

RESEARCH

Educational Program Report



Family Leadership Institute Program Evaluation

2007-2008



2009 Board of Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FAMILY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (FLI) 2007–2008

Program Description

The Family Leadership Institute (FLI) is an educational curriculum aimed at parents and caregivers, with the goal of providing them with family leadership skills in order to support academic achievement and life success for their children. The program has been offered in the district since the 2004–2005 school year. It is composed of ten modules, which are taught in a group setting in separate sessions, usually one per month throughout the school year. It is offered in the district through a contractual arrangement with Education Achievement Services, Inc., of Las Vegas, Nevada.

The FLI was originally designed to serve immigrant and migrant Hispanic families. Its two main areas of emphasis are, first, to provide participating parents and caregivers with the skills and inspiration needed to enhance their own personal success and to allow them to serve as role models for their children. Second, the program places strong emphasis on parental engagement, and attempts to increase parents' involvement in their children's education.

The series of ten workshops offered by the FLI are normally conducted in Spanish, with bilingual presentation if needed.¹ The topics of the ten workshops are as follows:

1. *Home: Where Leadership Begins*: participants identify their own leadership styles and preferences;
2. *Self-Identity: Past, Present, & Future*: self-identity, self-esteem and its effects on the family;
3. *Living in Two Worlds: Cultural & Generational Perspectives*: cultural pride and traditions highlighted; parents learn about pressures children face (drugs, peer pressure, teen pregnancy, etc.);
4. *Storytelling & Journaling: Valuing Literacy Through Family History*: placing value on reading and its effect on children's acquisition of reading skills;
5. *Education: The Key to a Better Future*: essential role of education in economic, social, and intellectual well-being of their children;
6. *College Field Trip: What Does Success Look Like?* participants visit a local college in order to understand that a college education for their child is an attainable goal;
7. *Improving Family and School Relationships: Partnerships for Success*: strategies for building relationships with teachers, staff, and administrators; parents as advocates;
8. *Facing Challenges at Home: Coping Strategies for Success*: identify barriers to personal and family success, setting goals;
9. *Creating a Family Action Plan: Roadmaps for Success*: parents develop vision, mission, goals, & objectives; action plan for their children's success; and
10. *Celebrating Family Academic Excellence: Success as a Way of Life*: families make presentations to educational administrators; share successes and their children's academic progress.

At the conclusion of the series of FLI workshops, there is a graduation ceremony for parents who have completed the program. The ceremony is an opportunity for participants to showcase and present their family plans, and in addition there are keynote speakers, with each graduate receiving a certificate.

From 2004–2005 through 2007–2008, four cohorts of parents and caregivers have completed the FLI program. The present report summarizes the findings from an evaluation of the FLI, with results from all four years included.

Basic demographic data on program participants is included, as are data concerning the academic progress of children of FLI participants as well as results of parent and student surveys.

Key Findings

1. *How many parents and caregivers have participated in the FLI, and what are their demographic characteristics?*

- Counting only parents who were eligible for graduation from the program, a total of 504 parents and caregivers have participated in the FLI (162, 131, 127, and 84 in the school years 2004–2005 through 2007–2008, respectively).
- FLI participants were almost exclusively Hispanic (approximately 97%).

2. *How many children of FLI participants were enrolled in HISD schools, and what were their demographic characteristics?*

- A total of 765 children of FLI participants were enrolled in HISD during the same school year that their parents or caregivers took part in the program.
- The majority of these students were male (54.5%), while 45.5 percent were female.
- Almost all of students of FLI participants were Hispanic (99.4 percent). The next largest ethnicities were Asian and African-American (tied; <1%).
- Nearly 69% of these students were considered LEP at the time their parents participated in the FLI.

3. *What was the impact of the FLI program on the academic achievement of the children of FLI participants?*

- Stanford 10 performance of students showed NCE gains across the lifetime of the pro-

gram on the reading subtest that exceeded gains observed in a matched control group.

- FLI students who were also LEP showed statistically larger NCE gains over the four years of the program in language than did a matched control group.
- Performance on the English TAKS also showed improvement for FLI students overall as well as for the LEP subgroup, but these did not exceed gains shown by matched controls in any subtest.
- FLI students were less likely than matched controls to have repeated a grade, and this effect was largest for students at the middle school level (grades 6 to 8).
- FLI students showed virtually no change in the number of disciplinary incidents after FLI participation, while a matched control group nearly doubled the number of reported disciplinary incidents over the same time period.

4. *Did participating in the FLI change the attitudes, beliefs, or skills of parents and caregivers?*

- 90 percent of FLI participants reported that they were involved in parent-related activities at their child's school.
- Almost all parents (98.1%) said they used strategies learned from the FLI program in their own homes.
- 95.3 percent of parents reported that the FLI had influenced how much time they spent with their children.
- 97.3 percent also reported that the FLI had affected their child's school performance.
- 92.7 percent of parents indicated that their perceptions of school leaders had changed, and 91.7 percent that their interactions with

school leaders had changed as a result of the FLI.

- Former graduates of the FLI have gone on to be hired as teacher’s aides, clerks, and one has been hired as a teacher in HISD.

5. Did the FLI have an impact on the beliefs of children of FLI participants?

- FLI students participating in an FLI-related student leadership program showed more positive attitudes towards school than did a comparison sample of LEP high school students in the district.

Recommendations

1. During the time it has existed in the district, funding for the FLI program has been a challenge. Therefore, more stable sources of program support should be sought. Since the

program began it has been supported by Title III funds through the Multilingual Department. However, this funding has been reduced every year, largely due to budgetary constraints. The district should investigate all options regarding alternative funding sources for the program.

2. The FLI program should be expanded, and the number of campuses and regions offering the program should be increased.
3. The FLI model allows for the possibility that former graduates of the FLI be used as “trainers” to supplement or replace paid professional staff. In this way, over time, the FLI can be offered to more campuses and parents, and could be self-sustaining. This process has just begun in the district. Should the FLI program continue, a rigorous evaluation needs to be done of how this particular aspect of the program has been performing.

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Introduction

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At the conclusion of the series of FLI workshops, there is a graduation ceremony for parents who have completed the program. The ceremony is an opportunity for participants to showcase and present their family plans, and in addition there are keynote speakers, with each graduate receiving a certificate.

From 2004–2005 through 2007–2008, four different groups of parents and caregivers have completed the FLI program. The present report summarizes the findings from an evaluation of the FLI, with results from all four years included.

For ease of explication, rather than repeated use of the phrase "parents and caregivers", this

report will rely on the simpler term “parents” to refer to FLI participants. It must be emphasized, however, that this term should be interpreted as including a child’s actual parents as well as any non-parental caregivers such as an aunt or uncle, grandparent, sibling or non-relative.

Program Goals

The main website of the Family Leadership Institute opens with the following statement: “The objective of the Family Leadership Institute is to teach parents and caregivers the art and skills of family leadership in support of academic achievement and life success for their children by using a practical ten-step approach” (Education Achievement Services, 2009). The following goals are, specifically, delineated:

- increase engagement of families in their children’s education;
- provide purpose, tools, and direction to parents and their children to achieve academic success as well as life success; and
- produce a cadre of knowledgeable and committed parents & caregivers who actively support school/community efforts that benefit their children in addition to encouraging other families to do the same.

Program Participants

During the four years in which the program has been in place, the number of parents participating in the FLI has varied. In the school years 2004–2005 through 2007–2008, there have been 162, 131, 127, and 84 parents who met the requirements for graduating from the FLI. Most of the decline throughout this period can be attributed to budgetary factors as funds available for the program have declined.

The FLI has, generally, been based in or focused on specific regions in the district. The precise region and campuses have varied, based on student achievement patterns and need. Parent recruitment occurs via parent coordinators at campuses within the targeted region. Flyers describing the FLI as well as registration materials are left at the school or are distributed to parents

by the parent coordinators. Recruitment targets for each year are set (based on available budget), but parents are not turned away if they show up.²

Many FLI participants bring along their friends or relatives after they have started attending the workshops and begin to see the value in them. Word of mouth spreads once the series begins or even beforehand. Current and former FLI participants may be the program’s best recruiters. However, any new participants must meet enrollment criteria in order to continue participation (see below).

