

# Collective Impact

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## The Collective Impact of Social Innovation on a Two-Generation Learning Program with Hispanic/Latino Families in Detroit

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Racial and ethnic diversity has increased dramatically over the past 35 years, enriching our public schools with students whose families embody a global village. Of the children born in the U.S. to at least one foreign-born parent, the majority are Hispanic. This is a pattern that reflects the recent rise of immigration from Latin America. Approximately 16% of English language learners who are Hispanic/Latino are first-generation immigrants (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).

The demographics of the nation's students imply that most, if not all, teachers can expect to have English Learner (EL) students in their classrooms (U.S. Ed. NCELA, 2015). This paper describes how a strategic partnership and a commitment to a common agenda led to gains for EL students who are Hispanic/Latino and their parents who live in Detroit. It demonstrates a combined and focused effort that resulted in a collective impact for families. With a common agenda, professional development, continuous communication, and ongoing technical support, this mutually reinforcing partnership enriched the social capital of programs and delivered the promise of two-generation educational success.

### Expectations, Equity, and Opportunity Matter

Setting high expectations for all American students is a national goal. Yet there is a persistent achievement gap between EL students who are Hispanic/Latino and all other students that impacts the national high school graduation rates. Nearly 11% more White, non-Hispanic students graduated in 2014 than Hispanic/Latino students—that is 87.2% of White students compared to 76.3% of Hispanic/Latino students. Low education and poverty operate in tandem to create intergenerational cycles of inequity and lost opportunities.

There are degrees of English proficiency used by educators to provide appropriate language services to students. When queried by an assessor, ELs report that they speak English “very well, well, not well, or not at all” (Gambino, Acosta, and Grieco, 2014). EL students’ classification is based on their self-assessment that they are not as English proficient as their peers who feel that they speak English “very well.” (Gambino et al. (2014), p. 2). Those who speak English “very well” are considered English proficient and do not require educational services.

No single government agency or nonprofit foundation can independently resolve the achievement gap. Detroit is home to a portfolio of nonprofit management organizations funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service’s (CNCS) Social Innovation Fund (SIF). CNCS is a federal agency dedicated to empowering organizations to identify and support sustainable solutions that are already making a difference by transforming communities. The goal of CNCS SIF is to identify social problems and then *find what works and make it work for more people*.

*No single government agency or nonprofit foundation can independently resolve the achievement gap.*

American schools are diverse communities of learners with complex problems for which there is no single solution. CNCS through its Social Innovation Fund found a way to reinforce community-driven initiatives aimed at the improvement of early childhood education in low-income communities. Led by the United Way for Southeastern Michigan (UWSEM), nearly a dozen funding recipients in Detroit collectively focus on strengthening early childhood education and kindergarten readiness outcomes.

UWSEM subgranted its SIF funding to Southwest Solutions to establish the English Language Learners' Project (ELLP). The ELLP is a family literacy program, utilizing the family learning model created by the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL), designed to enhance the learning of young elementary students who are Hispanic/Latino. Southwest Solutions is a member of a learning network dedicated to ensuring that schools work for all students and their families. The network includes NCFL and 10 other UWSEM subgrantees.

These subgrantees work toward common indicators related to early school success. The ELLP represents a collection of strategies that if replicated to scale, would address the academic needs of the 6,733 Hispanic/Latino students in the Detroit Public Schools. There is a critical need for determining effective ways to improve achievement for Hispanics/Latinos. The Detroit Public Schools' 2015 graduation rate for Hispanic students was only 73.7%. Southwest Solutions promotes the ELLP as a way to ensure that none of their young learners become one of four students who does not graduate. ELLP is a way to ensure that none of their young learners becomes one of more than 700 DPS students a year who do not graduate.

