

## **FLI IMPACT REPORT 2017**

### **The Family Leadership Institute (FLI) Program at the San Bernardino City Unified School District (SBCUSD)**

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## Executive Summary

The Family Leadership Institute (FLI) has been a major program initiative among parents at the San Bernardino City Unified School District (SBCUSD) the past two years. Since academic year (AY) 2015-2016 the program has principally focused on parents and caregivers with the goal of providing family leadership skills that support lifelong success for parents and high academic achievement for their children, as provided to the district through a contractual agreement with Educational Achievement Services, Inc. (EAS, Inc).

During the past two academic years, seven cohorts of parents and caregivers and district personnel completed the FLI program for a total of 344 participants. Another 149 participated in related FLI events (e.g., National Practitioner Training Summits and PLP community events)<sup>1</sup> for a total of 493 participants receiving some type of FLI training during this time.

Evaluation of the FLI began early 2017. The study was based on a mixed-methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data were based on district events as well as from interviews with school staff and parents, including parent focus groups and formal/informal field observations; with quantitative data gathered from two parent surveys as well as from student performance indicators. The latter were gathered from two stratified random samples of students from trained parents matched with comparison groups. Driven by three research questions, the study first reviewed the demographics of who participated in the program and how they viewed the training, with two additional research questions focused on particular parental behaviors and indicators of student performance.

Participants were primarily female (86%) and Hispanic (93%). Evidence of program effectiveness yielded most favorable results for increased parent participation rates across various indicators of parent engagement. As parents gained positive attitudes toward schools, they also became more involved with school-based activities and events, where nearly one-fourth now volunteer across schools, focused on special initiatives aimed at academic progress for their children. Among ancillary outcomes, the FLI helped strengthen the Family Engagement Leadership Development Office and led to the formation of parent cadre leaders at various schools and districtwide.

Study results indicate substantial evidence of program effectiveness, especially schools where parents were highly involved. Nearly all (98%) parents reported greater capacity to put into practice strategies learned. During interviews and focus groups, most parents were able to report specific ways FLI had influenced interactions with their children. A large majority (88%) also felt this increased their child's performance in school. Program satisfaction is very high.

For FLI parents, significant changes are also now evident in their children's attendance rates and GPA, with decreases also reflected in disciplinary action. Given these trends, it is expected that academic performance will be influenced soon by parental changes in both attitude and behavior. While program exposure has been far too short to fully reflect influences from change in parent behaviors, it is expected soon, as academic performance is often last in the series.

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<sup>1</sup> These are specialized and condensed FLI trainings tailored to particular settings, organizations and populations (refer to page 7).

## FLI IMPACT REPORT OCTOBER 2017

### I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### Introduction

Investment in parent involvement is a cost-effective and evidence-based process that promotes family-school relations by supporting parent and caregiver<sup>2</sup> engagement in the schooling process, as it also advances student performance and wellbeing. Research is now abundantly clear that parental support greatly enhances school performance, quite likely the strongest contributor to student success.<sup>3</sup>

Programs like the FLI are dedicated to the advancement of student success both for academic and lifelong accomplishment by reaching out to parents as key stakeholders in the process of learning and achievement. Many studies suggest that as parents engage with schools, so do their children; and as parents feel comfortable with schools, so will their kids. Equally for academic success, as parents attend to homework so will their children complete their assignments, creating a strong pattern of reinforcement and support.

While every district applauds parental engagement, all too few fully promote and support the concept. By contrast, this is the story of one district that has taken important steps in a positive direction to ensure that parents and caregivers are equipped with the skills needed to guide their children toward academic success. SBCUSD fully anticipates the promotion of more parent activities of this type the next several years. Most recently, it has expanded resources for its parent community by enhancing its parent resource center known as the Family Engagement Leadership Development Office and by sponsoring the training of parent cadres as they help lead the process of school engagement.<sup>4</sup>

To this end, the Family Leadership Institute (FLI) program played a major role in serving the needs of immigrant and migrant Hispanic/Latino<sup>5</sup> families through four main programmatic thrusts: 1) providing parents and caregivers with skills needed to enhance personal success; 2) guiding parents as role models for their children; 3) placing strong emphasis on school-family engagement; and 4) strengthening parent leadership at home and with schools and community. Altogether, these initiatives promoted the success of children, as they strengthened personal development for parents and helped increase their connections with schools.

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<sup>2</sup> The terms parents and caregivers are interchangeable throughout this report.

<sup>3</sup> NEA, *Parent, Family, Community Involvement in Education*, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase “parent resource center” will be used in reference to the “Family Engagement Leadership Development Office.”

<sup>5</sup> The terms Hispanic and Latino are synonymous.

During the past two years, efforts from the FLI were aimed at the heart of these initiatives. By doing this, the FLI directed the training of nearly 500 parents, key community leaders and school staff, with parents and caregivers becoming stronger leaders in their homes; staff becoming greater ambassadors for school-based learning; and community leaders more vested in parental engagement throughout the City of San Bernardino and its public schools. As such, FLI leadership and parenting courses reinforced student learning and development by investing in the needs of parents and the local community.

### **Study Aims**

In promoting K-12 achievement in public schools, the important role of families has become a most critically important area of focus for the success of American education this past half century. Aligned with this mission, the SBCUSD has adopted the concept seriously, as it has enlisted programs like the FLI to strongly assist in this process. As such, it has lent support to these efforts, especially for both Latino and African American communities in the reinforcement of parent leadership development.

In addition, the district has involved the Family Engagement Leadership Development Office, also known as the parent resource center, in strengthening these relationships among the 71 public schools throughout the City, while also including the district's alternative schools, its adult school, and several of its child development centers.

To better assess how the needs of parents are being met, the SBCUSD wanted to know the impact of its parent programs; more specifically, the impact of the FLI program among schools where FLI has been strongly implemented in its promotion of higher levels of parent engagement in schools. The goal of this research aims to assess the extent to which programs like the FLI have impacted parent groups, both for family strengthening and school participation as well as for student progress.

Specifically for the FLI, this study aims to evaluate the impact of enrolling and certifying hundreds of parents, school staff and community leaders alike in the FLI curricula. Most notably among them, the Latino parents that have completed the 10-module course of the FLI the past two calendar years, 2015 and 2016. The study attempts to assess how the FLI has helped SBCUSD meet its community goals, including that of attaining higher parental engagement in its public schools. In addition, it provides suggestions on how to more greatly maximize this influence and support its rate of success.

Quite specifically, the purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which overall objectives of the FLI program are being met as these also bolster district goals. This includes changes in beliefs, behavior and skills that might reflect improved attitudes and stronger leadership skills among parents as well as how they transfer positively to the overall improvement of behavior and academic performance for children.

The following three research questions drove the study: 1) How many and what type of parents and other influences have been impacted by the FLI program? 2) What has been the degree of impact of the FLI program on these groups of participants? and 3) What notable

evidence exists for parents on the behavioral change and academic achievement of their children?

### **Parent Engagement**

Looking back at parent engagement, the 1970s was known as the decade of “parents as advisors,” as the role of parent involvement gained impetus from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) mid-sixties, most especially Title I (compensatory education) and later Title VII (bilingual education). From the federal perspective, increased parent involvement aimed to: 1) make services delivered to the “poor” more responsive to their needs; 2) integrate community life with schooling; and 3) ensure stronger school accountability (Davies, et al., 1979). It was the ESEA amendments of 1974 that later passed tighter regulations to establish parent advisory councils (PACs) before the submission of applications for supplementary funding by the Federal Government (Federal Register 45 C.F.R., 116.17(o)).

Subsequently in 1978 (P.L. 95-561), the ESEA Amendments created the most comprehensive of any of the Title mandates that related to parental involvement. Under these Amendments, local education agencies (LEAs) were required to involve the PACs in Title program planning and implementation that assured PAC composition was representative, among other assurances. Since then, parent engagement has expanded considerably, as we have subsequently learned more about how it best works and how its relationship to student success is strengthened.

Our learning from parent engagement is that it is not a hindrance to the goals of a school system. To the contrary, it is essential for parents to become involved. In cases where districts see parents as getting in the way, this more often related to issues the district had mismanaged or neglected, fully independent of parent engagement *per se*. Documentation now clearly shows that the health of a district is more dependent on the health of its parent groups than the other way around. Data are now rather conclusive that contrary to limiting parent programs, school districts are learning how to expand and reinforce parental efforts whenever possible. In tandem, similar principles are also applicable to administrators and their schools.

Research on high expectations is now consistent that children’s “expectancy for success” emanates greatly from parents, as parents take on the role of “expectancy socializers” (Frome & Eccles, 1998). It follows that when parents increase their expectancies of success, so do their children. This is also why achievement becomes more greatly valued, pursued, and anticipated by the child. In actuality, this is similar to how the pursuit of higher learning and career aspirations are also promoted (Dubow, et al., 2009).

By parallel logic, teacher expectations follow similar reasoning, as teachers must also affirm high expectations. Fundamentally, however, orientation should begin at home. Regardless of antecedents, if expectations at home and school are unaligned, child insecurity and failure increase. Over time, this can put the child at considerable risk.

FLI concurs that the most critical factors in the learning and character-building of students occurs within these two primary spheres of influence—the family and the school. Intuitively, linking the two reinforces the child’s progress socially as well as academically. These two pillars

of support are what researchers call “overlapping spheres of influence” (Epstein & Sanders, 2000). These are critical for both parents and educators, as it stands to reason that in working together they jointly create the best of both worlds toward student success.

It is important to note that when school staff (especially the teacher) is uncomfortable with parents, it is often because there has been insufficient professional orientation on how to work with parents, as parents represent the single greatest asset, dollar-for-dollar, for student achievement. It is also important to note that rather than blaming the parent, even the most difficult-to-work-with becomes an asset when reached through appropriate school and teacher practices. The underlying belief is that *all* parents can be enlisted. For nonmainstream populations, all too often the cultural component is a missing ingredient for staff and a major reason why schools falter in this arena.

As the FLI reinforces throughout its trainings, the role of the parent resource center (or equivalent) back at the district becomes critical, as it fortified by these trainings, putting into immediate practice what parents have learned, while motivating them to be role models and to connect with local groups, where parents learn from parents and support one another. To this end, parent resource centers play key roles for parent participation in school events, including hosting activities that help refine and put into practice the key concepts they have learned. As such, multiple programs and engagement activities with parents should be ongoing and periodic (e.g., monthly), even for those that rarely attend meetings.