The main criterion for participation in the FLI is that the parent must have at least one child enrolled in HISD who is considered LEP³. Parents who attend all ten sessions receive a Certificate of Completion at the conclusion of the program. Parents who miss one or more sessions receive a Certificate of Participation at the same graduation ceremony. The present report includes data from both sets of parents, as well as their HISD enrolled children. It does not include results from parents who started participating in the program but who stopped attending at some point.

Purpose of the Evaluation Report

The purpose of this evaluation report was to examine whether the two overall objectives of the FLI program were being met. Namely, whether parents who participated in the FLI reported changes in their attitudes, beliefs, or skills, which might reflect improved “leadership skills”; and whether parents’ FLI participation had an effect on the academic performance or attitudes of their children.

Research Questions

1. How many parents and caregivers have participated in the FLI, and what are their demographic characteristics?
2. How many children of FLI participants were enrolled in HISD schools, and what were their demographic characteristics?
3. What was the impact of the FLI program on the academic achievement of the children of FLI participants?

4. Did participating in the FLI change the attitudes, beliefs, or skills of parents and caregivers?
5. Did the FLI have an impact on the beliefs of children of FLI participants?

Literature Review

Parental involvement in the education of their children has long been shown to have a positive impact on various indicators of school performance and student attitudes (Epstein, et al., 2002; Epstein, 1995; NMSA, 2003, 2006; Fan & Chen, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Positive effects on students include; higher grade and test scores, improved attendance, higher graduation rates, greater enrollment in post-secondary education, lower rates of suspension, decreased use of drugs and alcohol, and increased motivation and self-esteem.

Parental involvement can be of many types, and Epstein and colleagues (1995, 2002) proposed a six-category framework, which includes (among others) *parenting* (e.g., supervision of time and behavior, expressing expectations about student's education), *communicating* (particularly, about school performance), and *learning at home*. Ho Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) suggest a similar model, with *discussion of school activities* and *monitoring of out-of-school activities* figuring prominently. In general, anything that increases the amount of parental involvement in home learning activities, allows parents to serve as models for their children, or involves setting up a home environment of encouragement and educational support, has been shown to be beneficial. In addition, establishing high but realistic expectations for student achievement, and opening channels of communication with school staff and teachers is important; the latter because it allows the student to see school as an extension of their home life, and not a separate entity.

The FLI program is focused on promoting many of the skill sets and parental behaviors that the research literature has shown to impact student academic achievement and attitudes. Thus, it is expected that the FLI should have a positive

effect on both of these variables, as well as on parental attitudes and behavior.

Methods

Data Collection

Data collection began by first compiling rosters of parents who were participating in the FLI. This was done for each of the four years in which the FLI was offered. These lists were then put into a Microsoft Access database where families and participants were given unique code numbers. Next, children of each FLI participants were identified from lists provided with the original parent rosters. Identities were confirmed by consulting the districts School Administrative Student Information (SASI) and Chancery databases,⁴ in order to verify whether the students were enrolled in district schools. This was accomplished by cross-referencing parent information provided by FLI staff with that of children using phone numbers and home addresses. The SASI and Chancery databases were then used to extract student identification numbers, gender, ethnicity, grade level, home language, and LEP status.

Student performance data were collected from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), as well as the Stanford Achievement Test (Stanford 10).

Other data was collected using two surveys. One was administered to all parents attending the FLI. A second survey was administered to a subset of children whose parents attended the FLI, specifically, those students who participated in the SLiCK program (this program is described later, see p.15).

Counts of parents reflect only those who graduated from the FLI. Demographic data are not normally collected from FLI participants. However, these data are available for all parents who complete the parent survey, which is equivalent to approximately 55 percent of all potentially eligible. Thus, parent demographic data are taken from the responses collected at the time the parent survey was administered, and should closely reflect the actual demographics for the group as a whole.

Assessment Instruments

The Stanford 10 is a norm-referenced, standardized achievement test in English used to assess students' level of content mastery. The reading, mathematics, and language subtests of the Stanford 10 are included in this report for grades 1 through 11. Reported are mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores for each subject. The NCE is a normalized standard score most often used when interpolating or averaging scores. Like the National Percentile Rank (NPR), the NCE is a norm-referenced score, but in contrast to the NPR, the NCE provides an equal-interval scale that allows computations such as averaging or subtraction, which are useful when studying academic progress over time, especially when comparing different subject areas or student groups.

The TAKS is a state-mandated, criterion-referenced test administered for the first time in the spring 2003 as a means to monitor student performance. The English language version measures academic achievement in reading at grades 3–9; English language arts at 10 and 11; writing at grades 4 and 7; social studies at grades 8, 10, and 11; and science at grades 5, 8, 10, and 11. Students in the 11th grade are required to take and pass an exit-level TAKS in order to graduate. For the purposes of this report, only English language assessments were of interest. Thus, no data from the Spanish language version of TAKS are reported. Data reported are the percent of students meeting the panel recommended standard⁵ (scale score of 2100).

Qualitative Data Collection

Informal interviews with key stakeholders in the FLI program were conducted to gather information on program goals, objectives, and activities.

Sample

Enrollment data were based on the SASI (for the school years 2004–2005 and 2005–2006) and Chancery databases (for school years 2006–2007 and 2007–2008). Student lists were limited to those students whose parents had met the graduation requirements for that year's FLI. Par-

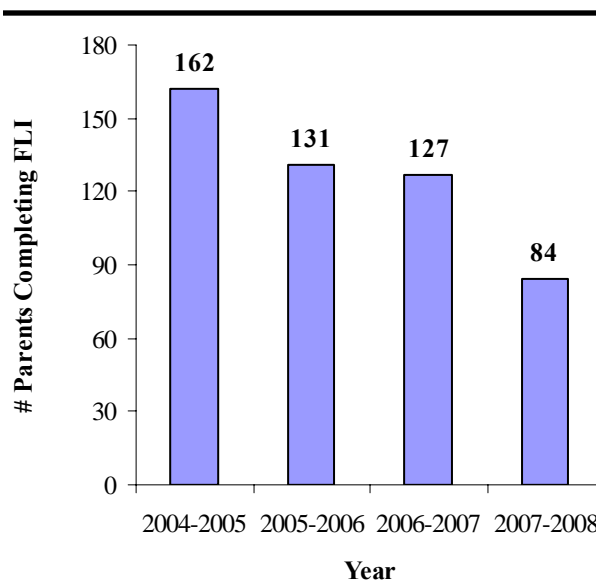


Figure 1. Number of parents completing the FLI for the years 2004–2005 through 2007–2008.

ents were included if they attended enough FLI workshops to qualify for either a Certificate of Completion or a Certificate of Participation.

The analysis of academic achievement data was based on eligible students' Stanford and TAKS results, i.e., all students included in the spring administration of the respective tests who were listed as students in the SASI or Chancery database.

Results

How many parents and caregivers have participated in the FLI, and what are their demographic characteristics?

Through the first four years of the FLI, a total of 504 parents have graduated. **Figure 1** (see above) shows the number of parents completing the FLI by year. It can be seen that the enrollment was highest during the first year, and has declined each year since. The principal reason for this is the availability of funding, which has declined over the course of the program.