## Two-Generation Education

How can we answer the CNSC question, "*What works?*" Federal legislation in the *Every Child Succeeds Act* acknowledges that gaps exist in educational opportunity and achievement, especially among low-income, low-achieving students who also are otherwise disadvantaged. English proficiency is tied to economic prosperity. Nationally, approximately 74% of English language students who are Hispanic/Latino are from families where English is not the primary language spoken at home, and they live at or below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Educational inequity will only be remedied when those closest to affected students, their parents, families, and communities are driving decision making (Leadership Education Conference Education Fund, 2016).

One solution towards eradicating intergenerational cycles of low education and poverty is to provide learning opportunities for children and their parents. Comprehensive two-generation learning emphasizes the provision of education, social capital, and other essential supports to create a legacy of well-being and prosperity that is handed down from one generation

to the next (Ascend, 2016). Two-generation strategies aimed at closing the achievement gap are fundamental elements of many social innovations. Head Start, the William S. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program, and Toyota Family Learning Programs collectively represent over a century of two-generation educational programs. The common tenet across these programs is that families living in poverty can thrive when educational and social service frameworks address both children and their parents.

*A two-generation strategy focuses on closing the achievement gap.*

"What works?" is Southwest Solutions' ELLP SIF project. Intensive parent engagement through family literacy and family learning programs is linked with powerful, positive outcomes for children. The families typically enroll with the goal of supporting their children as learners. They commonly believe that the best way to help their children is to become biliterate by learning the English language.

The ELLP is a two-generation strategy that connects homes with schools; parents and children learn together at the same time in the same school. The ELLP family learning program serves low-income, non-English-speaking families with children in prekindergarten through third grade. The five-year funding stream will impact over 400 families. The academic outcomes of approximately 1,000 elementary students will be analyzed to determine intergenerational effects on learning. This study examines only the third of five program years.

The ELLP evaluation probed academic differences between elementary students of parents in ELLP and their classmates whose parents were not ELLP participants. A baseline equivalence for groups was established at the beginning of the school year. Teachers completed a report at the beginning of the school year on four clusters of learning variables: attendance, academic, efficacy, and social behavioral. Students in their predominately Hispanic/Latino classes were matched by gender, age, English learner vs. English proficient, and approximate reading ability. Children of parents in the ELLP program (herein the focus students/group) were matched with two other children whose parents were not enrolled in ELLP (herein the comparison students/group). The analysis found that upon enrollment in ELLP at the beginning of the school year the two student groups were equivalent.

*The focus and comparison groups were equivalent at the beginning of the school year.*

Teachers compared the same students again at the end of the school year. Outcomes for parents and students were analyzed through a rigorous evaluation process monitored by the CNCS SIF program and the UWSEM; the resulting impact was a catalyst for change—a two-generation family engagement program designed to improve young EL school achievement.

## **Bring Parents to School So Two Generations Take Learning Home**

Research has shown that the greatest impact on school performance is parents' support of learning at home (Center for Public Education, 2011). Learning takes time, but children spend less than one out of every 10 hours during childhood in schools (Berliner, 2009). Berliner concluded that 91% of childhood is devoted to summer vacations, out-of-school time, and sleeping. Educators attempt to lengthen learning time by assigning homework. Unlike many parents who struggle to deal with crinkled papers in their children's backpacks, ELLP parents become prepared to serve as homework helpers. They read to their children, engage in conversations, browse the Internet for educational information, email teachers when questions arise, and listen to their children read in English and Spanish. Parents and children learn together and become biliterate.

Family learning programs build families' capacities for school engagement by providing opportunities to create home-to-school partnerships. ELLP offers over 330 hours of opportunities for parent engagement in children's schools every school year. Parents' appreciation for the interactive activities is evidenced by the intensity of their involvement in school and at home. As a group, parents directly participated at their children's schools for more than 13,500 hours during the school year.