Such centers should also strive to encourage parent input and ideas that strengthen opportunities to volunteer. A key goal is to ensure that parents are fully involved in events throughout the district, as such parent centers should also help track and monitor parent participation in school functions and activities that will further expand their voice by including them in decision-making processes and in the training of others.

The Strategic Plan for Family Engagement formulated by the SBCUSD (May 2017) is aligned with these concepts, with the mission to “help implement best strategies for promoting Family Engagement ... to ensure ... educational success for families in the San Bernardino community” (p. 2). A critical takeaway from this initiative is the need for schools to value collaborative and coordinated systems that promote strong and healthy family and community engagement.

### **Research Significance**

The goals of this study align with the conclusions of major research conducted the past several decades on parent engagement such as that from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), *A New Wave of Evidence* (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). This macro analysis—now sustained—concluded that the most accurate and consistent predictor of student achievement is the extent to which families are involved in the education of their children. This was documented to be more important than family income, race or other factors. Scores of studies have subsequently affirmed that when schools, families, and communities work in tandem to support learning, children do better, as they become more receptive to benefit from classroom instruction.

Research findings from associations like the National Middle School Association (2006) and America’s Promise Alliance also indicate overwhelmingly that regardless of background, income or zip code, students with involved parents are more likely to earn better grades, attain higher test results, enroll in higher-level programs, earn more credits, attend school more regularly, have more highly-developed social skills, and demonstrate stronger resilience in their relationship with peers, all evidence-based findings.

According to data from America’s Promise Alliance cited by a recent report from the National PTA (2014), a student drops out of school every 26 seconds. As presented, their data suggests that “every student should be afforded every opportunity to graduate from high school while being adequately prepared for and encouraged to pursue postsecondary education, including vocational education” (p. 3). By similar standards, the Association explicitly emphasizes that for families to become engaged they will need: a) information, b) encouragement, and c) support from school staff. These are precisely the guidelines adopted by the FLI curriculum, but with the added admonition that parents must be d) trained to guide the process adequately as well as e) know the elements that assure healthy cultural norms are never compromised, as these must remain intact and strongly reinforced. For the parent, culture is akin to the ballast that provides the balance to a floating ship.

As now well established, parents that provide substantial influence on their children’s behavior also exert strong control and oversight to their academic performance, almost as if an accountability mechanism was spearheaded from the home. At the other end of the spectrum, children exposed to highly aggressive parenting conditions—like interpersonal conflicts—display high rates of stress and aggression. Here the effects between negative parenting and acting out are bi-directional. Presumably, children learn negative problem-solving styles as a result of repeated exposure to such models (Huesmann & Kirwil, 2007). As a result, parents that utilize strong power-assertive techniques in managing their child’s behavior will influence their children in ways that are more likely to get them into trouble with the law and more often encounter disciplinary action (Cummings & Davies, 1994).

The latter concept is important to fully appreciate in broader context, as many families wrestle with interpersonal and familial conflicts that can spill onto the school environment. In conflict resolution, for example, social behavior is controlled to a great extent by social scripts. By learning to modulate among these scripts, parents can learn to discern more viable options and alternatives to resolve conflicts. By doing this, they both model behavior as they also pass this on to their children. Without doubt, the mental stability and healthy condition of parents has a great bearing for their children.

Students spend more than 70% of their time at home, with the balance of their time in school, among peers or with other family members (Dubow et al., 2009). The fact that parents have the greatest influence and are the first teacher in the life of a child, means that working with parents pays off for family cohesion and student wellbeing. Therefore, parent involvement that includes establishing home stability, checking on homework, attending school meetings and events, discussing school activities, and interacting with teachers has a more powerful influence on academic performance than other factors within the school itself.



More to the point, when parent engagement facilitates learning at home (e.g., reading aloud, sharing cultural history and engaging in simple learning tasks around the home) such activities produce a more profound impact on educational achievement than independent efforts expended by their teachers or the students themselves (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

In a research review of the FLI conducted by the Houston Independent School District (HISD, 2008), findings confirm that the FLI focuses on many of the skill sets and parental behaviors that the research literature has shown to impact on student academic achievement and attitude. In its analysis of nearly 200 parents, the HISD study found that the FLI had positive effects on both of these areas as well as on the overall attitudes and behaviors of parents long-term.<sup>6</sup>

Aligned with the above trends, the goal of the FLI is “to teach parents and caregivers the art and skills of family leadership in support of academic achievement and life outcomes for their children by using a practical ten-step approach.”<sup>7</sup> The following objectives are delineated in all FLI curricular materials as well as its Website.

1. To increase the engagement of families in the educational success of their children;
2. To provide needed tools and direction for parents and their children to achieve academic and lifelong success; and
3. To produce a cadre of knowledgeable and committed parents that actively supports school/community efforts that benefit their children while also equally encouraging families to succeed.

A more detailed description of the FLI curriculum and its ten modules is included in appendix A. The appendix also provides a broader overview of the FLI program and its objectives.

### **FLI Curricula**

At San Bernardino the FLI provided two types of curricula. One was the standard FLI parent curriculum, consisting of 10 modules, ranging from two to four-hours each; with the other called the Parents Living with Purpose (PLP), as a condensed, 2-day version of the 10-module, FLI parent curriculum. In a similar manner, the latter curriculum provides parents with the knowledge, tools and motivation to help children succeed in school and in life. It is designed to help empower parents become advocates for their children by improving their communication and collaboration with schools, with the goal of building partnerships to ensure greater student success.

The standard FLI curriculum is driven by research findings that confirm the role of parents as essential to the success of children in school. This represents the standard and most prescribed FLI parent workshop that contains ten essential modules. The premise is that when schools work together with families to support learning, such children tend to succeed more greatly “not just in school, but throughout life” (Henderson & Berla, 1997, p. 1).

<sup>6</sup> HISD evaluation of the FLI, 2008, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Taken from FLI Website, available at: <http://www.easleadership.com/programs/family-leadership-institute/>

When dealing with minority populations, the importance of the FLI curriculum follows the reasoning that researchers like Joyce Epstein (2001) advance, from her extensive research on parent engagement at Johns Hopkins; namely that family involvement is more important than family background in determining whether and how students' progress and succeed in school. In point of fact, one of the reasons districts sponsor parent initiatives is to help parents more strongly engage with schools as well as help monitor progress that ensures needed support systems are available to them and their children. School districts most heavily engaged in these processes are also among those that reach highest performance.

The FLI curriculum is predicated on the belief that parents are capable of learning new techniques for working with their children. This is further bolstered by the fact that all parents want their children to succeed. As a result, parents take pride in learning the best methods for how to work better with their children without undue pressure.

Successful parent engagement efforts also recognize that the parent-child relationship is distinct from but equally as important as the teacher-child relationship. It is important to understand, however, that what works well at school will not always work at home and vice versa. These relationships and tasks must be well understood as they also must be carefully cultivated and fostered. The magic of FLI is how it helps parents navigate across these domains delicately, with culture, relationship strategies, and socio-emotional factors each playing critical roles in supporting and nourishing the proper balance and wellbeing of the child.

Unquestionably, programs like the FLI are extremely important for parent engagement precisely because such well-evidenced and culturally-relevant program practices produce the strongest results (Moodie, et al., 2014). Regarding culture, related studies indicate that cultural approaches have great influence on parent engagement such as parent trainings, as they bring great relevance and tie best with culture (Barrera & Castro, 2006). These approaches appeal to hard-to-reach parents that might otherwise not participate, as considerable data now indicate that educational, community and mental health programs are more likely to successfully enlist Latino and other minority group parents when compared to traditional, middle class, mainstream approaches (Hughes, et al., 2005). Very special appeals are necessary for nonmainstream populations, as field-grounded methods and approaches work best in continually capturing and motivating such hard-to-reach populations. At its essence, programs like the FLI are uncommon and hard to find, with even fewer pre-qualified programs recommended by the Federal Government as evidence-based.

The FLI approach has several advantages to sister programs across the nation. In going beyond basic knowledge, it also brings relevance to the lives of parents, expanding much beyond even Epstein's (2001) framework of six types of parent involvement. For example, the FLI adds to its curriculum additional critical dimensions such as: 1) knowledge, awareness and acceptance of cultural roots; 2) personal validation and self-confidence; 3) basic principles of child advocacy; 4) support systems among parents; 5) lifelong goals and strategies to achieve them; 6) directly visiting universities, not just hearing about them; and 7) establishing harmonious relationships with family members by promoting personal and emotional wellness.

Additional to the standard FLI parent curriculum, the PLP curriculum was also offered to community organizations in San Bernardino, as section II elaborates in greater detail. As alluded, this latter curriculum is an abbreviated form of the full-length, 10-module, FLI parent curriculum. In addition to the standard FLI and the PLP, there are several other curricula offered by the FLI, including specialized curricula for youth. To date, however, only the standard FLI and the PLP have been sponsored in the City of San Bernardino.

The FLI curriculum has a long-standing reputation. Having been in operation for over twenty-two years, it has undergone extensive revisions and updates over time. This is not to say that one size fits all. In point of fact, this is not what it represents. From the start, the curriculum has been multicultural, though emphases was on the Latino family, as this coincided with the founder’s background. By fall of 2017, however, the curriculum is expected to again add several more sections to three of its modules that include more vignettes and relevant examples pertinent to both Native American and African American groups. Among parent programs, FLI is one of the most versatile, dual-language, and multicultural curricula of its type nationwide.

## II. GENERAL APPROACH AND FINDINGS

### Data Collection and Methods

A mixed-methods approach reliant on both qualitative and quantitative methods was utilized to measure program effects. More specifically, data were gathered utilizing ten distinct approaches and sources, as follows:

#### **1. Representative Numbers: Who participated, from where and how?**

*Trainings and Attendance:* The FLI began providing parent training to the City of San Bernardino on June 2015. Since then, seven FLI training sessions have been provided to cohorts of parents and school staff using the 4-day, 10-module FLI training curriculum. A total of 344 persons representing SBCUSD were trained between 2015 and 2016. Exhibit 1 represents total graduates for this curriculum, all attaining certificates of completion.

In addition, four other trainings were sponsored by the FLI for community persons using a sister curriculum called Parents Living with Purpose (PLP). This was oriented primarily to the African American, previously underrepresented. The was administered at four locales: the Anne Sherrill Community Center, the Boys and Girls Club, the Center at Highland Church, and one other training at San Gorgonio High School.<sup>8</sup> As earlier noted, this training is two days, somewhat different from the traditional FLI parent training, as it is also more condensed.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Two trainings occurred here: one was for the traditional FLI curriculum and the other for the PLP program.