Demographic data are not available for all parents who participated in the FLI. However, in spring of each year, a 21-item survey is distributed to all parents attending one of the last sessions of the program (the schedule has varied

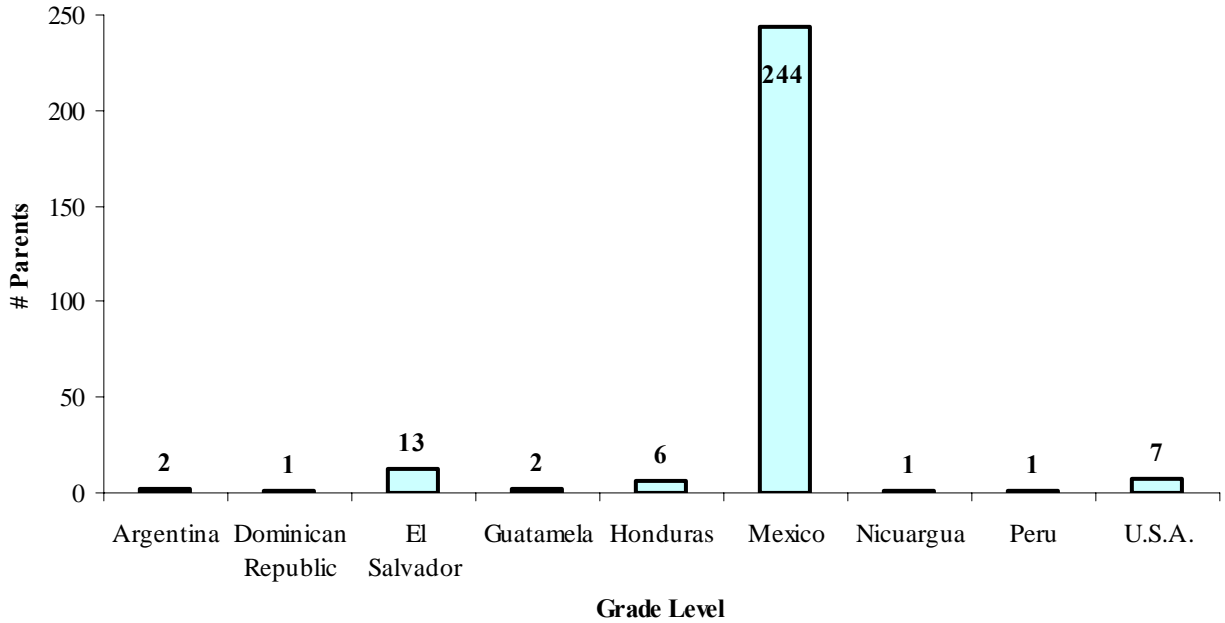


Figure 2. FLI parent country-of-origin (data from parent survey).

depending on the availability of staff to assist in administering the survey). Survey data has been collected from 279 of these parents, representing 55.3% of all FLI graduates, and these surveys do contain some questions on parent demographics. Results are summarized as follows.

The ethnicity of the parents attending the FLI is, overwhelmingly, Hispanic. As evidence for this, firstly, most parents choose to complete the survey in Spanish (96.7%) rather than in English (3.3%); the survey is printed in both languages. In addition, 98.6% of parents indicated that Spanish is their home language. Only 1.4% specified that English is their home language.

Most of the parents (97.5%) also indicated that their country-of-origin was somewhere other than the United States. **Figure 2** (see above) illustrates the country-of-origin of the 277 parents answering this question on the survey. As can be seen, a large majority of them list Mexico as the country-of-origin (88.1%). Other Latin American countries make up most of the remainder.

Other data from the parent survey reveal that the typical FLI attendee has multiple children. The mean number of children listed is 2.3, with a range of 2 to 8. Almost 95 percent of parents reported family sizes of between 2 and 4 children (94.8%).

How many children of FLI participants were enrolled in HISD schools, and what were their demographic characteristics?

Analysis of student data was limited to those students who were enrolled at HISD and whose parents met requirements for graduating from the FLI. A total of 765 students met this criterion. **Table 1** (see p. 10) summarizes basic demographic data for this group. Also included for comparison purposes are data from the general HISD population, as well as the overall LEP population in the district.

Data are summed across the four years of the FLI. It can be seen that the FLI student population is comparable in many ways to the overall LEP population in the district. Specifically, FLI students tend to be, overwhelmingly, Hispanic (99.4%), with a home language of Spanish (93.9%). Indeed, the majority (68%) of FLI students are considered LEP (see note #3). Similarly, the percentages of FLI students who are considered immigrant (11.5%), at-risk (83.8%), are served by Title-I programs (98.0%), or are economically disadvantaged (95.3%), bear more similarity to the percentages seen with the overall LEP population than they do to those observed in the district as a whole.

Special education and gifted and talented status are two areas where FLI students differ from the general LEP population, however. Only 4.4% of FLI students have special education status, lower than either the LEP population or the district overall. In addition, the percentage of FLI students classified as gifted and talented (10.8%) is higher than that found in the LEP population, and closer to the proportion observed in the general district student population.

What was the impact of the FLI program on the academic achievement of the children of FLI participants?

To assess the impact of the FLI program on the academic progress of students, results from both the Stanford 10 and English version of the TAKS were analyzed. Only data from English language assessments were considered, for two

reasons. First, students who are considered LEP are tested in Spanish in their early grades (i.e., on the Aprenda 3 or the Spanish TAKS), but will, eventually, progress in English proficiency to the point where they are tested on English language assessments only. This reduces the total amount of data available from Spanish language assessments. In fact, the amount of Spanish language data proved so small that results were too unreliable for evaluation purposes

A second reason for focusing on English language assessments is that a student’s long-term academic success is arguably best predicted by how well they do on English language assessments as opposed to ones in their native language. At a minimum, student performance in high school and their ability to meet state criteria for graduation both rely on English language assessments, since there are no Spanish language assessments at those grade levels.

Table 1. Demographics of FLI Student Sample, in Comparison With Statistics for Overall HISD Student Population and HISD LEP Population: Average of 2004–2005 Through 2007–2008.

	FLI		HISD	HISD-LEP
	N	%	%	%
Gender				
Male	417	54.5	51.0	52.4
Female	348	45.5	49.0	47.6
Ethnicity				
America Indian	0	0	<1	<1
Asian	2	<1	3.1	2.4
African American	2	<1	29.2	1.5
Hispanic	759	99.4	59.2	95.4
White	1	<1	8.4	<1
Home Language				
Spanish	718	93.9	43.5	94.8
English	44	5.8	53.4	1.0
Other	3	<1	3.1	4.2
Program				
LEP	521	68.1	28.4	-
Immigrant	88	11.5	4.2	13.1
Migrant	6	<1	<1	<1
At Risk	641	83.8	65.3	99.9
Title I	750	98.0	90.5	97.4
Special Education	34	4.4	9.7	8.9
Gifted/Talented	82	10.8	11.4	4.6
Econ Disadvantaged	729	95.3	80.6	95.0
Total	765	100	100	100