*ELLP extended learning time by equipping parents with strategies to engage their children in literacy activities.*

The ELLP program, based on NCFL's Kenan model of family literacy, has four program components: Adult Learning (eight hours per week), Parenting classes (two hours per week), Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® (two hours per week), and Children's Learning (provided by the schools and childcare providers). A Family Service Learning program is infused into Adult Learning classes and Parent Time. Parent Time provides opportunities to build families' capacities to become engaged with schools and their children as learners. During the two hour-long weekly sessions, community providers with expertise on issues affecting families (e.g., social services, mental and physical health, nutrition) did presentations and led discussions. PACT Time takes place in the children's classrooms during their reading or math lessons. PACT Time fosters a culture of reciprocal learning where parents and children learn from and with each other.

During a typical week, ELLP parents attended four half-day family learning sessions per week at the same time that their children were in their elementary classrooms. The parents had daily Adult Learning classes where they learned English with instruction informed by the children's curriculum. In addition to Adult Learning classes and study assignments, parents and children learned side-by-side for 30-45 minutes a day in the children's classrooms. Parents learned about teachers' expectations and worked with their children to achieve grade-level benchmarks. Over half of the parents devoted more than 149 hours to learn English, strengthen math and literacy skills, manage service learning projects, participate in children's classrooms, increase technological expertise, and learn to navigate the school system. Respecting that parents deal with competing external agendas (e.g., jobs and other family responsibilities) and numerous distractions for their time, the evaluators set full participation at 80% or 150 hours for the program year (Levesque & Scordias, 2016).

While parents and their elementary students were busy learning, younger siblings attended childcare programs on site. Children were screened with the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and ASQ SE (Social Emotional) through additional funding provided by UWSEM's *Help Me Grow* initiative. Staff and parents reviewed the ASQ results during Parent Time. They shared ideas about how best to support their children's development at home.

## Teach Parents How Schools Work

Parents strengthened their English language skills. They became better able to communicate with teachers and support their children as learners. As their learning progressed they shared “courageous conversations” (Singleton, 2015) about school policies, reasonable expectations for success, and gaps between their children’s and others’ achievement.

Eighty-four families enrolled in the ELLP during the 2014-2015 school year. Of these, 93% of the parents had immigrated to the U.S. more than a year prior to enrollment. Most (88%) of their children were born in Detroit. Almost all (93%) of the parents received their education outside of the U.S. Nearly a third of the parents had, at the most, only completed the 6th grade. Although the parents were new to American public education, their children were not. Over 80% of the children attended Head Start or preschool (Levesque & Scordias, 2016).

Family literacy and learning programs work to improve children’s learning outcomes, including preparation for college and careers. A rigorous quasi-experimental evaluation of the ELLP examined performance outcomes for participating adults and children. Pre- and post-data about parents’ home literacy activities, use of technologies (smartphones, electronic tablets, and other devices), program participation, and English literacy skills were analyzed. Teachers compared the reading achievement, academic mindsets (Dweck, 2006), and attendance of participating students with students whose families were not engaged with the ELLP.

*Bilingualism is strength – it enhances brain development and prepares children for a global economy.*

Educated mothers whose first language is not English gift their children with a bilingual legacy. Research on English Learners across racial and ethnic groups shows a link between a mother’s education level and her children’s English language skill development and school success (Gambino et al., 2014). The majority (66%) of ELLP parents had not graduated from high school and most (88%) of the children were born in the U.S. Nationally, children who enter school as ELs have mothers who did not complete a high school education compared to those students who are English proficient—and bilingual—and do not have to strive to learn a new language as well as the

core curriculum. Research affirms that a powerful predictor of school success or failure is the extent of children’s vocabulary before kindergarten (Hart & Risley, 1995).

Bilingualism has positive consequences for brain development. Even if a child is just exposed to but does not become proficient in two languages, his cognitive development is enriched (Barac, Bialystok, Castro, & Sanchez, 2014). Parents and their young children are able to shift from one language to the other building children’s English vocabulary before their kindergarten age. Simply stated, the more words children know and use—in their native language and English—the less likely it is they will struggle in school.

