individual families, as well as the extent to which individual students with identified needs had shown improvements in key areas of school performance. As shown in exhibit 42, teachers believed that home visits had ‘very much’ improved the quality of their relationship with more than 80% of the families they visited. In another 18% of home visits, teachers felt that the experience had improved parent-teacher relationships at least ‘somewhat’.

Exhibit 43 reports the degree of improvement that teachers observed among their students in areas of need targeted by the program, including academic achievement, attendance, homework completion, classroom behavior, and parent communication and engagement. Teachers were only required to rate students who were experiencing challenges in each area and had needs for improvement. Below grade level academic performance was the most common need identified among students who received a second home visit, although academic needs were only noted for about one-third of all students (34.4%). Classroom behavior (20.6%) and issues with homework completion (15.2%) were the second and third most commonly identified needs, respectively, followed by attendance issues (7.4%) and needs for improved parent engagement and communication (4.2%).

For students who were performing below grade level academically, teachers observed ‘some improvement’ or ‘strong improvement’ in academic performance among 86% of students over the course of the school year. Teachers also noted improvements among 73% of students exhibiting behavioral issues in the classroom, 66% of those who had trouble completing homework assignments, and 64% of those who had issues with tardiness or attendance. Teachers also reported increases in family engagement among 73% of families who they had identified as being disconnected from the school setting.
Teacher Reflections on the Home Visit Experience

The teacher and staff survey concluded with a section asking respondents to reflect on their experiences with the program and to convey their plans for future involvement. More than two-thirds those surveyed (68%) believed that it was "extremely important" or "very important" for their school to continue implementing HOME WORKS! Teachers and staff noted that the most rewarding aspects of their participation in the program included the relationships they cultivated with families (78%), the response and excitement they observed among their students (16%), and the improvements that observed in student academic achievement (6%) and parent engagement (5%). Two-thirds of teachers and school staff surveyed (66%) indicated plans to participate in HOME WORKS! in the future.

About one-third of teachers and staff indicated that they would not be returning to HOME WORKS! in the future, and some shared their reasons for this decision (n=30). For about a quarter of these respondents, the reason given was that their school was discontinuing the program. For the three-quarters in continuing schools, the most commonly identified reasons were the overwhelming time commitment and lack of adequate compensation (59%), as staff perceived that their participation was taking too much time away from lesson planning and home and family life. Other reasons mentioned were that the program imposed too much stress and required too much time without sufficient results (17%), that participation presented a risk to health and safety (13%), or that the program parameters were too abstract (10%). One respondent noted that the shift in leadership resulted in too much confusion and lack of consistency.

Teacher Recommendations for Strengthening the HOME WORKS! Intervention

When asked for recommendations on an open-ended survey, about one-third (n=54; 34%) of all teachers and staff offered one or more recommendations how the HOME WORKS! program could be strengthened.

- Increase compensation for participating school personnel (19%)
- Adjusting the approach to teaming staff for home visits, for example, by removing restrictions on who can serve as home visitors, or by identifying strategies to team staff more effectively when visiting families with multiple children (19%)
- Expanding the timeframe for conducting visits so visits could be initiated during summer months, although visits are already being conducted in the summer is some school districts (13%)

Exhibit 44. Importance of conducting teacher home visits

Source: HOME WORKS! Teacher and School Staff Survey, 2014–15
Summary and Conclusions

- Limit the number of home visits or combining home visits with more school-based conferences or events to minimize the time burden (11%)
- Reduce the paperwork burden (9%)
- Improve the quality of learning materials provided to families by expanding the selection of materials and providing more age-appropriate resources (9%)
- Partner with other services or resources, such as parenting, health promotion, or tutoring programs to more effectively link families with needed resources (7%)
- Increase the consistency of program guidelines and training information (6%)
- Allocate more time for scheduled visits (6%)
- Devise better strategies for working with families in non-neighborhood schools to minimize excess time burden and transportation costs (4%) and
- Reduce the length of visits (4%).

Section Summary

Teacher and staff surveys and teacher home visit logs provided valuable insight into teachers’ home visit experiences, including their beliefs about the involvement of families in the learning process, the challenges they encountered in implementing home visits, and their assessments of the program’s management and operations. The survey and teacher logs also captured teacher reports of the influence of home visits on instructional practices and the outcomes they observed among students and families reached by the program.

With the caveat that the teacher/staff survey response rate was under 60%, analysis of the results provide useful information. Survey findings revealed a belief among teachers in the program that families want to help their children succeed, but may lack the knowledge, skills, and resources to accomplish that goal. This perception conforms to the program theory of change, which suggests that home visits can help parents develop a stronger understanding of the role they play in their children’s learning, and by providing tools and resources, can help parents gain confidence in their own ability to support learning in the home.