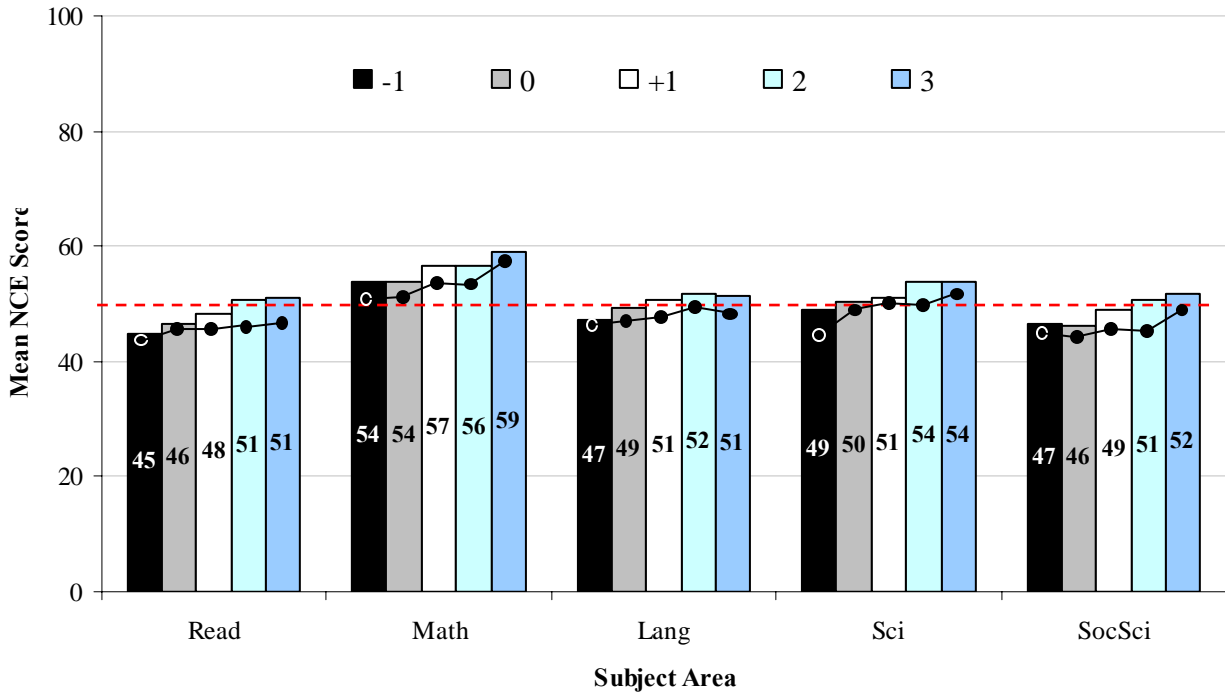


Figure 3. FLI student Stanford 10 performance (mean NCEs) by subject area and year. Also included (filled circles) are results from a matched comparison sample.

Stanford 10

For each of the four FLI cohorts, the following procedure was used to analyze Stanford performance. First, children of FLI parents were identified and assigned ID numbers based on information in the district’s SASI and Chancery databases. In most cases, children’s names were provided along with rosters of parents attending or graduating from the FLI. For one cohort these names were not provided, but had to be looked up. In all cases, student IDs were assigned only after theirs and their parents identities could be confirmed by cross-referencing information in district databases. This cross-referencing relied on information (e.g., address, phone numbers) included in the parent rosters. Once it could be confirmed that a student listed in any of the district databases was indeed a child of an FLI attendee, then that student’s district identification number as well as PEIMS ID number were extracted, along with demographic and other data.

Next, using the ID numbers thus collected, student rosters were then matched with Stanford performance results from the same year the FLI was held. Stanford data was also matched to stu-

dents performance in the prior year, and any years subsequent to their parent’s participation in the FLI. This resulted in a database containing Stanford results for FLI students that reflected pre-FLI, concurrent, and post-FLI performance. Individual Stanford performance was collected (when available) in each of the five areas of reading, mathematics, language, science, and social science.

This same protocol was followed for each separate cohort of students and parents. To increase statistical power, results from the four cohorts were then collated together. An additional set of analyses was based on that subset of FLI students who were classified as LEP. In each case, a student’s LEP designation was based on their status as of the year in which their parents attended the FLI.

Figure 3 (see above) shows the results of this analysis for all FLI students. Data are shown for five different Stanford subtests. In the format used, year “0” represents the year in which the student’s parent attended the FLI. Year “-1” is data from the school year prior to the FLI, and years “+1”, “+2”, and “+3” represent student

performance one, two, or three years after their parents attended the FLI.⁶

The data represented by the filled circles connected by black lines are from a matched comparison sample. This comparison sample was selected such that each FLI student was paired with a randomly selected student whose parents did not participate in the FLI, but who matched the FLI student on ethnicity, LEP status, gender, grade level, and campus attended.

As can be seen in this figure, gains are shown by FLI students in each subtest area. However, only in reading did these gains appear to be noticeably larger than those shown by the comparison sample. To confirm this pattern, a statistical analysis was conducted. The analysis was limited to only those students (either in the FLI group or the matched comparison sample) who had valid Stanford 10 scores in all five subject areas for both the year prior to their parents' participation in the FLI (i.e., year "-1" according to the terminology used in Figure 3), and for the most recent post-FLI year for their particular cohort. For these samples (n = 161 for FLI, and 162 for the control group), a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was then conducted. The dependent variables were the post-FLI Stanford NCEs for the reading, mathematics, language, science, and social science sub-

tests, and covariates were the five corresponding pre-FLI Stanford NCE scores for these same subtests. The independent variable was group (FLI vs. control).

Results of this analysis showed that there was no significant difference between the two student groups overall, $F(5,308) = 1.59$, $p = .163$, Wilkes Lambda = .98. When results of the five Stanford subtests were considered separately, the only one to reach statistical significance was for reading, $F(1,312) = 4.12$, $p = .043$. Adjusted mean NCE scores (see Figure 4, below) showed that the FLI group had higher post-FLI performance than did the comparison group (48.6 vs. 46.4).

As was mentioned earlier, approximately two-thirds of the FLI students are also classified as LEP. Since LEP students as a group generally perform at a lower level than their peers on English language assessments (at least until they have exited LEP status), one could infer that this is also likely to be true of the LEP subgroup of FLI students. Thus, FLI LEP students might stand to gain more from the parent's participation in the FLI, and could show a greater amount of academic improvement. The next analysis reports results of only those FLI students who were considered LEP during the year in which their parents attended the FLI, and the findings are shown in Figure 5 (see p. 13).

As was the case with the full samples (see Figure 3), the FLI student group showed gains in performance for each subscale of the Stanford from pre-FLI baseline (black bars) to the most recent post-FLI year. However, these improvements do not appear to be greatly different from those shown by a matched sample (this matched sample was composed of the LEP subset of the one reported earlier). The only exceptions to this trend appeared to be the language and reading subscales.

Subsequent analysis examined these results in more detail. A MANCOVA showed that the FLI and control groups were not significantly different overall, but that the difference was close to significance, $F(5,75) = 2.21$, $p = .062$, Wilkes Lambda = .87. Results of the five Stanford subtests showed that reading scores did not

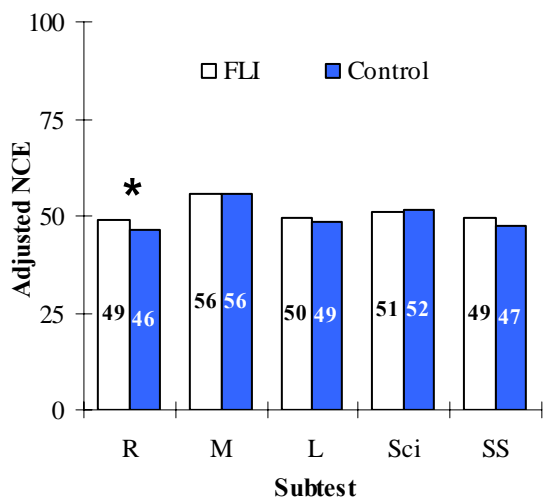


Figure 4. Adjusted mean NCEs by subject area for FLI and matched control groups. Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.