All of the ELLP parents aspired to improve their English language skills. Just one family spoke English only at home, while 39% had bilingual homes. Pretest scores on the *Basic English Skills Test* (BEST) revealed the group’s English skills ranged from Low Beginning ESL (English as a Second Language) to Advanced. The National Reporting System (NRS) describes the skills associated with the level (Low Intermediate ESL) of parents’ pretest scores. Generally, ELLP parents scoring at this level can read in English simple material on common subjects containing familiar vocabulary. For example, they can interact in English while helping young children with homework and read aloud children’s books. Parents’ new skills are reinforced during PACT Time as they develop vocabulary, decoding, and comprehension skills that lead to reading fluency.

*English language communication arts and literacy are embedded in the four program components of ELLP’s two-generation strategy.*

Parents practice essential literacy skills in their Adult Learning class. They often use students’ books as part of their lessons. The primary grade readability levels and common rhyme, rhythm, and repetition patterns of children’s literature reduce parents’ anxiety about reading aloud. As the parents and children read more together, their vocabularies expand and reading fluency becomes more proficient. At the end of the program year, 93% of the parents reported that their children were read aloud to multiple times throughout the week. The majority of parents (63%) reported reading aloud with their children between four times a week and daily (Levesque & Scordias, 2016).

A comparison between pre- and post-test NRS levels showed a positive trend suggesting that parents were functioning at higher levels and making progress towards English proficiency. While progress varied across parents, most were still ELs and required adult educators' support as they absorbed the nuances of dialogue, written language, and jargon common in schools.

In order to support children as learners, parents need to talk, read, and interact with their children in both their home language and English. Parents at any NRS ESL level can support their children in English and their home language too. Their children will grow up bilingual. This is not a deficit as the 21st century global economy requires increasing numbers of employees who are proficient in more than one language.

Parents also need to communicate efficiently and meaningfully with their children's teachers. Unfortunately, relatively few teachers are bilingual and so EL parents must learn to become bilingual. Improved English language is a strong ELLP adult learning outcome. All ELLP parents improved their understanding and use of English.

## Taking New English Skills from Schools to Homes

Parents transferred lessons learned during the school day to out-of-school time with their children. They practiced English by writing, reading, speaking, and listening together. As parents' English proficiency grew, so did their computer literacy. Access to the Internet furthered their capacity for school engagement. Parents' aptitude for networking grew, which in turn bolstered their confidence to connect in new ways. Half of the parents used their school's website to keep abreast of progress updates and school announcements. Last year (2013-2014) the majority of families owned smartphones and had Internet access, but few used their devices to communicate with teachers. This year three out of four parents emailed back and forth with teachers and visited the school webpages.

*Successful intergenerational activities increased parents' self-efficacy. They felt capable and competent to support their children learning in school and at home.*

Parents developed a collective understanding that they were valued members of the school community. These realizations contributed to positive self-efficacy. Parents stated that they should, could, and would help their children succeed as learners. Their classes planned Family Service Learning projects during Parent Time. Then later, with their children, parents accomplished the projects and reflected on what they were learning. Parent Time provided a safe space to discuss sensitive issues associated with parenting, cultural diversity, financial and health literacy, and citizenship.

Daily exchanges with teachers during PACT Time generated a sense of stronger social positioning—parents became more comfortable talking with teachers. They were invested in learning about progress and barriers to their children's success. Nearly all (94%) attended a parent conference or met informally with teachers and principals to discuss their children. The same number attended special events (school plays, art shows) when their children participated, and nearly two-thirds attended at least one parent advisory meeting. Data affirmed meaningful engagement whereby nine out of 10 of the parents attended PTA meetings, three-fourths volunteered at special events, and half volunteered in their child's classroom beyond PACT Time (Levesque & Scordias, 2016).