While most teachers were highly positive about their participation in teacher home visits, participants did perceive significant challenges to implementation, including challenges related to excessive time commitments, difficulties scheduling visits with families and coordinating visits with partners, difficulty convincing families to participate in the home visit process, and burden associated with reporting requirements. Despite these perceived challenges, teachers held relatively favorable impressions of the amount of support and training they received through the HOME WORKS! organization to help them accomplish program objectives. Staff, however, were more mixed on the question of adequacy of compensation given the time they invested in the program. These findings, taken together, suggest that the workload required to meet program expectations, as the program model is currently defined, may exceed the resources teachers have available to dedicate to the effort, particularly given the relatively low level of compensation. This indicates a potential need to revisit the program model to avoid teacher burn-out, by exploring ways to minimize excess administrative burden, streamline coordination efforts, and perhaps alter the model structure to make visits more feasible to implement.

The focus of the HOME WORKS! implementation study report was to assess the quality of implementation of the standard, standard model, which was implemented across the largest number of schools, by the largest number of participating teachers and school staff. The evaluation was also expected to encompass an outcome study component using school records of student performance, but school data supporting the outcome component had not yet been released at the time the report was published. The study intent was to document how the program was implemented across diverse school settings, areas where implementation varied, and, if possible, why that variation occurred. The study also measured the extent to which schools achieved fidelity to the standard program model to determine whether or not core program components that are logically linked to outcomes were in place to produce results, and to allow for the effectiveness of the intervention to be reliably tested in future study. This documentation of the implementation process, and perceptions of teacher and parent experiences with the program, raised several issues that warrant further consideration.
Key Findings and Recommendations

Parent and teacher perceptions about the value and impact of the program confirm the importance of relationship-building as an essential program feature. Parents clearly appreciated the opportunity to meet with teachers one-on-one in informal settings, to share information about their children, and to observe the positive interactions between their children and their children’s teachers. More than 90% of parents surveyed felt that home visits had improved the parent-teacher relationship. Similarly, for 80% of the parents and caregivers they visited, teachers felt as if the home visit experience had ‘very much’ strengthened their relationships with families, creating a positive connection between school and home. Teachers also rated the ability to understand their students’ culture and home life, and the ability to build stronger relationships with families as the areas of greatest impact for the program.

Teacher and parent perceptions suggest some influence of teacher home visits on parenting practices and on student performance, although the findings were less clear. Ninety percent of parents did agree that home visits taught them ways to support their children’s learning at home, and 82% felt more confident in their own ability to help their children succeed. However, when asked to identify the most important benefits of their participation, relationship-building aspects of the program were favored over learning-related benefits. Teachers also reported greater improvements in the areas of parent-teacher relationship quality and parent attitudes towards school, than in the areas of student behavior, student motivation and attitudes, student academic performance, or student attendance. However, teacher ratings of student improvement shown over the course of the school year, indicate that 87% of students with demonstrated academic needs who completed the home visit intervention (i.e., families completed two visits) showed ‘some improvement’ or ‘strong improvement’ in their academic performance. Seventy-seven percent of students with behavioral needs showed “some improvement” or “strong improvement” in classroom behavior.

Parent and teacher perceptions that program benefits related to relationship building were clearer than benefits related to school performance may be linked to the fact that the academic component of the program was not well-implemented across school settings. More specifically, only half of all students in schools received the second home visit as part of their program involvement. Among families that did participate in the second visit, about one-third were not visited by the teacher until the last three months of the school year.

Program guidance restricted teachers or school staff from discussing student’s academic progress with families during the first visit based on the assumption that families may become further disengaged from schools or mistrusting of teachers if academic discussions are broached too soon in the relationship. However, by exclusively focusing on relationship-building in the first visit and by failing to implement the second, most students miss the component of the intervention that is most directly tied to changes in parenting practices and outcomes. In some cases, parents who were surveyed also questioned why teachers failed to address student’s academic progress during visits, particularly when first visits were often conducted three to four months into the school year.

Understanding these implementation patterns, next steps for the program should focus on (1) assessing why schools face such significant challenges implementing second visits and whether or not alternative approaches might be more effective or feasible to implement, and (2) testing the assumption that sharing information on academic progress, or discussing strategies for how parents can support learning at home, is damaging to the development of trusting relationships. This second question should be a major emphasis of parent focus group discussions planned for the upcoming evaluation contract period to explore the validity of this assumption and to assess ways to introduce academic elements into initial visits in a manner that is still sensitive to family orientations toward school.