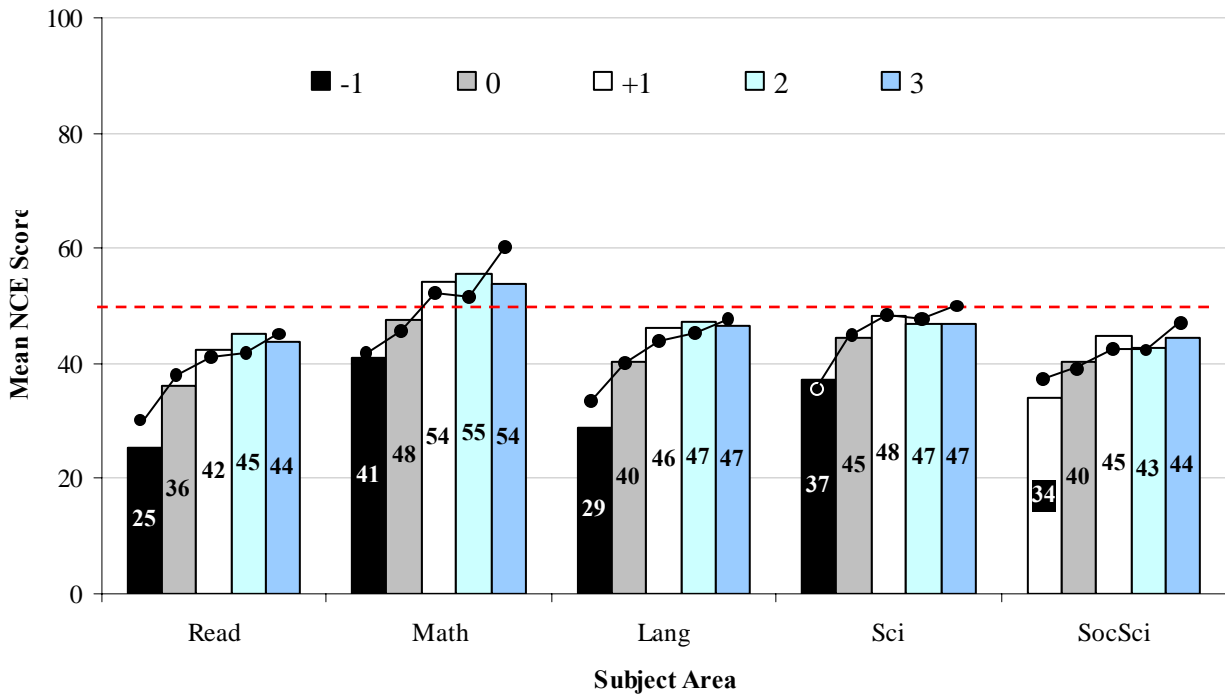


Figure 5. FLI LEP student Stanford 10 performance (mean NCEs) by subject area and year. Also included (filled circles) are results from a matched comparison sample of LEP students.

differ for the FLI-LEP and control groups, $F(1,79) = 0.53, p = .469$). However, the two groups did differ on language, $F(1,79) = 8.79, p = .004$. Adjusted mean NCE scores (see **Figure 6** below) showed that the FLI group had higher post-FLI performance on language than did the comparison group (42.0 vs. 35.1).

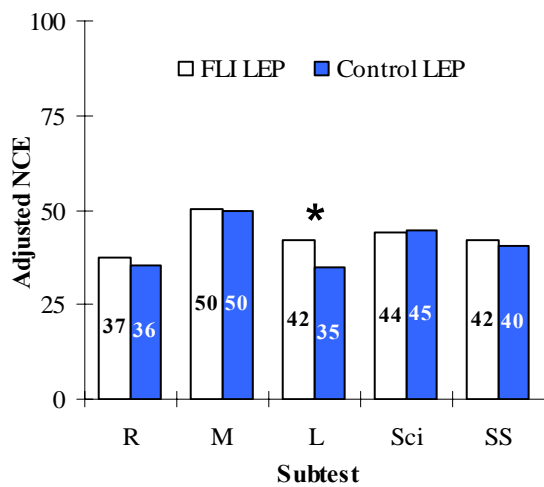


Figure 6. Adjusted mean NCEs by subject area for FLI-LEP and matched control groups. Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.

Appendices A and B show detailed results of t-tests conducted on both the full samples of all FLI students as well as on the smaller sample of LEP-only FLI students. Included are results from each separate cohort of FLI students, as well as overall results, for each of the five Stanford subscales. Results of t-tests on data provided by the matched samples is also included for comparison.

In conclusion, both the findings from FLI students overall as well as those from the LEP-only subgroup suggest that FLI participation has a measurable, if modest, impact, on the academic performance of students. Students whose parents participated in the FLI show gains in performance on the Stanford 10 that are larger than those seen in comparable populations over the same time period, for reading (for the overall FLI sample) and for language (for the LEP subgroup of FLI participants).

TAKS

A set of analyses similar to those conducted on Stanford data was also carried out for the English TAKS. Results were more variable since there was less TAKS data to analyze (TAKS is

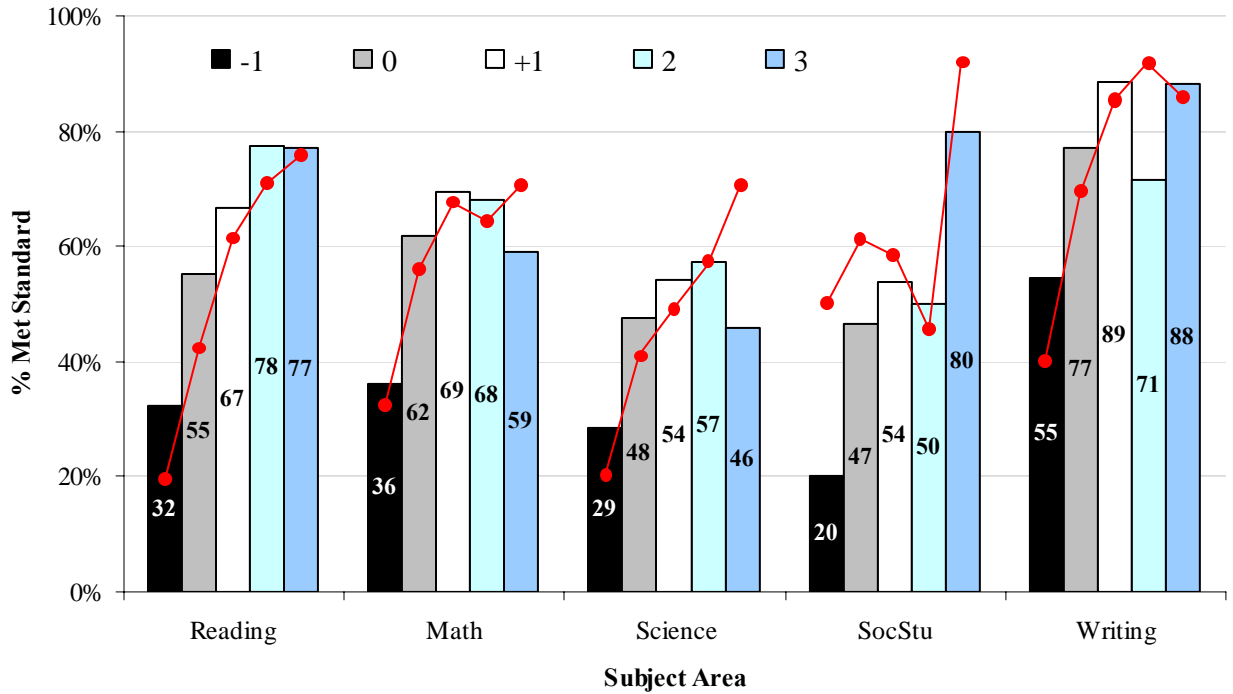


Figure 7. FLI LEP student English TAKS performance (% passing) by subject area and year. Also included (filled circles) are results from a matched comparison sample of LEP students.

only administered in grades 3 through 11, whereas the Stanford 10 is administered in grades 1 through 11 in HISD). Only data from the TAKS analysis of FLI LEPs is shown, in **Figure 7** (see above). Shown are the percent of students meeting the panel recommended standard (i.e., scale score of 2100)⁴ for each of five subtests; reading, mathematics, science, social studies, and writing. Dotted lines indicate data for a matched sample.

Results of the TAKS were not the same as those for the Stanford. Although FLI students showed improvements in performance for each of the five TAKS subtests, there was no evidence for any of the subscales that these gains were larger than those observed for a matched comparison group.

Student Retention

Another set of student achievement data is illustrated in Figure 8 (below right). This illustrates the percentage of FLI students who have repeated at least one grade. Also included are data for the same matched control group included in earlier analyses. Results are shown according to grade level.