<sup>9</sup> It had been decided that the PLP training would be helpful for certain community-based organizations (CBOs) and key participants, indirectly associated with the school district. These workshops further expanded the inclusion of the African American community so as to ensure they were included in the process.

**Exhibit 1:**  
**Number of New Parents Attending FLI Training at SBCUSD, 2015-2016**

School	Total Parents
Cajon High School	65
Dominguez Elementary	37
Vermont Elementary	54
San Gorgonio High School	41
San Bernardino High School	44
Indian Springs High School (1)	46
Indian Springs High School (2)	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>

PLP added another group to the original list from exhibit 1, bringing the total attendance from the City of San Bernardino to 471 by end of 2016, as per exhibit 2. Nearly 1-in-4 (26 percent) graduated from the PLP curriculum. All of these workshops were held in the City of San Bernardino.

**Exhibit 2:**  
**Total Number of Persons Participating in Trainings Hosted by the FLI,  
 City of San Bernardino (both FLI and PLP curricula)**

Institution	Total Parents
SBCUSD (FLI training for a total of seven school sites)	344 (74%)
Boys and Girls Club (PLP training)	42 (9%)
Anne Shirrells Community Center (PLP training)	30 (6%)
The Center at Highland Church (PLP training)	30 (6%)
San Gorgonio High School (PLP training)	25 (5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>471</b> (100%)

During this period, another three FLI training events (National Practitioner Training Summits) were held in Las Vegas, where SBCUSD also participated.<sup>10</sup> These events attracted larger attendance, as they included participants from multiple districts, though smaller representation from any single district. These latter workshops were again somewhat different, oriented for

<sup>10</sup> Two workshops were held in 2015 (July and December) and one in 2016 (June).

individuals interested in becoming FLI facilitators (or assistants) back at their district, with the exception of district staff that was present for general curricular orientation.

As designed, the forum for the summit events is conducted more like a trainer-of-trainer (TOT) model. Many attending from San Bernardino had been certified already in the traditional FLI curriculum. However, additional SBCUSD participants added another 22 to the list of first-time attendees, increasing the unduplicated total from the City of San Bernardino to 493 persons for all FLI events (FLIs, PLPs, and summits). Numbers are inclusive of parents, district staff (teachers, administrators and principals) as well as community members.

**2. *Observations from several workshop events as well as review of participant comments and ratings from all events, years 2015 and 2016.***

A total of four FLI workshops were observed (summits and local), where SBCUSD parents and staff participated. Notes were taken from these events on parent interactions, sidebar comments and informal conversations. Event interactions provided opportunity to observe dialogues among parents and note attitudinal responses during each four-day period. Interactions among participants were extensive, with sharing of the learning process well displayed and highly visible.

In addition, as reaction forms were collected for all FLI workshops in 2015 and 2016, a thorough review of these responses was also undertaken. This was helpful in capturing the likes and dislikes of every workshop as well as in documenting what participants considered most helpful. A compendium of selected quotes has been highlighted from these sessions and is included in appendix B. Statistical data compilations from reaction forms appear in later subsections to this report.

**3. *Observations at FLI-related events and parent center activities.***

Various observations were held for local events directed by FLI parents themselves as well as other local events related to the FLI program. In general, parents took on bold initiatives and various spinoffs for new activities occurred, fully parent-led, many independent of the parent resource center.

One example is when LTC (R) Consuelo Castillo Kickbusch, USA, was asked by parents to present at an impromptu event at El Cajon High School early spring of 2017. This was a kick-off event to expand the FLI program to nearby feeder schools. Turned out, the meeting was a catalyst that helped inspire parents to spearhead FLI initiatives to other schools, where parents subsequently guided efforts to establish new FLI groups, one group promoting another; with food, entertainment, speakers, and music fully provided by the parents. With tacit approval from principals, more events of this type are now being planned by parents.

At another event, FLI parents sought opportunity to present their story and achievements at a conference of bilingual educators, where parent groups were attended preconference institutes. Here the FLI parents had submitted a proposal and were selected as presenters for a pre-conference workshop. As it turned out, the all-day workshop event was very well attended

and highly rated, a conference highlight, with even greater attendance in the afternoon, as word spread throughout the conference. This was at the NABE national conference in Dallas (February 22, 2017). It marked a first-time event for SBCUSD parents of this type, one where Aldo Ramírez, Director of the parent resource center, was able to assist and promote. At the event, parents shared what the FLI meant to them, as first-time presenters before a national audience. This was an occasion where parents presented a “solo” run of their accomplishments. Highly thrilled in sharing their story, parents returned fully charged to fully continue these efforts back home and share accomplishments with much greater enthusiasm. Additional observations from various related events of these types, formal and informal, were noted as part of this evaluation.

**4. *Observations from special meetings held between parents and school officials, teachers, and community leadership.***

There was also opportunity to observe parents in the process of advocating for their children at several meetings; once at a school board meeting, other times at school meetings, and at another occasion within a wider-community context, with a CBO.

These meetings provided parents with the opportunity to express their feelings about school matters. Equally important, this became of major relevance for parents themselves, as they represented new advocacy roles that had been uncomfortable for many. Among Latino parents most especially, conversations about school matters with knowledgeable authority figures had been highly unusual, with the taking of stances to advocate on behalf of their children most difficult.

**5. *Archival review of information/reports housed at the Family Engagement Leadership Development (FELD) Office and at the FLI offices.***

Opportunity was granted to review records, data and other documentation at the parent resource center, including past progress reports, calendar overviews, specific events together with survey results, videos, internal documentation, among other program-related documents. In addition, statistical counts of how parents were utilizing the center were helpful in tracking parent progress and increased involvement over time.

Similar opportunity was facilitated at the FLI offices, where post-program documentation was made available across districts, including SBCUSD. These included reports, demographic counts, videos and related information on curricular progress over the years and outcomes from particular sites, as provided by staff and available through warehoused archives, with comparable data by which to examine SBCUSD progress.

For both groups, access to internal meetings was also facilitated, where staff interactions were accordingly observed and where certain parents also participated in sharing their views, whether related to parent efforts, focused on site management or the district at large.

**6. *In-depth interviews and written/oral testimonials from parents, school staff and community persons, both formal and informal.***

Two site visits were arranged in early 2017 where in-depth, individual and face-to-face interviews were held with district officials as well as with principals from several schools, especially those with highly-active FLI parent groups. Meetings with parent leaders and with local community leaders were also arranged. A total of 15 face-to-face, in-depth interviews were held. Additional informal chats with teachers and other district staff occurred, but not officially included in this reported category.

In addition, telephone interviews were held in the process of information seeking. For example, several conversations were held with African American and Native American curriculum writers currently working with FLI curricular revisions (and addendums) to several modules. This was to be more inclusive in the nuances of cultural differences as well as the addition of multicultural life stories and anecdotes. These additions have been well received. Informal phone interviews were also held with several of the parents unable to attend focus groups.

Written and videotaped testimonials were likewise reviewed<sup>11</sup> as well as information included from the multiple parent surveys. Also, anecdotal information was documented from the focus groups, with additional information gathered from in-depth interviews. Another information source was that which had been provided in written form to the offices (and staff) of the parent resource center as well as the FLI offices. One letter in particular from a principal (anonymously) was quite lengthy and rather personal, but which documented the change the FLI program made on this individual and parents at the school, including how it had influenced management at the school. Other anecdotes and observations came from superintendents from other districts that have seen how the FLI has impacted their districts over time.

Altogether, these form a large group of written and oral testimonials from parents, school staff, and others about the FLI program and its effects. These statements are quite specific and incisive, beyond mere rhetoric. Samples of these have been included in appendix C.

**7. *Information gathered from parent focus groups conducted in the spring of 2017 with FLI-trained parents (52 participants, 9 focus groups).***

A series of focus groups were undertaken during district visits in the winter/spring of 2017. A total of 52 individuals participated in nine distinct focus group sessions, representing nearly 1-in-7 (15 percent) of all SBCUSD workshop participants. All sessions were held at the parent resource center. Participants were selected via stratified random sampling processes utilizing the list of SBCUSD graduates from FLI workshops the previous two years (2015-2016) for parents and staff alike. Randomization was constructed to ensure that participants from each FLI cohort group were represented.

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<sup>11</sup> A total of 58 written testimonials from multiple sources were reviewed, with several being confidential.



Since not all selected participants were able to attend a focus group, it became important to ensure that systematic sampling processes were fully adhered. As a result, non-attendants were interviewed by phone, with annotations to responses to protocol questions from the focus group. This ensured that 93% from the originally identified participant list was included.

In addition, one other focus group was conducted with local community leaders, independent of parents and district staff, inclusive of leadership from the African American community. This was to obtain external perspectives and impressions from outside the district, as these related to the overall impact of the FLI. Quotes from focus group sessions are included in appendix D.

**8. Results from a parent survey administered by the parent center in 2016.**

A phone survey of parents was conducted by the parent resource center at the SBCUSD in September/October of 2016. Parents that had attended FLI workshops were surveyed by phone. A total of 78 parents responded. According to the resource center, parents were “fairly representative of participating parents up to that point.”<sup>12</sup>

The survey gathered pertinent information on parental views about the FLI curriculum, the educational progress of their children, the SBCUSD and its various initiatives as well as related parent activities across the district. Satisfaction ratings were based on Likert-type scales, with respondents providing high praise and great satisfaction.

**9. Independent survey among parents administered by ICI, Inc. (2017) specifically for this study.**

An additional but independent survey of parents that attended FLI workshops was administered by ICI, Inc. in the spring of 2017, specifically designed for this study. This second survey was independent and external to that which had been earlier conducted (2016) by the parent resource center. This latter survey was administered for the purposes of establishing another set of indicators while also enhancing information gathered from focus groups.

The survey was anonymous and on a voluntary basis, available in both English and Spanish. It was distributed to SBCUSD parents at multiple parent events, meetings and functions as it was also made available at all focus group events, but independent of these sessions. Although distributed to all persons attending SBCUSD parent events and activities, it had major limitations as it only represented purposive samples of parents that volunteered to respond, not randomly selected and not distributed at all events.

With a total of 66 parents responding to the survey, less than half (45 percent) selected the English version and nearly two-thirds (65 percent) spoke Spanish at home. Among the latter group of Spanish speakers, 58 percent spoke “mostly” Spanish as compared to 23 percent speaking half Spanish and English and 19 percent speaking “some” Spanish. As it turned out, FLI

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<sup>12</sup> Taken from the parent resource center survey report (2016) provided to the SBCUSD board.



and non-FLI groups seemed fairly comparable, as there was little difference in language use or preference between the two groups.