## Attendance Is an Access Strategy for Equity and Achievement

Tracking chronic absence is a strategy to promote literacy development (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016). ELLP students exhibited a strong annual attendance rate equal to or greater than the mean daily attendance rate for the school, matched sample group, and Detroit Public Schools District. Consistent daily attendance is an important program impact. Chronic school absence is in part responsible for an attendance gap that disproportionately holds back primary grade students from low-income families who miss critical learning days when the reading curriculum is taught.

Chronic absenteeism is a barrier to academic success for students in the Detroit Public School District, which holds Michigan's lowest status for daily attendance. Detroit students attend roughly four out of five school days. The problem exacerbates academic achievement, especially in literacy skill development. Fewer than one in three

students is proficient in reading (Detroit Public Schools, 2016). The link is clear. When students are disengaged, they are not learning the core curriculum. They become increasingly frustrated and stay home. Disengagement and poor attendance contribute to a low graduation rate. Thirty percent of Detroit students fail to graduate. These points were made clear to parents across all of the ELLP program components. If parents expected their children to succeed they had to instill good attendance habits and ensure their children got to school on time every day.

Student attendance is measured in two ways. First, the attendance percentage is the most common measure used in education. It is determined by using the formula: (time present) / (total possible time). The second measure is used to identify whether or not schools meet the federal attendance criteria. This measure uses the percent of students achieving the 90% average attendance benchmark. Attendance was analyzed using both strategies. The data are provided in the following tables.

*Focus students' attendance over the school year was 10% above the public schools daily rate.*

The mean attendance percent was determined for the focus students' group and the comparison students' group. A comparison of differences between the groups shows that the focus group attendance percentage was at least 2.5% higher and as much as 5% higher than the comparison group. To create the match set, one student in third grade who didn't have a comparison match was removed. The focus students had higher percent attendance at all four schools (95.5% vs. 92.64%). The focus group percent of attendance exceeds the Detroit Public Schools rate (85.2%) by 10% for the 2014 - 2015 school year.

**Table 1**

Average Percent Attendance by School

School	Focus Students	Comparison Students
1	95.40%	92.63%
2	96.70%	94.14%
3	96.93%	91.89%
4	94.90%	91.89%
Total	95.80%	92.63%

Next, average attendance of the focus group was examined by whether the parents had enough hours for full participation in the program activities. This analysis indicates that the comparison students (see Table 1) had the poorest attendance with an average rate of 92.63%. This was followed by the attendance rate of 93.81% average for students whose families enrolled in the program but did not complete 150 hours of participation. Adults' persistence and continuous attendance paid off. The highest attendance rate (96.89%) was set by students whose parents were enrolled in the program and who had completed at least 150 hours of participation (Levesque & Scordias, 2016).

**Table 2**

Average Attendance of Focus Students by Participation Level of Parents

	Average Attendance
Full Participation	96.89%
Less than Full Participation	93.81%

When evaluated by the criteria of attending 90% or more of the time, the focus group had significantly more students meeting the criteria than the comparison group.

In practical terms, as a group, the focus students attended 369 more days (about 2,214 hours) than the comparison students. This finding means the focus students had more than two additional weeks of instruction than their comparison peers (Levesque & Scordias 2016).

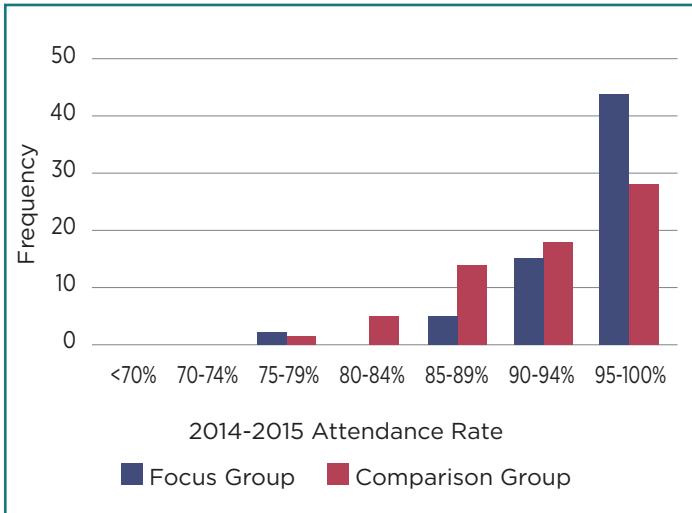
*If the attendance rate continues, by the time they enter 9th grade kindergarten focus students will attend a full school year more than comparison students.*