The evaluation also uncovered a considerable amount of variation in how programs were implemented across school settings that was tied to expectations for teacher involvement and differences in how teachers identified students and families for participation. This observed variation is important because it influences not only the proportion of classrooms, students, and families that are ultimately reached by the program within each school, but also the characteristics of families selected. More specifically, this past year marked a change in the program model that shifted the scope from a more universal implementation approach where the goal was to engage all families, to a more indicated approach whereby teachers identified students for participation based on need criteria. This change in strategy was designed to ensure that the program was needs-driven and was succeeding in reaching students who were most at risk for school failure. As more school data becomes available, the
evaluation will be positioned to more fully answer questions related to how participating students differed from non-participating students in terms of their need characteristics, and how these differences relate to teacher and student participation rates and approaches to student selection that were documented across sites.

The differences in how students were identified for home visits also raises the question of who is most likely to benefit from the home visit experience. For example, is it more effective to engage students with the greatest academic and behavioral needs, and whose parents are largely disengaged from schools, or is it preferable to focus on children who are at the margins academically and whose families may be more receptive to invitations for engagement? These are also important questions that may be addressed through focus group discussions with teachers and through future evaluation work.

Lastly, recognizing that a goal for the program is to expand into new school systems, additional issues for discussion to strengthen program accountability and fidelity to the program model include: (1) clarifying expectations for teachers and other school staff concerning their participation, and determining whether or not participation should be solely voluntary, (2) determining realistic targets for the number of visits per classroom given that teachers tend to pair with other classroom teachers, (3) providing clear and consistent guidelines concerning who is approved to conduct visits and how teams are optimally configured, when visits should occur and how much time should reasonably elapse between visits, where visits can be held when family homes are unavailable, how visits should be scheduled and documented when families have multiple children either within the same school building or attending other schools, and (4) establishing mechanisms to confirm with families that visits have actually occurred.

Overall, there is good evidence to suggest that HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program strengthened parent-school connections in underperforming Title I schools by helping teachers engage more meaningfully with the families of the children they served as compared to more traditional approaches to engaging families in. The implementation study is the first part of a two-part study that will also explore impacts of the program on student academic behaviors and performance among participants, as compared to students in matched school settings that did not implement teacher home visits this school year. This work lays the foundation for a more rigorous evaluation study to provide evidence of the model’s effectiveness in transforming underperforming school environments and helping all children achieve school success.

References


Appendix A:
Comparisons Between HOME WORKS! and Other Teacher Home Visit Models

The HOME WORKS! model is one of several parent engagement programs that have evolved from the original Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project (PTHVP) that was implemented by the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) and that now has a presence in 17 other states. Exhibit A documents some of the similarities and differences between the various programs based on specific elements, including their intervention components, their approach to selecting students, their training requirements, location of interventions, and expectations for participation. All programs share an overarching goal of building relationships with families and improving academic success through home visits.

Standard Teacher Home Visit Models

The three teacher home visit models reviewed include the HOME WORKS! Standard Model, PTHVP, and the Flamboyan Foundation Parent Engagement Partnership. There are a few important differences between these different models (see the Home Visit Programs section of Exhibit A). One of the key differences concerns the way in which students are selected into the program. For example, an important feature of the PTHVP is its emphasis on universal implementation to ensure that no stigma is associated with the home visit request. This creates an expectation for teachers to reach out to and potentially visit all students in their classrooms. The Flamboyan Parent Engagement Partnership also emphasizes the importance of avoiding stigma, but the program allows teachers to select a sub-sample of students as long as selection is not tied to specific risk factors. This adaptation of the original model may be an acknowledgement of the practical challenge of conducting visits with all students in a given classroom, particularly with large class sizes and if teachers choose to team with other classroom teachers to visit families (e.g., with 32 students per classroom two teamed teachers would conduct 64 home visits within a three to four month period). The HOME WORKS! model, instead, recognizes the practical barriers to visiting all families and tendency to visit less disadvantaged families, and directs teachers to prioritize students based on need while still attempting to maximize the number of visits completed.

Parent-Teacher Team Models

The Parent-Teacher Team models also focus on engaging families in their learning process, but with an expressed emphasis on creating a community of parents. The two models reviewed included the HOME WORKS! Parent Teacher Learning Team (PTLT) and the Flamboyan Parent-Teacher Teams (see the Parent Teacher Teams section of Exhibit A). The two models each include individual meetings or conferences between parents and teacher, and both include classroom based instructional components to review student progress as a parenting group. Classroom meetings offer an opportunity to discuss student performance, review academic goals and expectations, and to demonstrate skills that parents can use at home. The HOME WORKS! PTLT model is the only learning team model that incorporates teacher home visits into the program design, although the model differs from the standard teacher home visit model in that teachers are only required to complete one visit to the home.
### Exhibit A. Comparisons between HOME WORKS! and Other Teacher Home Visit Program Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOME VISIT PROGRAMS</th>
<th>PARENT TEACHER TEAMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOME WORKS! Standard Model</td>
<td>Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the goal?</strong></td>
<td>Building relationships to improve academic success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What are the main components?</strong></td>
<td>(2) trainings, (2) home visits, (2) school events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How were students selected?</strong></td>
<td>Teachers prioritize high need populations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Was teacher participation mandatory or voluntary?</strong></td>
<td>Schools are required to involve at least 50% of their classroom teachers, with schools responsible for determining the extent of volunteerism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How often were teachers and staff trained?</strong></td>
<td>Training content aligns with the visit purpose; first training emphasizes relationship-building, second training focuses on academic content. Both trainings also address cultural competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where are visits conducted?</strong></td>
<td>Most visits are conducted in homes; none are conducted on school grounds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Participating schools encourage full teacher/staff participation and inclusion of all families.*