Statistical analysis showed that across all grade levels, there were significantly fewer re-tentions for FLI students than there were for those of the matching control group (Chi-Squared = 5.80, df = 1, p = .016). Further analyses of each different grade level showed that this

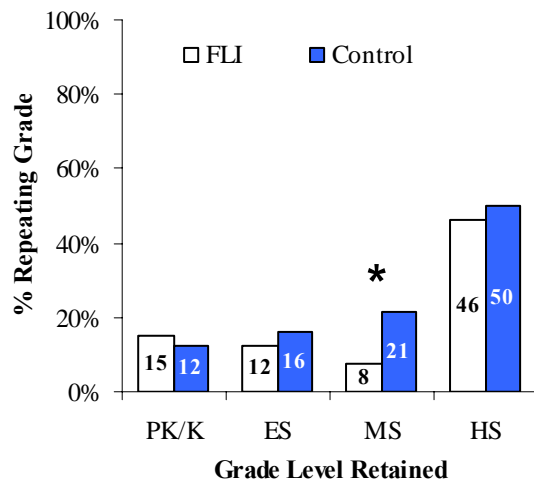


Figure 8. Percentage of FLI and matched control student repeating at least one grade. Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.

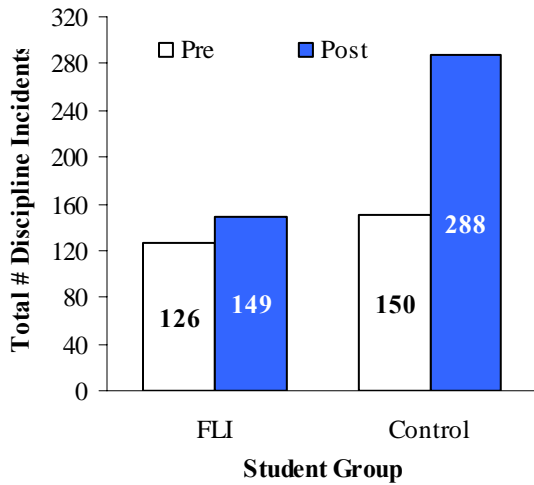


Figure 9. Total number of disciplinary incidents reported before and after FLI participation, for FLI and control groups.

effect was largest for students in middle school (Chi-Squared = 17.45, df = 1, $p < .001$).

Student Discipline

The final set of student performance data is shown in Figure 9 (see above). This figure shows the total number of discipline incidents reported for students in the FLI group as well as for those in the matched control group. Data from all four student cohorts is included. “Pre” data is from the year prior to FLI participation, while “post” data is from 2007–2008 school year for all cohorts. Only students who were enrolled for both the “pre” and “post” school years are included in this analysis.

As can be seen, the FLI student group showed only a modest change, with a non-significant increase of 18.3% in the total number of discipline incidents. In contrast, the number of discipline incidents reported for the matched control group increased by 92.0% over the same time period. This interaction was highly significant (Chi-squared = 9.53, $p < .003$).

Did participating in the FLI change the attitudes, beliefs, or skills of parents and caregivers?

Parent surveys were administered to LEP participants in three of the four years in which

the program was offered, to a total of 279 parents. Their responses are summarized here. Demographic statistics for survey participants were provided earlier. Survey items are divided into four different categories; empowerment, benefits, family life, and leadership. The survey questions are provided in **Appendix C**, along with details of responses collected.

Empowerment

Ninety percent of parents reported that they were involved in parent-related activities at their child’s school. Most (53.6%) indicated that they had been involved for more than a year, with 28.1% involved between 6 months and a year and 18.3% being involved for less than 6 months.

The most common parent activities reported were acting as a volunteer (71.8%) and participating in a parent leadership group (67.3%). Most parents also reported that they had enrolled in classes (76.7%) to improve their English skills, the most common option being ESL classes (83.6% of those responding).

Benefits

Ninety-eight percent of FLI participants said that they used strategies they had learned from the FLI program in their homes. The most commonly reported strategy used was “communicating with their children daily about their needs and their future”, 86.3%. Also mentioned were becoming active participants in their child’s homework (67.9%), and organizing an area in their home that their child could use as a work area (60.5%). Only 35.1% mentioned journal writing, another strategy taught during the FLI.

Ninety-three percent said that they had received career guidance through the FLI. Among the most commonly cited examples of career guidance activities were: college field trips, how to transfer college or school credits, and how to apply for and get assistance to enter college.

Most parents (94.8%) also reported that it was very helpful for them to have the FLI offered in both Spanish and English.

Family Life

Ninety-five percent of parents reported that the FLI had affected how much time they or their

spouse spent with their children. Activities commonly listed towards this end were: spending more time together, communicating, listening to their children more, doing some kind of fun activity together, and discussing schoolwork.

In addition, 97.3% of parents reported that the FLI had affected their child’s performance at school. Things affected by the FLI included improved grades (80.0%), improved relationships between child and teachers (60.8%), improved relationships with peers (51.0%), and improved school attendance (46.5%).

Leadership

Ninety-three percent of parents reported that their perceptions of school leaders had changed

since they started the FLI. Reasons for the change included: having more respect for school leaders, valuing the work of school leaders and teachers, knowing that the school staff are interested in educating their children, and knowing that they were concerned about their kids.

Ninety-two percent of parents also reported that their interactions with school leaders had changed as a result of the FLI. Examples included improved communication, lower feelings of insecurity in meetings with teachers, increased self-confidence, improvements in expressing themselves, and increased mutual respect.

Finally, parents were asked to provide suggestions on how the FLI might be improved.

Table 2. FLI SLiCK Student Survey Responses, in Comparison to All District LEPs in High School.

Survey Item	FLI SLiCK			HS LEPs			Sig.
	Agree	NS	Disagree	Agree	NS	Disagree	
1. My school explains what students need to do to graduate	77	16	7	79	14	8	ns
2. My math teacher makes the coursework easy enough for me to understand	68	17	15	65	19	16	ns
3. My science teacher makes the coursework easy enough for me to understand	80	12	8	63	22	15	p<.05
4. My social studies teacher makes the coursework easy enough for me to understand	75	21	4	67	21	11	p<.03
5. The teachers are highly motivated to teach their students	77	18	5	62	28	11	p<.03
6. The teachers show interest in their students	73	21	6	63	26	11	ns
7. Students having problems with schoolwork can get the help they need	83	10	7	73	19	9	ns
8. Students can get counseling when they need it	71	25	4	63	25	12	p<.02
9. I am motivated to do well in school	87	11	2	81	14	5	ns
10. My friends are motivated to do well in school	57	37	6	54	37	11	ns
11. The school and teachers have high expectations for their students	77	20	4	63	28	10	p<.03
12. My parents are involved with and support my education	83	8	8	78	13	10	ns
13. Things I learned in earlier grades prepared me for work I now have to do in high school	83	15	2	76	15	9	p<.03
14. Responsibilities outside of school affect my ability to do well in school (e.g., working, parenting or family duties)	40	29	31	45	24	32	ns
15. Interesting after-school extracurricular activities are available to me (clubs, sports, etc.)	76	15	8	62	21	18	p<.02
16. There are interesting classes or programs I can participate in	81	15	4	63	24	13	p<.005

Common suggestions included: involve more schools or expand the program, have sessions at different time including night sessions, and significantly, having more fathers attend the workshops. Typically, most parents taking part in the FLI are the child's mother or female caregiver, not their father or male care-giver.

There are other anecdotal data that highlights the impact of the FLI program on parents. Precise numbers are unavailable, but former graduates of the program have gone on to be hired as teacher's aides and clerks in the district. One parent has even become a teacher for HISD.

Did the FLI have an impact on the beliefs of children of FLI participants?

Since the children of FLI participants do not attend the FLI sessions, and are distributed across a number of campuses and home addresses across the district, obtaining feedback from them is impractical. Fortunately, there is an option for collecting data on student attitudes and beliefs by utilizing student participants in the SLiCK program.

SLiCK is an acronym for "Student Leadership, Identity, Knowledge, and Culture". SLiCK is a parallel series of leadership workshops for youth (middle and high school students) whose parents participate in the FLI. The SLiCK program consists of a series of five workshops occurring in the fall or spring.

Beginning in spring of 2007, a sixteen-item survey was administered to student participants in the SLiCK program towards the end of the program. Students were polled on their attitudes towards school, motivational level, and more generally how they perceived their current school environment. The full set of items used in the survey are presented in **Table 2** (see p. 16). Also included in Table 2 are corresponding data collected in spring 2007 from over 4,000 high school student classified as LEP. The latter survey was conducted independently of the FLI and has been utilized for other purposes. It does, however, allow us to compare attitudes of SLiCK participants to those of typical LEP high school students in the district.