A histogram helps us to visualize the distribution of scores. It is apparent that the focus group had substantially more students with a 95% attendance rate or better. Focus students were absent fewer than two weeks during the year. The comparison group had more students with an attendance rate of less than 90%. On average, a comparison student was absent more than a month of school. If the trend of chronic absenteeism

continues, the first grade comparison students will forfeit a full year of school before they enter high school

**Figure 1**

**Number of Students Scoring in Each Attendance Percentage**



One principle of the two-generation learning theory of change is that when change occurs for any member of a family the effects are intergenerational. The ELLP intervention works to change the children by focusing its direct services on the parents. The school year begins with ELLP intake and orientation. The adult educators emphasized the importance of parents' regular attendance for the entire school year. Getting to school on time every day is one way parents ensure that their children will be successful. When parents come to ELLP, their children get to school.

*Parents' full participation in ELLP benefited their children who were likely to have a 90% attendance rate.*

The percentage of the students in the focus group that met the 90% attendance criteria was examined by whether students' parents had full participation in the ELLP. There is a dramatic difference between focus students whose parents completed 150 hours of participation and those who were absent more often. Students whose parents completed the full participation hours were more than twice (40:19) as likely to have an attendance rate of at least 90% (Levesque & Scordias, 2016).

**Table 3**

**Percent of Students Meeting 90% Attendance Benchmark by Participation Level of Parents**

Level of Participation	Average Attendance
Full Participation	95.24%
Less than Full Participation	79.17%

Parents who attended the ELLP made sure that their children got to school on a daily basis. The difference between their children and the children in the comparison group is jarring. Dramatic and statistically significant differences were found among groups. The comparison students had the highest rate of absenteeism. Students whose ELLP parents did not complete at least 150 hours attended more than the comparison group, but less than the focus group of students whose parents completed 150 hours or more. Focus students had strong daily attendance and substantially more time for learning.

## **Focus on Learning**

Teachers were asked to observe (pre and post) focus and comparison students with the Teacher Reports on Student Progress (TROSP) developed by NCFL. The tool includes a number of variables associated with academic mindsets. Mindsets reflect the way students think about themselves in relation to how they learn, what they want to learn, and how they learn success (Dweck, Walton, & Cohen, 2014).

The framework of deeper learning (Ark & Schneider, 2010) is geared toward the skills and knowledge students must acquire in order to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world. The framework includes working collaboratively, communicating effectively, and learning how to learn (Farrington, 2013). These behaviors and attitudes are included in Dweck's (2006) model of growth mindsets. Students' growth mindsets contribute to the development of positive attitudes about learning, persistence, and successful outcomes.

Teachers rated students as poor, fair, average, good, or excellent on the TROSP items associated with academic mindsets. The first step of the ELLP analysis was to determine whether the student groups were equivalent in their TROSP ratings at the beginning of the year.

No statistically significant differences were found between the mean scores of the focus and comparison groups. The next step was to determine whether the groups were equivalent in their ratings at the end of the year. Results affirmed changes that took place during the year and clearly defined different mindsets between the groups.

Statistically significant differences were found for the focus group on classroom behavior items ( $t(61) = -2.484$ ,  $p=0.016$ ). An item analysis indicated substantial gains were made by the focus group on self-initiation of a task, and the ability to

- complete a task in a group,
- complete a task when working independently,
- ask pertinent questions,
- know when to get help from a teacher,
- seek help from peers when appropriate,
- talk about class activities, and,
- interact comfortably with peers.