**10. Analysis of student performance indicators among children of trained parents against comparison group students.**

With assistance from the SBCUSD Office of Accountability and Education Technology, with assurance to protect personally-identifiable information, students from two lists of FLI parent graduates (2015 and 2016) were compared to comparable lists of students from non-participating parents so as to track student progress and change over time.<sup>13</sup> This included comparisons against the following five variables for the two-year period in the study: a) average daily attendance (ADA); b) retention and graduation rates; c) student discipline (e.g., suspensions and disciplinary action); d) grade point average (GPA); and e) proficiency test results, as appropriate.

Albeit two-year timeframes (or less) are often much too short for accurate attribution and impact of effect, important differences and trends were evident. Normally, impact attribution of this type is valid with high degrees of confidence only after three to four years from program intervention. Nonetheless, improvements were already noticeable for certain variables. These are expected to further improve over the next several years.

**Findings**

As alluded, both qualitative and quantitative methods of data gathering were utilized. This was a mixed-methods approach to data gathering, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. For the purpose of this report, data gathering procedures and findings are logically divided into ten distinct categories of data organization for ease of understanding, somewhat different from a standard research approach, as findings are also to be shared with participants. These data follow the same parallel logic and sequencing to the above categories.

To this end, *qualitative* data, as already described, were divided into seven logical chunks (or categories), with focus group participants having been identified via a stratified random-selection process; meaning that everyone had an equal chance of being selected within their cohort group (by workshop). Also, special interviews and event observations are included in the data-gathering process. Altogether, they are denoted in findings #1 through #7.

*Quantitative* data, in turn, are divided into the three remaining categories that include two parent surveys (findings #8 and #9) and student outcomes (findings #10), with the latter encompassing five areas of student performance, as earlier de noted: average daily attendance (ADA), grade point average (GPA), graduation/retention rates; student conduct (discipline), and proficiency test scores.

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<sup>13</sup> Comparability was obtained by matching demographic information on ethnicity/race; income as measured by school lunch program attendees; English language learners (ELs); and geographic representation, based on school registration.

**1. Findings from data collection #1: Participant attendance, description and representation**

As delineated, nearly 500 persons attended workshop events in the City of San Bernardino and Las Vegas. About 3-in-4 (74 percent) of SBCUSD schools were represented at these events. Notwithstanding the majority of participants clustered around seven schools that represented nearly half (47%) of all attendees. Overwhelmingly, the vast majority of attendees were females (86%) and most (93%) were Hispanic, with the average family representing more than two children, but with 1.8 children enrolled in a K-12 school at SBCUSD.

Interest in the FLI workshops grew considerably in response to the first workshop held on June 2015. As word rapidly spread, enthusiasm heightened. By end of year two, parents had overwhelmingly responded quite positively to the program, most especially Hispanic parents, as more and more requested workshop attendance.<sup>14</sup> However, while the number of participants grew quickly, they mostly represented a small cluster of schools of about eight schools. For greater diffusion and utilization in the future, the program needs to develop more cadres of parents at other schools, with smaller numbers of trained parents.

While a smaller representation (4%) of African American parents attended FLI workshops,<sup>15</sup> the FLI has more recently created high interest among the African American community, especially after outreach efforts expanded through community centers such as the hosting of the PLP curriculum, as an abbreviated version of the standard FLI curriculum (with shorter delivery periods of one to two days) as well as tailoring of the curriculum for community organizations and with particular adaptations to the audience.

**2. Findings from data collection #2: The FLI Workshops**

The FLI workshops generated much enthusiasm around the curriculum, as participants engaged in multiple areas of interest that resonated with them. Overall, reception to the workshops was very positive. This was the case for nearly all events, as there were no rating ranges that were significant between the years 2015 and 2016.

Exhibit 3 provides the average (mean) satisfaction ratings from reaction forms for each of the workshops across nine distinct categories of content and approach, with nearly all (97%) quite favorable. Reaction forms also included personal commentaries about the event, capturing over 1,000 comments in total, with observations ranging from personal impact to specific changes in attitudes and behaviors. Evaluation forms also asked for specific examples, some of which appear in appendix B.

Enthusiasm for the workshop events was highly evident from all indicators, as sample comments in appendix B well reflect. Workshops were viewed as “extremely helpful;” “personally enriching;” “highly instructive;” “very engaging;” and “highly motivating.” Comments fell into five distinct areas: 1) *likes/dislikes* about the program; 2) what was *learned*; 3) what

<sup>14</sup> Hispanic parents represent 73% of the SBCUSD enrollment.

<sup>15</sup> African American parents represent 14% of the SBCUSD enrollment.

participants would do *differently* (e.g., behavioral change); 4) *helpfulness* and *applicability* of the information; and 5) suggested *improvements*.

Among the *likes (and dislikes)*, few dislikes were cited, mostly about insufficient time to cover particular topics of interest. Nearly all participants expressed the need for more engagements of this type for their district, with parents greatly appreciating the opportunity to engage, share and learn. For most attendees, it was the first time they had attended an event of this type.

Comments strongly echoed the excitement of discovering new information about themselves, as participants kept illustrating how much they had learned from the process. For nearly all, the workshop was highly educational and illuminating. As one teacher phrased it, "It touched on many areas of new information for me." For most, the experience was an opportunity for self-discovery and introspection as it was also a time for self-analysis, introspection, and behavioral change.

Much *learning* was shared among participants. Most were pleasantly surprised by how much they had been affected and how this seemed to relate to behavior toward their children. These messages were powerfully felt, as new ways of thinking, planning, and behaving was called out. While many thought they were the only ones to traverse difficulty and setbacks too personal to share, the opportunity to "let go" and "open up" became a special moment for many and a great relief for others. As it turned out, the workshop was a "safe" haven for many and an opportunity for growth, as they not only shared, but also explored new ideas and possibilities.

Growth in personal knowledge and feeling of greater empowerment was palpable in multiple observations of parent workshops. This was well reflected in comments about the workshop experience. Without questions, such exposure yielded dramatic results, as even more timid parents were now willing to "try out new ways of behavior, even at the risk of not getting it right," as one parent later shared.

As it regarded *behavioral* change, many parents committed to "act differently" upon their return. Multiple statements included in the appendices bear this out, as they portray a wide gamut of commitments. Equally strong, everyone seemed to have a new spirit of engagement and willingness to try new things, while "fixing" some of the past. More importantly, participants expressed willingness to work at becoming more engaged with their children at both home and school as a result of the experience.

Interviews indicated that for many parents the experience was also reinforcing of a new commitment. Parents expressed time and again that they were going to behave differently with their children, whether it was yelling less, working with homework, visiting teachers or just plain listening. These were demonstrable statements about the *helpfulness* and *applicability* of the newly gained information.

Statements regarding program *improvement* were more about adding extensions to the program as well as making it more available to other parents, including other communities. Interestingly, parents also wanted to ensure that school staff also went through the program.

Several voiced this loud and clear: “They [district staff] need it as much as we do” as “They have to change as we also must change. We both must change together.” Other parallel statements were also voiced. Concurrence was that this program is for everyone that “works” with kids, especially those that “care about our kids.”

Among the *SBCUSD staff*, many of their observations focused on how they enjoyed the opportunity to “engage” with parents as well as how much they had “learned” from the experience. Several realized and even openly admitted their biases. Others shared rather powerful anecdotes on how they had prejudged the parent training beforehand and how wrong they had been; while still others shared more about what they would do differently, once back at their school.

Quite specifically, as indicated in exhibit 3, the “content” of curricular materials and topics as well as “approach, delivery and clarity” and “value to my school” were each ranked at the highest level of excellence for nearly all (93%) participants. As indicated in the tabular data, all nine of the rated categories scored above 90% for excellence, with two exceptions. Altogether, these represented extraordinarily high ratings for any group of workshops of this type.

Among non-favorable comments, barely 2% reflected disappointment, with the bulk principally focused on facilities, logistics, food and related services, unrelated to content or workshop delivery. Other comments suggested longer workshop periods, wishing for more time. Less than 1% of all comments regarded the relevance and applicability of topics, with the primary desire for other topics also to be covered.

Few ancillary comments were made such as not fully sticking to the agenda, and with some African American participants expressing a desire for more culturally-specific examples referencing their community. On this latter topic, several curriculum writers have been providing additional input to the FLI curriculum. Our interviews with several of them indicate that they have suggested specific additions to three of the curricular modules. These are expected to be included by fall 2017, ensuring further relevance and applicability cross-culturally to African American and Native American participants.

While additions to the curriculum are forthcoming, no higher costs are anticipated. As it stands, the FLI has been priced at comparably lower per-participant costs when compared to other parent curricula of its type. Price advantages have held the past three years.

Exhibit 3:  
Rating (%) by Category, as Average for all FLI Workshops, 2015 and 2016

Coverage	Percent Rating (aggregate for all workshops)					Total
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Not Satisfactory	
1. Relevance of curricular content	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%	100%
2. Value of information learned	93%	6%	1%	0%	0%	100%
3. Approach, delivery, and clarity	95%	5%	0%	0%	0%	100%
4. Personal connection with participants	86%	12%	1%	1%	0%	100%
5. Adds value to my child's education	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%	100%
6. Offered opportunity to develop my talents	87%	11%	2%	0%	0%	100%
7. Can use learned strategies immediately	92%	7%	0%	0%	1%	100%
8. Helped me become a stronger parent	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%	100%
9. Recommend to other schools/districts	96%	4%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<b>Average</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**3. Findings from data collection #3: FLI-Related Events and Parent Center Activities**

Observations were collected from a variety of related events that spun off the FLI. Some were assisted by LTC (R) Consuelo Castillo Kickbusch, USA, and her staff. Other have been led independently by FLI parents themselves, while still others have been supported by the parent resource center together with staff and volunteers. In many respects, however, FLI parents have undertaken many initiatives to drive their own events, with minimal support from the center. More recently, several are now designing, leading and delivering their own, personalized workshops with considerable success.

As a result of the NABE institute earlier referenced, for example, this parent group has now been invited to speak at other conferences. What is notable about the NABE event is that many more parent-led initiatives now have been initiated in contrast to previous years, most especially the leadership of Hispanic parents. This indicates a movement that is expanding, parent-to-parent and districtwide.

Some parents are also going back to school and taking classes, an unanticipated outcome; while others are attending book-reading events they themselves have sponsored. For example, there are now two book-reading groups going through LTC (R) Consuelo Kickbusch's book, *Journey to the Future: A roadmap for success for youth*.