A total of 84 student surveys have been collected from SLiCK participants since spring of 2007. Data in Table 2 summarize the results from these 84 students, in terms of the percentage of students agreeing with or disagreeing with each particular survey item (NS indicates "not sure"). Also shown are data for the LEP high school sample from spring 2007 (this survey has only been administered once so far). Comparisons of the proportions agreeing or disagreeing across the two groups were conducted using Chi-square. The rightmost column in the table summarizes the probability levels associated with each comparison. Note that all probability levels shown are directional, i.e. they assess the extent to which responses from the SLiCK sample are *more positive* than those from the LEP-HS sample, not simply whether they are different per se.

The student survey has 16 items, and on eight of them there was a significant difference between the percentages of positive and negative responses of SLiCK participants and the district's LEP high school population. In each of these cases, the SLiCK participants demonstrated more positive responses. Two of the items showing more positive responses were #3 and #4 ("science/social studies teacher makes the coursework easy enough to understand"). A difference was also seen for item #8 ("students can get counseling when they need it").

Additional items showing advantages for SLiCK students were # 5 and #11 (concerning teacher's motivational levels and expectations), as well as item #13 (concerning how prepared they were for the schoolwork they now faced). Finally, SLiCK participants felt that there were more interesting extracurricular activities available (item #15) as well as interesting classes or academic programs they could take part in (item #16). There are certain caveats which must be considered with respect to this data (e.g., the fact that the SLiCK sample included not only high school students but some middle school students as well). Nevertheless, the pattern of results does appear to show a more positive set of attitudes towards school among FLI students who participate in SLiCK.

Conclusions

The goal of the Family Leadership Institute (FLI) is to provide parents and caregivers with family leadership skills in order to support academic achievement and life success for their children. The program is composed of ten modules, taught in a group setting in separate sessions throughout the school year. It has been offered in the district since the 2004–2005 school year. Its two main areas of emphasis are, first, to provide participating parents and caregivers with the skills and inspiration needed to enhance their own personal success and to allow them to serve as role models for their children. Second, the program places strong emphasis on parental engagement, and attempts to increase parents' involvement in their children's education.

The FLI primarily serves Hispanic families, (approximately 98%), and has graduated a total of 504 parents since it began in 2004–2005. For these parents, a total of 765 students could be identified as being enrolled in HISD. Approximately two-thirds (68%) were LEP at the time their parents participated in the FLI. Most demographics for the FLI students were similar to those of the district's overall LEP population.

Stanford 10 scores for FLI students were only modestly impacted by parental participation in the program. Statistically significant improvements from baseline (pre-FLI) to post-FLI scores were seen for the complete FLI sample for the reading subscale of the Stanford. When the FLI-LEP subgroup was examined, a single subtest also showed significant improvement, but in this case it was the language subscale. In addition, FLI students were significantly less likely than matched controls to have either repeated a grade or to have increased disciplinary incidents.

There were 279 parents who completed surveys assessing their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in four categories; empowerment, benefits, family life, and leadership. Across all categories, parents reported high levels of interest in the program, and a belief that it had helped improve their skills in addressing their children's educational needs. Ninety-eight percent of parents said that they had used strategies learned via the FLI

program in their home, and 97% believed that it had affected their child's performance at school.

Finally, children of FLI parents who participated in the SLiCK program showed more positive attitudes towards school than did a comparison group of 4,000 district LEP high school students. Overall, the FLI program appeared to have had a positive impact on attitudes and beliefs of both parents and students, and there is evidence for gains in academic performance as well.

Recommendations

1. During the time it has existed in the district, funding for the FLI program has been a challenge. Therefore, more stable sources of program support should be sought. Since the program began it has been supported by Title III funds through the Multilingual Department. However, this funding has been reduced every year, largely due to budgetary constraints. The district should investigate all options regarding alternative funding sources for the program.
2. The FLI program should be expanded, and the number of campuses and regions offering the program should be increased.
3. The FLI model allows for the possibility that former graduates of the FLI be used as "trainers" to supplement or replace paid professional staff. In this way, over time, the FLI can be offered to more campuses and parents, and could be self-sustaining. This process has just begun in the district. Should the FLI program continue, a rigorous evaluation needs to be done of how this particular aspect of the program has been performing

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2. Assuming that other conditions were met, in particular that they have a child who is LEP and is enrolled in the district.
 3. To participate in the FLI, parents must have at least one child who is enrolled in the district and is considered LEP. However, not all of their children need be LEP. Thus, the full roster of children whose parents have taken part in the FLI includes both LEP and non-LEP students.
 4. The SAS database was used in the district through the 2005–2006 school year. With the start of the school year in 2006–2007, it was replaced with the Chancery database system.
 5. For TAKS, it was decided to use the panel recommended standard (scale score of 2100), because the actual “met standard” passing criterion was not constant over the years of the program for certain subtests. Using the panel recommended standard allows data from each cohort and each year to be compared.
 6. By combining the results of all four cohorts, data from different years will be derived from different numbers of observations. More precisely, years “-1” and “0” include data from all four cohorts. However, year “+1” includes data from the 2004–2005 through 2006–2007 cohorts, year “+2” includes data from the 2004–2005 and 2006–2007 cohorts, and year “+3” includes data from the 2004–2005 cohort only.

Endnotes

1. The FLI sessions have usually been offered exclusively in Spanish due to the population of parents who have participated. There was one exception when a single African American parent was enrolled; during that year's FLI, sessions were in Spanish and English.

Appendix A

Mean pre- and post-FLI NCE scores for FLI student group and matched comparison sample. Shown are Stanford 10 scores for each of the cohorts that have gone through the FLI (C1 = 2004–2005, C2 = 2005–2006, C3 = 2006–2007, and C4 = 2007–2008), as well as overall performance. Data for the reading, mathematics, language, science, and social science subtests of the Stanford are included. Also indicated are the mean pre vs. post difference scores, one-tailed t-test, and probability level.

Reading	FLI						Matched Control					
	n	Pre	Post	Δ	t	p	n	Pre	Post	Δ	t	p
C1*	55	45.72	50.11	4.33	2.51	.0074	45	44.03	46.80	11.10	1.53	.0664
C2	34	48.62	51.64	3.02	1.24	.1114	34	44.95	43.67	-1.28	-0.65	.2582
C3	53	48.47	51.09	2.62	1.55	.0638	60	43.18	45.51	2.33	1.62	.0549
C4	33	43.67	44.29	0.62	0.35	.3639	38	43.24	41.63	-1.61	-1.04	.1523
Combined	175	46.73	49.61	2.88	3.04	.0013	177	43.75	44.65	0.90	1.07	.1425
Math												
C1	54	52.69	55.64	2.95	1.36	.0902	46	51.24	54.90	3.66	1.84	.0357
C2	33	58.38	57.37	-1.01	0.35	.3640	35	54.31	54.46	0.15	0.18	.4267
C3	53	56.16	56.17	0.01	0.00	.4982	59	50.03	51.92	1.89	0.84	.2005
C4	33	58.58	59.14	0.56	0.26	.3972	38	51.81	54.42	2.61	0.26	.3972
Combined	173	55.96	56.80	0.84	0.76	.2235	178	51.51	53.72	2.21	1.99	.0239
Language												
C1	56	47.06	48.51	1.45	0.88	.1909	47	48.16	45.79	-2.37	-0.99	.1615
C2	34	53.49	53.69	0.20	0.08	.4663	37	49.17	49.32	0.15	0.06	.4762
C3	53	48.69	51.31	2.62	1.42	.0802	59	45.99	49.58	3.59	1.97	.0266
C4	33	47.71	45.91	-1.80	-0.77	.2245	38	44.03	42.21	-1.82	-1.01	.1586
Combined	176	48.92	49.86	0.94	0.96	.1695	181	46.79	46.86	0.07	0.06	.4764
Science												
C1	54	48.64	50.25	1.61	0.69	.2466	46	43.41	51.63	8.22	3.51	.0005
C2	30	52.96	52.32	0.64	0.32	.3747	30	47.04	50.38	3.34	1.17	.1246
C3	49	52.25	52.84	0.59	0.28	.3913	52	45.95	47.64	1.69	0.97	.1676
C4	29	53.37	54.96	1.59	0.59	.2805	38	48.38	50.94	2.56	1.12	.1332
Combined	162	51.38	52.26	0.88	0.75	.2263	166	46.00	49.99	3.99	3.54	.0003
SocScience												
C1	55	46.83	50.59	3.76	1.96	.0276	46	46.45	49.76	3.31	1.35	.0919
C2	30	50.93	49.83	-1.10	-0.48	.3159	30	45.36	45.09	-0.27	-0.12	.4529
C3	49	49.05	50.49	1.44	0.75	.2271	52	44.06	44.53	0.47	0.26	.3973
C4	30	44.92	48.99	4.07	1.84	.0374	38	41.77	43.68	1.91	1.25	.1103
Combined	164	47.89	50.13	2.24	2.16	.0163	166	44.43	45.89	1.46	1.40	.0814