A minimal decline in scores was noted for the comparison group on four indicators: general discipline, assignment completion, ability to talk about class activities, and comfort interacting with peers. The comparison group also had a substantial decline in active engagement. This decline in the comparison group is troublesome. Research affirms that the consequences of academic disengagement, for example chronic absenteeism and off-task behavior, are detrimental and debilitating. They set off a downward spiral of low self-esteem, impeded effort, and escalating failure (Covington & Mueller, 2001).

*The mindsets of comparison students diminished over time and is evident by chronic absenteeism and active disengagement in class.*

Teachers observed in the focus students the elements of the deeper learning framework (Farrington, 2013). Focus students worked collaboratively, communicated effectively, and learned how to learn. They established cognitive domains that welcome exploration, increasingly complex problem solving, and open a confident disposition toward learning.

## Family Learning in an Acculturated Learning Community

Parents of EL students face daunting barriers as they work to become informed and involved members of the school community. Barriers include the inability to communicate with teachers because of language differences, unfamiliarity with formal schooling, and differences in cultural norms regarding what parents are “supposed to do.” Many newcomers to American education fear that they will be expected to sacrifice their cultural identity in order to best support their children in school (Igoa, 1995). Immigrant and first-generation ELs often experience pressure to forget their native culture in order to fit into a new one that may, at best, feel unwelcoming. Some of these children avoid school peers and see themselves as outsiders. Their identities are set solely within their native culture. Certain newcomers and ELs feel like outsiders in either setting and separate themselves from school and family social networks. They struggle with the misperception that assimilation means taking on a new way of life that severs familial bonds (Hall, 2015).

Cristina Igoa listened to the stories, fears, and hopes of her immigrant students. Many of the students felt that assimilating into American culture posed serious conflicts with their families’ culture and values. They feared that assimilation meant washing out one’s identity. Assimilation, to these students, required rejecting current beliefs to make room for the norms of a new culture. Igoa (1995) proposed that newcomers and ELs become “acculturated.” Acculturation begins by thinking about one’s own personal inner world. Igoa believes teachers of immigrants are charged with building on what students already know and believe about their native cultures and ways of knowing. Becoming acculturated means that a child, parent, and family feel secure in the worlds of native heritage and English mainstreamed American education (Igoa, 1995).

The ELLP provided weekly parenting sessions facilitated by adult educators and community staff. Parents met staff from numerous community resource agencies and learned about social capital. Parent Time and Family Service Learning projects reflect Igoa’s (1995) research on ways to enhance ELs. Dialogue took place within the comfort of a familiar language, culture, and social system. Parents were encouraged to validate and embrace their cultural identities. Parent Time fueled passionate discussions about rival expectations for children from the

perspectives of traditional family ideals and unfamiliar school performance targets.

*High expectations for students should be shared by teachers and parents.*

Successful family and school partnerships are grounded by common understanding and shared responsibility for ensuring high expectations. Parents expect teachers to recognize their children as unique learners who require ongoing support and high quality instruction. Teachers in turn expect families to support their children as learners by assuming the roles of supporters, encouragers, monitors, advocates, decision makers, and collaborators (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). They expect parents to guarantee that their children arrive on time and are prepared to learn every day. The teachers of ELLP students were not disappointed. On average, the children of ELLP parents had 12 more days of school time than their peers in the same classrooms. In addition to coming to class 97% of the time, their parents were right beside them during PACT Time in their classrooms at least four times a week.

ELLP parents and their children attended school together in a two-generation paradigm. In many ways the ELLP acculturated families. They learned to learn within structured classrooms and informally at home using English and Spanish as a means of mastering new skills and content. Teachers reported that focus students in kindergarten through third grade demonstrated academic mindsets. Unlike the comparison students whose attention and academic behaviors diminished over time, focus students were actively engaged all year.