At the workshops, it was interesting to observe how SBCUSD parents presented to other districts formally, and later informally. This was about the parent resource center as well as about accomplishments at their schools and about leading parent initiatives in general. These represented important moments for parents, where leadership was strongly exhibited. It is equally important to underscore that these are not just temporary spinoffs, but strong indicators of a parent movement that now has been gaining momentum across the district.

What now seems important is that certain Latino parents now have built up confidence to co-partner activities and workshops across schools to ensure the educational success of their children. This has been an increasing “positive contagion effect” the past half year throughout the district, as it also denotes major milestones being accomplished. All indicators confirm that there has been considerable evidence of positive change at the district among these parents and their schools, as indicated by comments received from several school principals.

Observations also indicate that parents are now taking major initiatives to speak with school leaders with greater confidence, as advocates for their children. These meetings are somewhat different from findings #2 above, as these now depicts parents directly advocating for their children with school leaders. Leadership development has been evident, especially among parent advisory councils (PACs) where Latino parents are now more strongly voicing their opinions and more greatly involved in bilingual education and Title I parent action committees.

**4. Findings from data collection #4: Observations from special internal meetings of parents as well as with school officials and with community organizations**

Among the various parent meetings, it has been striking to observe meetings between parents themselves as they prepared for presentations, reviewed recent learning when directing their own events. The excitement parents displayed was palpable at the NABE event, for example, where they rehearsed presentations and made self-corrections throughout, in great collaboration. Afterward, it was equally striking to see them critique each other’s performance and witness their own corrections in future presentations.

These dialogues were evidence of growth as well as development of critical judgment on what could be helpful to other audiences of parents and school leaders. Presentations provided opportunity to not only share their wares, but also practice what they had learned. Parents were there as a support group as well as a team of collaborators, working toward the goal of getting other parents engaged in working with their children. Unquestionably, the level of care and support demonstrated was heartfelt and personal as it was also rewarding.

Similar statements can be said of other meetings held, especially those with district officials, where critical judgment was made and important advocacy demonstrated. As observed in a short span of time, parents have grown from a process of self-discovery to that of facilitating understanding for others. It has been astounding to document rapid leaps in knowledge compared to where these parents had been prior to the FLI training.

**5. Findings from data collection #5: Archival Documentation**

While the purpose of this study is not to assess the operations of the parent resource center or related work of the FLI, since major review of these functions lie beyond the scope of this study, it is important to corroborate that center activities are well aligned with the service objectives of the FLI that well enhance parent engagement, including that which is planned for the near future, based on the 2017 Strategic Plan for the Parent Engagement Leadership Development Office. It is equally important to affirm that the mere presence of the FLI program

has propelled parents to further avail themselves from ancillary services the parent center will now be providing for the current academic year.

When compared to other FLI districts nationwide, parent workshops at the SBCUSD were fully congruent and aligned with the types of workshops and services provided by the FLI to other districts, with highly productive results. It is important to note that among the many districts served by the FLI, the SBCUSD represents one of the larger and most dynamic programs nationally, as these parents laud the program and are excited about their accomplishments. The participation of parents at SBCUSD well exemplifies how parent programs of this type can change the climate of the schools as they also change parent attitudes and behaviors toward schools.

#### **6. Findings from data collection #6: Testimonials and In-depth Interviews**

Beyond comments drawn from reaction forms and gathered from focus groups or obtained from in-depth interviews, certain individuals went out of their way to further applaud the impact of the FLI either for themselves or on behalf of their schools and district. Their comments not only humanized the impact of the program, but also put a face to the numbers, making it more about changing lives than mere statistical counts. Program validation of this type is powerful, as reflected in the testimonials included in appendix C. Though most comments are from parents, they also reflect statements from former and current school officials that have experienced program effects firsthand.

It is important to note that some statements were sent by text or E-mail, and several sent by postal mail. For the most part, however, statements are extracted from many of the interviews conducted with SBCUSD parents, teachers, principals and other administrators as well as from several community leaders. Understandably for some, identification from some respondents is undisclosed at their request.

Many anecdotes are reflective of real-life and emotional experiences that cannot be otherwise quantified statistically. As such, these are often omitted from studies and reports of this type. Different from traditional research, however, we deviate from these practices, as many parents with whom we spoke truly wanted “policymakers” and “administrators” to understand the human face to this dimension. They want everyone to know the degree to which the program has made profound impacts.

In-depth interviews provided vivid examples of how parent engagement made academic differences. For example, several principals shared how FLI parent engagement at their school changed both the behavior and the attitudes of students at their school. At one school, for example, the average daily attendance (ADA) changed dramatically this past year. Turns out a group of parents decided to assure that their children were going to have perfect attendance. At this particular school, about 100 students were on the perfect attendance rolls out of nearly 800 students. As more parents wanted their children to also be on this list, several took the initiative to put together parent-led initiatives for the school to reach a perfect attendance record. So, these parents led a host of events in special outreach to all parents. Within a short period, nearly



700 students could boast a 100% ADA. This was astounding for a predominantly Latino, low-income school of this caliber, breaking former ADA records.

Other conversations provided evidence that indicate how teachers benefitted from parent-led initiatives. For example, one principal shared how family vacation schedules no longer led to high absenteeism during the school year, as parents were no longer withdrawing children midway through the academic year. As one principal verified, “There is no question that parent involvement is playing a most significant role in the success of children at the school by not pulling them out as in the past. This helps students maintain focus and continue their studies uninterrupted.”

### **7. Findings from data collection #7: Parent Focus Groups**

Focus group attendance was determined through a stratified random process, where participants from each of the seven FLI workshops listed in exhibit 1 had an equal chance to be selected. Once selected, those unable to attend were interviewed by phone, as they responded to the protocol by phone, where their voice was added. As for the sessions, all were audio-taped, with prior permission from each session and with the understanding that quotes would not be personally identifiable.

Overall, nearly 15 percent of all parent attendees were represented in the focus group process. Among the sessions held, feedback about the program and its various workshops was genuinely positive. On a ten-point scale, the average satisfactory rating for all workshops was close to 9.2, exceedingly high. Regarding impact, parents provided very specific evidence of personal change in home activities and how they now interrelate with their children. They also commented on how the FLI experience seems to have made a difference among peers.

With little prodding, parents were eager to provide examples of personal impact and change in behavior. They were highly excited about recent changes at home [*mi casa*]. Said one, “*Mi comportamiento ha cambiado enormemente*” [my behavior has changed considerably]. Multiple examples were cited as evidence of change in attitude toward their children. A good number were now “taking time” to “talk” with their child, “listen” more intently, and “help problem-solve” [*ayudar resolver sus problemas*]. Through focus group sessions, they provided examples on how this was different from former behavior. Sample quotes from sessions are captured in appendix D.

Responses from non-Latinos that attended the workshops were equally positive, though rankings were slightly lower at “8.0” rather than “9.2.” They could relate to the issues and the anecdotes because they saw how these transcended, though preferring even more culturally-specific stories and examples. One said, “Culture is culture and we learn from each other’s stories.” Another emphasized, “Being multicultural helps, as it allowed us to see the same story from different lenses.” And for a non-Latina, “I would merely add several more examples and anecdotes that are important to me, but that’s just a matter of tweaking the curriculum.” One other clarified her feelings about the curriculum from a practical lens: “When the FLI curriculum was presented to a different audience the examples and stories changed, so it was not a problem for me to see the same curriculum from two perspectives. Much depends on who



facilitates and to whom. Having attended two different sessions, I have seen how the curriculum has been modified to fit the audience.”

Without doubt, focus group comments were overwhelmingly positive of the FLI curriculum. Underlying any of the concerns, statements were extremely powerful as they pointed to a considerable number of examples where participants were able to detect a difference in both attitude and behavior among themselves as well as among peers. This was convincingly communicated at all sessions. One participant summed up her feelings concisely, “Kudos to the FLI for having done the job that no one has done for me as a parent in the fourteen years I’ve had children in the school system.”

It should be pointed out that one concern that was raised was fully independent of the FLI itself, as certain parents focused on issues *following* the workshop event; namely, parent monitoring. One parent summed it up, “I didn’t know who I could see or what assistance I could receive after gaining so much practical information. I wanted to share and didn’t know what parent groups existed or who could help me with the process.” Another said, “There was little follow-up after the event, so it took me a long time to figure out what to do to start any parent action at my school.” Still another stated, “I lost track of who attended and didn’t know how to reconnect with the group,” with another stating, “I didn’t hear back from anybody back at the district after I attended.”

These statements made it obvious that over time different strategies were in place at the parent center across a two-year period, but that there now seems to be more targeted follow-up and parent monitoring. For example, there is currently a process, including a parent university model, where parents are being invited to participate in subsequent events, including attendance at booster-type workshops and through reading clubs, with some taking courses (e.g., English and IT) at the center or at nearby facilities, and still others continuing with their education. With sufficient support, this can be an important asset for the school system, as the major beneficiary is the child in school.

### **8. Findings from data collection #8: Parent Center Telephone Survey**

For the district-wide telephone survey administered by the parent center during September and October of 2016, SBCUSD parents that had attended FLI workshops responded to the survey (n=78) and rated the “impact” of the event. In responding to whether the workshops had a “positive” affect in their daily life, nearly all (96%) parents were in agreement, affirming “yes.” As to how participants felt the experience had impacted their family and children, responses were also exceedingly positive and quite consistent, with 95% and 94% agreement, respectively. When asked how “big” the impact of the FLI, 94% of parent respondents ranked it at “4” or “5,” based on a five-point Likert scale.

In further response to questions about how the FLI impacted their child’s “grades” in school, nearly 4-in-5 (80%) of parents agreed that the FLI had a “positive impact” on “children’s grades,” with larger percentages agreeing it had an even stronger impact on their child’s “behavior,” at 92%. In gauging how the workshop experience may have affected future aspirations of the parent, 95% of respondents agreed (“yes”), with the FLI experience representing very high

impact. Interestingly, among all respondents, nearly 4-in-5 (83%) wanted to participate in follow-up activities with the FLI and many did not see this as a temporary or one-time event, but one of continual development and growth.

Unquestionably, as per this phone survey, gathered data fully indicate the FLI had an overwhelming impact on the vast majority of parents. Percentage rates of impact well exceeded 90 percent for all major categories of life outcomes. Consistently, participants also perceived that the effects not only impacted them, but also their families and children. For most, the importance of the event was more than a personal experience. It had lasting consequences for them, their family, *and* their children.