*Required introductory training.*

*Classroom setting only.*
Appendix B: Parent-Teacher Learning Team Model

HOME WORKS! Parent Teacher Learning Team (PTLT) is a variation of the standard model that combines teacher home visits with school-based program components. The three major components of the PTLT model include: one teacher home visit, classroom-based instructional sessions for parents, and a parent-teacher conference.

**Teacher Home Visit**
Teachers are trained to conduct home visits to establish positive relationships and effective communication with parents. Teachers conduct one home visit to each of their students in paired teacher teams. This allows them to learn about the family in an informal setting and hear the parents’ vision for their children. Teachers discuss the importance of school attendance and reading and talking to children each day. Teachers lay the foundation for creating a home environment that supports learning by sharing the tools, skills, and knowledge parents must use in the home for their children to succeed at school.

**Classroom-based Instructional Sessions**
Parents are invited to attend three evening sessions that are held at school in the child’s classroom. Each meeting focuses on two academic skills children are learning in the classroom. The teachers and the principal use the curriculum, Common Core standards, data and the expectations of the next grade to choose the topics. At these meetings, teachers review and explain what students are learning in class and what they need to know to be on or above grade level. It includes a PowerPoint presentation and review of student performance for the class as a whole, and informs parents of their child’s individual academic performance. Teachers work with parents to set academic goals for their child, demonstrate skills that parents must use at home and give them time to practice them. Teachers also share attendance data on each class to all the parents. Each meeting includes networking opportunities among parents. Students participate in organized activities during meetings. Dinner is served as parents and families arrive.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences**
During these conferences, the parents, student, and teacher review the student’s academic performance, create an action plan for improvement, discuss how to specifically support learning at home, and develop stronger relationships. Additional individual conferences are scheduled as needed.

The PTLT model was implemented by five classroom teachers at one early elementary school site. The program served 27 kindergarten and third grade students and their families.
Appendix C:
HOME WORKS! Middle School and High School Model

The secondary school intervention model is a variation of the standard model that has been adapted for secondary school settings. Unlike the more universal approach of the standard model, students are identified for home visits based on indicated needs for academic or behavioral support. Home visits are conducted by paired teams of teachers and school counselors who are knowledgeable of the student’s academic performance. At the high school level, home visits are limited to 9th grade students with the intent of supporting school transitions.

During the 2014–15 school year, four middle schools, and two high schools implemented the secondary school model. These programs collectively served 453 students and their families and provided a total of 459 home visits.

Secondary School Sites

For the 2014–15 school year HOME WORKS! supported home visits across six secondary schools in three separate school districts. These schools included three regular middle schools, one charter middle school, and two high schools. The middle school and high school sites were similar in size, but varied with respect to the racial and socio-economic composition of their enrolled populations. Specifically, the two high schools served predominantly Black student populations where all families were eligible for FRLP. The three public middle schools were more racially and ethnically diverse and had lower percentages of social-economically disadvantaged families based on FRLP percentages. School demographic information for the charter middle school was not reported by DESE. Unlike other participating schools, the charter school adopted a classroom based home visit model due to differences in its school structure; for analysis purposes, the charter middle school is grouped throughout the report with other programs implemented at the elementary school level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Span</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>FRL</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9-12</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

Middle schools and high schools did not have to meet minimum criteria for staff participation due to variations in the program model. For example, at the high school level, home visits are limited to incoming 9th grade students only, and for both middle schools and high schools, the program intervention is more indicated than universal, meaning that a much smaller number of students are identified for program participation based on set screening criteria. The only exception is the charter middle school program that more closely resembles the standard classroom-based model.
Appendix D:
Fellowship Model

The fellowship model is a variation of the school wide model, which was introduced as a strategy to expand teacher home visitation to schools and districts where school administrators were not implementing the standard model. Teachers apply to participate in the program in pairs and conduct home visits with students in their own classrooms. Teachers meet regularly as part of a professional learning community to discuss implementation successes and challenges. For the 2014–15 school year, the fellowship model was implemented by 26 teachers across 5 school districts and 10 school sites. Fellowship teachers collectively served 172 students and their families and completed at least 20 home visits.