Data suggest the focus students developed strong self-efficacy regarding their ability to learn. While almost all of the students in the project schools struggled with learning to read, focus students tended to see reading as a challenge to overcome rather than a problem to avoid by missing school. Another factor that accounts for focus students' solid attendance is that parents and children entered the building together as members of a two-generation learning program.

Parents in the ELLP exemplify the importance of passion and persistence, otherwise known as grit (Duckworth, 2016). Grit is an essential attribute of two-generation success. Grit is what parents demonstrated through meaningful engagement in learning at their children's schools. Parents enrolled in ELLP with a strong desire

to help their children succeed in school. They knew that reaching that goal required both love and hard work. They believed being good parents meant not just wanting success but also helping their children to succeed.

Parents met ELLP's high expectations by being directly engaged in their children's learning. In addition to spending hundreds of hours at school, ELLP parents built new routines at home. They set aside time for listening to and reading with their children. Despite the fact that none of these parents held a high school diploma upon enrollment, they adapted well to the customs and rules of elementary schools. They designed and managed service learning projects that bridged the gap between home and school. Their children had exemplary attendance, developed appropriate social skills, and established academic mindsets.

## Collective Impact

*Two-generation models focus on the potential of collective impact generated by the disciplined collaboration of educators, community providers, and families to create culturally responsive solutions to the complex problems associated with the achievement gap.*

The work of all the charitable organizations that support Southwest Solutions' efforts to impact ELs is not new; however, this is the first time these organizations committed to a common agenda in Detroit. The combined and focused efforts and performance outcomes described in this paper represent collective impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011). The partners included a federal agency that served as the project backbone and primary funding source. A common agenda and professional development for two-generation learning was provided by a national organization that views education as a family affair. The regional charitable nonprofit ensured continuous communication by providing ongoing technical support for project management and mandated reporting inclusive of shared measures. These organizations and others enriched the social capital of Southwest Solutions so that it had the capacity to direct social innovation in four schools. When viewed from a holistic perspective, the work of each partner was mutually reinforcing. Together

they achieved constructive collective impact on EL students, their schools, and their Hispanic/Latino parents in southwest Detroit.

The ELLP is a social innovation. Creating learning communities that help families to acculturate rather than assimilate is a bold, culturally responsive way to value diversity. The added value of this two-generation learning program will accrue primarily in the four schools where attendance rates are rising and ELs' academic achievement is progressing.

At the end of the program year, students and their parents, educators, community leaders, and nationally recognized philanthropists were invited to attend ELLP's graduation ceremony. The guest speakers spoke in English and a translator communicated the messages in Spanish. The speeches exalted partnerships between families and schools, parents and children. Parents were honored for being powerful and optimistic role models. Their children cheered when they proudly crossed the stage and accepted graduation certificates—the first of many graduations to follow as these families continue the promise of two-generation educational success.

# English Language Learners Family Literacy Program

# 2015

## School Level Outcomes

### Program Overview



#### Schools Served

Harms  
Munger  
Maybury  
Lighthouse



84 Families served in Southwest Detroit

160.9

Average number of hours parents participated at each school.

13,519

Total hours of parents engaged in children's school during the school year.

#### Goals of Participation

83.6% of parents' primary reason for staying in the family literacy program was to become "a better teacher of my child"

100% of parents' primary learning goal was to improve their English language.

### Student Outcomes



Children with parents who completed 150 program hours were more than 2x as likely to have an **attendance rate of 90%**



Students in program (n=66) completed **369 more days of school** than comparison students.



**7.4% gain in reading level** for students in program, compared to 1.8% gain for comparison students.



**5.6% increase in reading proficiency** for students in program compared with comparison students.

### Parental Engagement

#### Parents Increased Engagement with Children's School/Education through Technology

**23%** Parents Access Educational Websites

**41%** Use Technology with Children

**51%** Parents Access School's Web Page

**73%** Emailed with Child's Teacher

**94.1%**

Percent of parents who attended a parent conference or met with children's teacher informally.

**50%**

Percent of parents volunteer in children's classroom.

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