### **9. Findings from data collection #9: Purposive Parent Survey**

In a second survey, independent of the parent resource center, both FLI and non-FLI parents were included, though the majority (82%) respondents had attended an FLI workshop. Responses provided opportunity to compare statements to the earlier telephone survey conducted by the parent center, while also providing comparisons against non-FLI parents. Demographic differences between FLI and non-FLI parents were slight, but not significant, as FLI parents were slightly more Spanish dominant.

All (100%) FLI respondents thought the FLI course would greatly benefit other parents. As word about the program spread among parents, expectations for the FLI increased, with non-FLI attendees also wanting to enroll. Seemingly ironic, among those that had never taken an FLI course, most expressed interest to enroll in an FLI workshop, ironically more among non-English speakers.

Response to this survey was not unlike the parent resource center survey.<sup>16</sup> Nearly all (98%) parents had used strategies learned from the FLI. Also, nearly all (96%) parents agreed their behavior had changed, with 84% responding “quite a lot” and 12% responding “a fair amount.”

Regarding time spent with child, responses were overwhelmingly positive that “more time” was being spent with child, with 94% responding “quite a lot” or “a fair amount.” When asked further if they thought the “FLI had positively increased their child’s performance at school,” the vast majority (88%) agreed with “quite a lot” or “a fair amount.”

Among FLI parents, responses showed positive indicators of program impact for both self-perceptions as well as against behavioral indicators. For the non-FLI parents, there was certainly a “positive contagion effect,” as desire was now higher for enrollment in an FLI workshop event.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> This is to be expected, as telephone responses tend to be slightly more positive toward a friendly caller than anonymous surveys.

<sup>17</sup> Behavioral research indicates that both measures may be equally valid contextually.

**10. Findings from data collection #10: Student Performance Indicators**

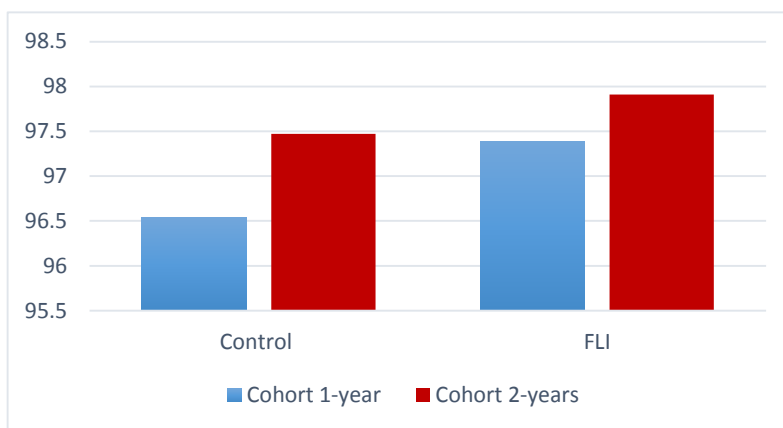
Specific groups of parents were identified from FLI attendees, where certified parents with high attendance at the FLI workshops were selected as the treatment group. These formed two distinct samples of about 75 parents each, one for the cohort attending FLI training in 2015 and another cohort for FLI training in 2016, with the latter representing a one-year cohort.<sup>18</sup>

Children from each of the two cohorts were matched with a comparison group of students<sup>19</sup> to track changes in student performance across the following four indicators: a) average daily attendance (ADA); b) grade point average (GPA); c) disciplinary action; and d) state proficiency tests. Retention and graduation data were not utilized, as samples were too small to be generalizable. Demographic data for the cohort are included in appendix E.

*Attendance:*

There was a statistically significant difference for positive change on average daily attendance (ADA), where both of the FLI student cohorts (one-year and two-year) indicate statistically higher rates of improvement over a two-year period, as compared to matched control groups. This is illustrated in exhibit 4. Not indicated is the trend over time, where the FLI group also has been increasing at a more rapid rate than the control group, approaching fairly high attendance rates.

**Exhibit 4:  
Average Daily Attendance (%), by Cohort (SY2016/17)**



It is important to again highlight that statistics like these were highly influenced by parents banding together to assist with carpooling for those in need of periodic transportation so as to assure all children get to/from school easily, while also reducing tardiness. Not shown is that FLI children also had lower tardiness rates compared to control groups.

<sup>18</sup> These were denoted as sample 1 for year 2015 and sample 2 for year 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Comparison groups were denoted as sample 1A for year 2015 and sample 2A for year 2016.

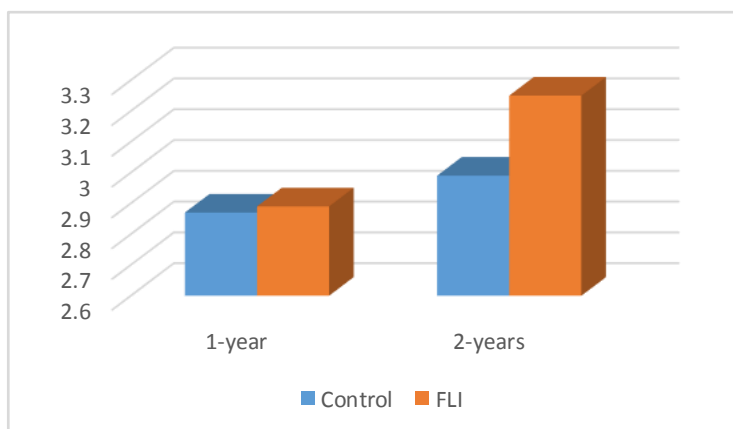
Also, as previously noted, FLI parents periodically met via small group sessions to provide counsel to parents, with general information about schooling, including convincing peers not to pull their children out of school during long winter breaks for warmer climates. Instead, they convinced parents to plan vacations around natural school breaks, so as not to disrupt learning during the school year.

In a series of surveys documented by the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, it was found that the major reason for dropouts was not that students “disliked school,” as portrayed by previous youth surveys, but that the most critical determiner of low achievement was due to high rates of “absenteeism.” Research of this type now concludes that loss of contact with schooling is one of the most salient predictors for dropping out of school (Doll, Eslami & Walters, 2013).

*Grade Point Average (GPA):*

The grade point average (GPA) for students was substantially different among sample cohorts. This is graphically represented in exhibit 5 which illustrates general patterns in its spread, with statistically strong differences within a two-year period.<sup>20</sup> In addition, certain GPAs increased by more than half a grade point for certain schools, though the latter is not shown.

**Exhibit 5:  
Grade Point Average (GPA) for FLI and control groups: one year and two years**



*Discipline and Suspension:*

Differences were substantial for FLI students for year-one cohorts, though not significantly different for two-year cohorts. For the latter, both groups appeared nearly identical, with no significant differences.<sup>21</sup> However, for year-one cohorts, differences were consistent across three measures, quite positive for the FLI students. These data were consistently positive for a) total number of suspensions, b) number of reported incidents, and c) total days of suspension.

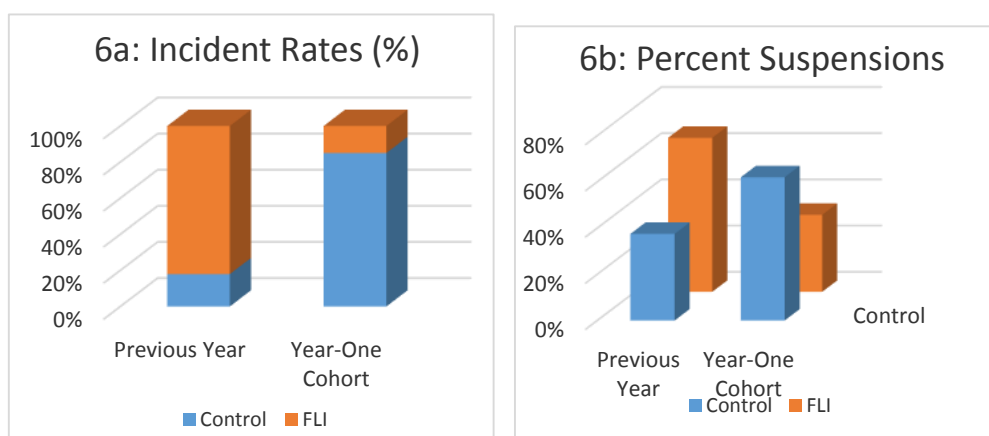
<sup>20</sup> Differences were statistically significant at a high confidence level (alpha .05).

<sup>21</sup> Data show that several students made the difference here, as two of them were under severe observation.

As compared to previous-year records, all three categories improved for FLI students, with trends further worsening over time for the control group. That is, each category showed improvement for the FLI, improving across years, showing more disciplinary incidents and suspensions for the control group over the same time period. It is important to note that one suspension can be the result of several incidents. For this study, we unfortunately were not able to access information on type of incidents, limiting inferences on degree or type of severity among reported incidents.

These data are briefly summarized in the next exhibit via two graphs, one for incident rates and the other for rates of suspension. Charts 6a and 6b show nearly flip-flop data for the two cohorts for the most recent year, with FLI students showing improvement over time as compared to the control group that indicates opposite trends.

**Exhibits 6a and 6b:  
Percent of Disciplinary Incidents and Suspension Rates**



*State Proficiency Tests:*

In carefully reviewing the results from state proficiency tests for both math and English language arts (ELA), no significant differences were found among the groups. Even trend data did not indicate potential changes, as groups perform at nearly the same level the past two years. Scale score differences for mathematics for example, among the two-year cohorts, was 18 points, while for ELA it was a difference of only 13 points. On a scale score distribution of over 2,000 points, this did not yield statistically significant results. Differences among the one-year cohorts reflected similar spreads.

If any effects are to be attained, these will likely not be discovered for another two to three years, as test scores are the last of the indicators to be reflected long-term, several years after conditions in either the school or the home environment have changed. This is to be expected in any comparison of this type. Up until now, the only areas where statistical differences have not been found are those attributable to results on state proficiency tests.

### III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

In brief, results from ten areas of findings indicate substantial change over time for both qualitative and quantitative data. Each of the three driving research questions were briefly addressed. These are reviewed by category, below.

#### **1) *How many and what type of parent has participated in the FLI program?***

Slightly less than 500 parents participated in the FLI program in one manner or another across a two-year period, with much higher percentages of females (86%), with nearly all (93%) being Hispanic. Given the fact that the average FLI parent experienced just less than a one-year exposure to the FLI, the impact of the program in the lives of these parents and their children has been considerable during this short period of time, as captured by a variety of observations and statistical indicators.