* C = cohort

Appendix B

Mean pre- and post-FLI NCE scores for FLI LEP student group and matched comparison sample of LEP students. Shown are Stanford 10 scores for each of the cohorts that have gone through the FLI (C1 = 2004–2005, C2 = 2005–2006, C3 = 2006–2007, and C4 = 2007–2008), as well as overall performance. Data for the reading, mathematics, language, science, and social science subtests of the Stanford are included. Also indicated are the mean pre vs. post difference scores, one-tailed t-test, and probability level.

	FLI - LEP						Matched Control - LEP					
Reading	n	Pre	Post	Δ	t	p	n	Pre	Post	Δ	t	p
C1*	15	22.27	35.21	12.94	3.57	.0015	9	30.18	41.28	11.10	2.38	.0221
C2	22	26.18	35.72	9.54	2.89	.0043	11	25.83	30.25	4.42	1.21	.1277
C3	11	25.87	35.00	9.13	2.72	.0107	17	28.19	33.94	5.75	2.43	.0136
C4	13	36.72	38.69	1.97	0.51	.3091	16	33.99	34.54	0.41	0.29	.3865
Combined	61	27.68	36.10	8.42	4.76	.0000	53	29.79	34.60	4.81	3.24	.0010
Math												
C1	14	33.84	45.14	11.30	2.42	.0154	9	48.09	56.63	8.54	1.44	.0931
C2	7	43.89	52.84	8.95	0.86	.2110	12	39.33	43.11	3.78	0.88	.1999
C3	11	42.02	47.95	5.93	1.67	.0632	17	35.88	46.66	10.78	3.16	.0029
C4	13	56.85	56.95	0.10	0.04	.4860	16	49.99	53.69	3.70	1.04	.1584
Combined	45	44.05	50.44	6.39	2.61	.0061	54	42.86	49.62	6.76	3.33	.0008
Language												
C1	16	25.00	33.73	8.73	2.05	.0288	9	36.21	36.41	0.20	0.04	.4847
C2	7	35.31	46.29	10.98	2.24	.0331	14	31.05	33.17	2.12	0.54	.2967
C3	11	29.60	39.30	10.30	2.50	.0156	17	34.18	40.26	6.08	2.51	.0116
C4	13	42.24	44.11	2.87	0.95	.1814	16	34.48	32.36	-2.12	-0.72	.2411
Combined	47	32.10	39.91	7.81	3.81	.0002	56	33.81	35.61	1.80	1.06	.1457
Science												
C1	14	32.33	38.20	5.87	1.08	.1489	9	35.47	45.84	10.37	1.17	.1376
C2	5	45.68	43.80	-1.88	-0.30	.3888	8	31.48	38.09	6.61	1.62	.0743
C3	11	36.98	40.60	3.62	0.88	.1984	16	32.83	40.86	8.03	4.14	.0004
C4	11	54.99	56.96	1.97	0.57	.2888	16	45.69	48.57	2.88	0.77	.2265
Combined	41	41.29	44.56	3.27	1.36	.0904	49	37.16	43.84	6.68	2.93	.0025
SocScience												
C1	14	25.91	38.67	12.76	3.42	.0022	9	44.23	46.21	1.98	0.36	.3621
C2	5	39.62	39.52	-0.10	-0.01	.4954	8	31.58	30.31	-1.27	-0.24	.4085
C3	11	32.71	36.58	3.87	0.89	.1973	16	31.18	41.49	10.31	3.61	.0012
C4	11	43.82	49.21	5.39	2.34	.0204	16	35.09	40.02	4.96	2.34	.0167
Combined	41	34.21	41.10	6.89	3.22	.0012	49	35.09	40.02	4.93	2.81	.0036

* C = cohort

Appendix C

Questions and responses from parental survey administered to FLI participants.

Survey Item	
Empowerment	
1. Are you involved in parental related activities at your school?	Yes = 238 (90%), No = 26 (10%)
2. How long have you been involved in parentactivities at your children’s school?	6 mo. Or less = 43 (18.3%) 6 mo. – 1 yr. = 66 (28.1%) > 1 yr. = 126 (53.6%)
3. What types of parent activities have you been involved with at your children’s school?	Parent leadership group = 165 (67.3%) Parent volunteer = 176 (71.8%) Tutoring = 21 (8.6%) PTO = 77 (31.4%) Other = 21 (8.6%)
4. Have you enrolled in classes to improve your English skills?	Yes = 198 (76.7%), No = 60 (23.3%)
5. What classes have you taken to improve your English skills?	ESL = 178 (83.6%) Adult literacy = 22 (4.7%) Other = 26 (12.2%)
6. Are you currently enrolled in any other type of education program?	Computer class(es) = 60 (29.3%) GED classes = 23 (11.2%) Vocational classes = 7 (3.4%) College = 3 (1.5%) Other = 64 (31.2%)
Benefits	
7. Have you received career guidance through the FLI?	Yes = 244 (93.1%), No = 18 (6.9%)
8. What type of career guidance have you received?	(open-ended responses)
9. To what extent has it been useful to you to receive the FLI training sessions in Spanish and English?	Not helpful = 0 Somewhat helpful = 14 (5.2%) Very helpful = 253 (94.8%)
10. What types of personal/family assistance have you received through the FLI?	Family counseling = 236 (86.8%) Parenting advice = 212 (77.9%) Financial information for college = 200 (73.5%) Health assistance = 68 (25.0%) other = 20 (7.4%)
11. Have you used strategies from the Family Literacy presentation in your home?	Yes = 254 (98.1%), No = 5 (1.9%)
12. What strategies from the Family Literacy presentation have you used in your home?	Organizing your child’s work area = 164 (60.5%) Active participants with child’s school work = 184 (67.9%) Journal writing = 95 (35.1%) Communicate with child daily about needs, their future = 234 (86.3%)
Family Life	
13. Has the FLI affected how much time you or your spouse spend with your children?	Yes = 244 (95.3%), No = 12 (4.7%)
14. How has it affected time spent with your children?	(open-ended responses)
15. the FLI affected your children’s performance at school?	Yes = 239 (97.2%), No = 7 (2.8%)
16. How has the FLI affected your child’s performance at school?	Improved attendance = 114 (46.5%) Improved grades = 196 (80.0%) Improved relationships with peers = 125 (51.0%) Improved relationships with teachers = 149 (60.8%)
Leadership	
17. Have your perceptions of school leaders changed since you began the FLI?	Yes = 230 (92.7%), No = 18 (7.3%)
18. How have your perceptions of school leaders changed?	(open-ended responses)
19. Have your interactions with school leaders changed since you began the FLI?	Yes = 200 (91.7%), No = 18 (8.3%)
20. How have your interactions changed?	(open-ended responses)
21. Suggestions to improve FLI?	(open-ended responses)