The composition of the parents has been primarily female for many of the obvious reasons that most males are working outside the home, most keeping long and non-customary hours; some with multiple jobs, thus leaving females attending to household duties and the children. In this respect, the Latino households encountered were fairly traditional, much in keeping with standard ways of native cultures back home in Latin America. Few exceptions were found among where males went out of their way to participate in the FLI at great sacrifice. Some of the females were also full-time workers, with equal difficulty making it to various meetings, with a number of them also representing single-family households.

Most families have been in San Bernardino and its environs for less than two generations, as they represent a fairly new resident population, many speaking primarily Spanish at home, as our data reconfirm.

#### **2) *What has been the impact of the FLI program for these groups of parents?***

The impact of the FLI has been substantial, as reported, occurring in several domains in the lives of participants. For one, it changed their outlook as parents and how their view their children as well as in family interactions and in their everyday responsibilities, including more careful attention to the needs of their children.

For another, the FLI had considerable impact in bringing parents together as a group, thus creating opportunity for them to support one another, forming common bonds that helped personal development as well as in relationship-building and the formation of strong parent cadres working with schools.

For another, the process was deemed important for self-affirmation, personal validation and empowerment. Beyond parents learning and working with each other, some also have been attending school, with other forming their own reading clubs, and still others developing

workshops for other parents (and staff). Several have even gone back to school to complete postsecondary studies.

Another major area of difference was change in behavior, as demonstrated by comments about daily life, but also highly reflected on how participants now perceive and behave toward their children and families, as gathered from anecdotal information, witnesses, and personal testimonies. Corresponding observations are also appropriate for school for staff, as reported, increasing their understanding of culture and relationship with parents. In several instances, our research team had access to informal interviews collected by an independent source, as part of an independent video documentation of the FLI. This provided another set of data. This and related research studies are included in the bibliography, appendix F.

A distinguishing characteristic of the FLI is that it strongly affects family dynamics, as the curriculum is based on the re-strengthening of core family values and the reinforcement of responsibility that each member has to their family as well as the reinforcement and pride of native culture, as a most valuable asset. For couples attending the workshop, relationships were strengthened in dramatic ways.

Unquestionably, the FLI effect has led many parents to now work more closely with local schools as well as participate more greatly in school-based events. This has spilled over onto greater care and focus on schooling activities for their children and attendant follow-up with the academic progress of their children. At all levels, parents seemed enthused about the program and eager to assist back at the district level in multiple ways, many volunteering in a variety of activities.

### **3) *What has been the impact of the FLI program on behavioral change and academic performance for their children?***

Relationships and emotional processes affect how and what students learn at school. With parents enlisted in the process, students seem to be benefitting more greatly by adjusting to the learning environment more quickly and with greater respect, as many parents shared during interviews and focus groups. Research also bear out the ability of parents to better control and manage their thoughts, feelings and behaviors that also link back to academic achievement. For example, students more self-aware and confident about their learning capacities try harder and persist more greatly in the face of challenges. They don't give up as easily when surrounded with supportive environments that assist with their efforts.<sup>22</sup>

According to a national survey of middle and high school students, less than one third indicate that their school provided a caring, encouraging environment, and less than half reported that they had competencies such as empathy, conflict resolution and decision-making skills (Durlak, et al., 2011). With programs like the FLI, these issues are dissipated. By strengthening students' social support networks and skills in self-management at home, parents can help students unleash their potential, including academic progress. When parents work

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<sup>22</sup> Vega, 2015.



together with teachers, the process inevitably strengthens student wellbeing and success. In time, this will increase achievement, regardless of measurement or indicator.

### **Recommendations**

1. *Funding*: Funding for the FLI has been a challenge the past two years. More stable and consistent program support is needed for greater balance and support for parents after FLI training events. SBCUSD district should explore greater options to expand these efforts more greatly and systematically throughout the district. FLI impact, as evident from this study, greatly benefits both parents and students, not to mention district performance at large. This is most especially the case for difficult-to-reach parents, namely in particular sectors of the district population.
2. *Facilitators*: The parent resource center should work concertedly at obtaining commitments from parents in prerequisite to FLI participation, especially at the summits, where follow through with these parents include expected requisites as well as the assurance of later group leadership support, with high standards of conduct and role modeling together with direct responsibility tied back to the parent resource center.
3. *FLI graduates*: Follow-up and utilization of FLI graduates should be rather deliberate. Greater planning should be devoted to parents helping parents as well as parents helping schools. This goes beyond the mere assignment of parent tasks, including volunteering at the parent resource center. It requires careful monitoring by the parent resource staff so as to ensure a better prepared cohort of parents, with concerted plans for greater engagement and deployment.
4. *Strategic planning*: Concern needs to be focused on immediate parent needs, while broader strategic plans are formulated. This can be done by piggybacking and learning from current accomplishments, not starting at *tabula rasa*. The strategic plan (2017) emanating from the parent resource center is an important document, as it should also be a shared and guiding document among parents. As such, it should take advantage of what parents have already accomplished and advancing that which has been learned. Independent of longer-term planning, there are pending action items regarding family strengthening and parent group cohesion that should become immediate action items. Parent groups want the resource center to provide such leadership in carrying out its strategic plan.
5. *Target schools*: While the number of participants has grown, it is still primarily clustered in a relatively small number of schools. For greater effectiveness, the FLI needs to reach greater cadres of parents at more targeted schools so as to create a strong movement among parents for greater student success districtwide.
6. *African American issues*: Certain issues have been raised by some African American leaders in the community regarding the FLI curriculum, especially about its “fit” and “relevance,” to African American needs and issues. Additions to the curriculum have been made in collaboration with African American experts in workshop design in response, but more can be advanced through local input. More importantly, there is concern that the allocation of resource for parent involvement becomes a divisive issue between Latinos and Blacks. To the contrary, this should be an area where unity in diversity must be attained. While much of



this must be dealt at the district level, the FLI program also can play a significant part in the solution, if allowed. Parent participation and control must obviate climates that ascribe blame back to parents as victims, precisely those that can benefit from greater voice and empowerment.

7. *Accessing district leaders:* Latino parents have expressed concerns at inability in reaching certain levels of district leadership, as they have been frustrated at impasses recently encountered. There should be a deliberate process whereby key issues are resolved and/or where key district officials meet with designated parents periodically. Point being that processes and procedures should exist whereby parents can meet with district personal without having to air their concerns at public meetings, at board meetings or behind closed doors.
8. *FLI for principals:* The FLI should be expanded to include more teachers, principals and district staff, as provided to parents. FLI parents suggest SBCUSD personnel should benefit from the FLI as much as they have. Parents expressed concern that they don't feel certain district leadership and principals have been paying needed attention to their needs. Statements like, "These principals don't listen to us parents" and "We don't feel respected," were some of the more common responses shared by parents. It is important that as parents become more greatly empowered they also feel they can participate more fully with administrators for the advancement of the school district and its children, as everyone stands to benefit. ■■■

## Appendix A:

### Overview of FLI Curriculum

A series of ten modules are normally offered by the FLI for the certification of attendance for participating parents, caregivers and district personnel, certifying that participants have completed the ten modules.<sup>23</sup> The curriculum is composed of a sequential series of ten modules of 2- to 4-hours each that walks participants through a logical and stepwise program of personal awareness and skills building that covers basic concepts concerning family knowledge and responsibility, self-awareness and ethnic/racial identity as well as leadership development aimed toward the heightening of resiliency skills, wellbeing and empowerment. Workshops are normally delivered in English, but with simultaneous Spanish translation via headphones for all sessions, including breakout groups.

The training series concludes with a graduation ceremony for those completing the program. The ceremony offers opportunity for participants to showcase and present their family plans, while also hearing from school officials about the district's commitment and support for parent engagement. The event concludes with each graduate receiving a certificate of attendance.

The development of the curriculum has a unique history, as it was initially conceived out of the life experience of LTC (R) Consuelo Castillo Kickbusch, USA, as dramatized years later in her book, *Journey to the Future*. As such, the curriculum has evolved over a 20-year period, having been refined from thousands of workshops and forums during this period. Over one thousand districts have been exposed to some aspect of this curriculum during this time, as it grew to become one of the most recognized parent programs nationwide. More recently, the program received a Department of Education endorsement as an evidence-based curriculum, one of the few in the country for a Latino audience, an unusual and most prestigious distinction. It will also be receiving another prestigious award end of 2017 by the National Dropout Prevention program as a national exemplary program.

While the FLI focuses on Latino parents, it has been rather broad in how it defines families, cultures and life-skills training, as its core is relevant and familiar to all families, regardless of socioeconomic or cultural background. Notwithstanding, the program has more recently expanded to not only be more inclusive of particular ethnic/racial groups, but also rather specific to several of them. As such, it has expanded its modules to be inclusive in narratives and examples that specifically relate to African American and Native American groups, most especially modules two, three and four. More specifically, it has undergone revisions by cultural and community experts in the redesign of written module enhancements, expected for release by fall 2017.

The ten modules covered by the workshops are the following:

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<sup>23</sup> The term parent is used generically, meaning guardian or any other caregiver.

1. *Home: Where Leadership Begins.* Participants identify their own leadership styles and preferences.
2. *Self-identity: Past, Present and Future.* Self-identity, self-esteem and its effects on the family.
3. *Living in Two Worlds: Cultural and Generational Perspectives.* Cultural pride and traditions are highlighted and juxtaposed, as parents learn about pressures their children face (e.g., drugs, peers, pregnancy) and how to address them.
4. *Storytelling and Journaling: Valuing Literacy through Family History.* Placing value on reading and its effect on children's academic performance and wellbeing.
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 school-home involvement as well as building relationship with teachers, staff and administrators, with parents serving as advocates.
8. *Facing Challenges at Home: Coping Strategies for Success.* Identifying barriers to personal and family success by setting goals.
9. *Creating a Family Action Plan: Roadmaps to Success.* Parents develop vision, mission, goals and objectives through action-planning for their children's future.
10. *Celebrating Family Academic Excellence: Success as a Way of Life.* Families make presentations to each other and to educational administrators that are participating, sharing their hopes and plans for their children's academic progress and wellbeing.

## Appendix B:

### Sample Comments Selected from Various Workshops<sup>24</sup>

#### What did you like most about the FLI workshop?

1. Shared stories and testimonials from mothers.
2. The great learning gathered from both presenters and participants.
3. I finally found a safe place to come and learn, listen and grow, and become a better person.
4. Not to be afraid of teachers and principals. They are like me.
5. Put this learning into practice.
6. Working with other mothers strengthened me.
7. That I can be a better role model for my kids.
8. That the way I talk can be different in the future.
9. That I can present before other people with less fear.
10. How to advocate for my child.
11. To better communicate with school staff.
12. How to better educate my kids.
13. That being a mother is also being a leader.
14. That being proud of my culture does not mean disliking other cultures.
15. How to better relate with my children.
16. How to visualize the future and set goals in advance for myself and my kids.
17. How to understand the different personalities of my children.
18. That it's OK to be different.
19. Self-reflecting and journal writing.
20. Creating a family vision board.
21. I was able to laugh and cry in a safe environment.
22. I was able to release my negative emotions.
23. I can communicate with greater confidence.
24. The fact that I can actually become a leader.
25. To respect myself so that I can better respect others.
26. The joy of serving others.
27. The true meaning of servant leadership.
28. That education is freedom for our kids, most important.
29. Education is empowerment.
30. Leadership is working with others in collaboration.
31. To stop yelling at my kids.
32. The value of a university education.
33. To dream bigger.

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<sup>24</sup> These comments have been selected from the yearly FLI SBCUSD Executive Reports for years 2015 and 2016 for all FLI workshops.

**As a result of what I have learned, I will change my behavior by:**

1. Learning new ways of behavior.
2. Trying to understand one another instead of getting angry all the time.
3. Knowing what it means to be a leader in my school.
4. Being aware that I can change my home (*mi hogar*)
5. Understanding how I behave and communicate with my kids.
6. Working on my temper.
7. Changing my relationship with my kids.
8. Having more patience and listening better.
9. Learning more about myself.
10. Attending more school activities.
11. I learned that different cultures are more alike than different.
12. I learned how to talk better to my kids.
13. To plan my future more carefully.
14. That I can help my kids get to college.
15. That I need to spend more time with my children.
16. Be conscious of my actions so that my children can see a good example.
17. I learned that I can have more confidence in myself.
18. I learned to value my children more than ever.
19. Learned the characteristics of different leadership types.
20. How to better help our kids get ahead in school and in life.
21. I learned about my children as I learned more about myself.
22. I learned to believe in my children more.
23. How to build stronger relationships.
24. To take pride in my achievements.
25. Motivating my kids to read more.

**What will you do differently as a result of your participation in the FLI workshop?**

1. Stop being so hard on myself and my kids.
2. I will try not to raise my voice so much so that I can listen to others.
3. Provide my kids a better example.
4. Stop yelling and stop placing blame.
5. Judge less.
6. Learn to talk with my kids and actually converse.
7. I will go back to school and learn more.
8. Improve my communication skills.
9. Being more loving and caring.
10. How to be a better mom.
11. The many ways I can show love to my kids.
12. How to help my kids with schoolwork.
13. How to participate in school activities.
14. How to volunteer.

15. To be more positive.
16. Better work with others as a team, especially others different from me.
17. We need to change as adults to better help our kids.
18. Have greater courage to be me.
19. To get more involved with schools.
20. To take greater initiative.
21. To value myself and set realistic goals.
22. That we are all leaders.
23. To teach my kids to love learning.

**In what ways was the information learned from the workshop helpful to you?**

1. I learned much about myself and what I can change.
2. I learned who I am.
3. I can be more comfortable with myself.
4. There can be equality between leaders and parents.
5. That even a destroyed family can resolve issues of the past.
6. That my self-esteem is low, but that I can improve it.
7. How to talk and reason with my children.
8. Improve my attitude.
9. Learn how to talk with teachers.
10. Listen without judgment.
11. I learned that I can love my family and my kids more.
12. I was able to write down my stresses and emotions clearly. Now I understand them better.
13. The visioning exercise helped me sort out my future more clearly, as I learned from others.
14. Testimonials motivated me to do more. It gave me the feeling that I can do better.
15. I was able to think differently about my self-doubts.
16. My problems were not unique to me as I had thought.
17. My attitudes towards my children can actually improve.
18. FLI changed my mental image completely.
19. I can improve my way of thinking.
20. I need to pay more attention to my kids' dreams.
21. It is never too late to better myself.
22. I am responsible for my kids' good values.
23. Learned that what works for Latinos also works for other groups.
24. I learned the five gifts of love.
25. Yes, it makes me want to keep leading.
26. I learned more about myself at the workshop than I ever thought possible. This is relevant for both me and my kids.
27. With my children communication has been a struggle. This workshop helped me understand different ways to communicate and know that every perception is different.
28. The course helped me better communicate not only within my home but outside as well.
29. The FLI help me believe in myself when I was feeling hopeless.

### **Other Comments**

1. I wish I had taken this workshop many years ago, as my kids could have benefitted.
2. This program is so much needed for other parents that I know. It needs to be taught to new parents.
3. I would like to see this course offered to students.
4. That this course be offered to other communities.
5. I think school staff should be forced to attend. They need to hear this and also get to know us better.
6. This is the best course I have ever taken.
7. I learned much more than ever expected.
8. I think this will make me a stronger mother and advocate for my kids.
9. This course has changed my life.
10. I wish they had this program at every school. We need more workshops like this.

## Appendix C:

### Select Quotes about the FLI Program

(Parents and Administrators Comments on FLI Efficacy and Impact)

*I have been to different workshops throughout the years with the district [SBCUSD] and I have never seen such engagement from participants. I was used to thinking of Latinos as more reserved. I considered it such a blessing to see their hands shoot up with such willingness to share their stories. I have to admit, I did not have a frame of reference for a lot of what they shared, but that didn't stop it from tugging at my heart. I was inspired by each and every person that shared their story. There is no way someone could sit in that room and not leave with a better spirit, to not be moved by the words... It was a most special event.*

**--SBCUSD Staff**

*I went to this first presentation [workshop] with LTC (R) Consuelo Kickbusch apprehensive and stressed ... It just felt like just another thing I had to do and within just seconds ... I was transformed ... and I was absolutely hypnotized and drawn into the power of these workshops as I sat there in that room listening to the entire presentation... The beauty of this inspirational program is that every single human has an inspirational story and every single person is truly a hero in their own regard. But not only is this changing the way our staff interact and inspire the community to believe in themselves and empower themselves to create opportunities to break family curses and emerge from the cycle of poverty, [but] it is truly empowering our parents to have the confidence, self-worth, and pride to actually believe in themselves and train, teach and empower each other.*

**--Principal, Southern California**

*As family participation in the educational lives of our children increased, so did the improvement in student achievement in the classroom. The reception to the FLI training was unbelievable. New community leaders emerged. Our Latino population gained a voice. New Latino businesses were opened in town. Student achievement in school improved. A community once divided became whole.*

**--Former Superintendent, Bridgeport, WA**

*The FLI had a profound effect on me. It was healing. It helped me find myself. I have become more secure both as a father and as a husband. I have seen many parents get more involved in their school as a direct result of their participation with the FLI. The program is a valuable resource to any school, as it is a process that really makes a difference for the entire family, not just the school. It represents a most special resource from which participants greatly benefit.*

**--Father and Parent Leader, E. Palo Alto, CA**



*My husband told me that the FLI had helped me become a better mother. This was important to me. I have since returned for a booster training, as it is now helping me as a parent leader and school volunteer. The program has dramatically changed my life as well as my outlook. My children, I think, also seem grateful.*

**--Mother and Parent Leader, SBCUSD**

*Our research shows that family engagement is one of the best things you can do to increase graduation rates and to decrease dropout rates. And it exciting for me to see in progress a program that is effective in that nature. It's been a privilege to witness this amazing program firsthand.*

**--Assistant Director, Programs & Outreach, National Dropout Prevention Center**

*I've been to many, many conferences of all types the past 20 years, but I've never seen one like this. It is very different because it really gives practitioners needed tools to engage with families. Parents normally become very defensive at events of this type. I see it much too often. But the FLI is very open, non-judgmental and family friendly. It also has fabulous facilitators! The program is well balanced and highly focused on family dynamics and home culture. I like it.*

**--Social Worker, Deming, NM**

*After abuse and neglect for years, I've learned much the hard way. As a result, I think I've become a stronger person. But this program has helped me realize I can do my work even better and help others in special ways. As a home visitor, I have all the connections with community. I know the struggles out there. People need that support. But I didn't know how to do it before. With FLI, I have a starting point. I want to share my story so that others can share theirs, helping each other lift that weight. It was great leaving the summit so much lighter than when I came.*

**--Mother and Parent Leader, Longview, CA**

*I've been a professional educator for more than two decades, but the FLI meant being a parent first. Every parent, regardless of title, wants to reach their child. This is important to me. FLI made this possible. FLI let's parents go where they need to go, to get where they need to get, so as to help their child. I think teachers need to hear it, counselors need to hear it, as do principals like me. It's a curriculum, but it's also an approach that allows parents to go through 'their' journey. For me, it's a balance between being a principal and being a parent. As educators, we need to recognize all parents love their kids. They need assistance on how to be the best for their child. I subscribe to this program whole-heartedly.*

**--Principal, Central Oklahoma**

## Appendix D:

### Parent Comments from Focus Groups

1. I still can't believe how much I have changed as a result of attending a workshop. I never thought this could happen to me.
2. As a mom, the workshop really made a difference to me. I learned how important I am for my children and that I have the power and responsibility to make them more successful in school, even if my education is limited to the sixth grade.
3. I now have an extended family. Those parents that attended with me at the FLI are now part of my life. They will help me. I am not as alone as I was a year ago. They are like my support group, and our kids are now like brothers and sisters.
4. Living in this district has not been easy for some of us. The FLI has brought new hope for me and many of my friends. I now truly believe our kids can be successful.
5. I am now volunteering at a school. I never thought I would do this. I was too scarred and felt inadequate. The FLI has helped lift my confidence.
6. The FLI has not been an academic process for me. It has been personal and life-changing. I wish it for all my friends.
7. The process of attending the FLI event for me was like charging up my batteries for when I came back. It is important that I keep this spark alive.
8. I am more patient with my children and try to listen more intently to them.
9. For me, it's been like therapy. Much healing has come about. My patience has grown.
10. I am more tolerant of differences among others, as I have always been very quick to judge.
11. I believe FLI has affected my child, as I pay more attention and am much more supportive to him. Maybe it will take a while, but I see slow changes coming about in his behavior also.
12. For me, Consuelo affirmed many of my troubles, but I found out I'll be OK. I'm not the only one. More important for me is that I now have great confidence I can now make it with my kids, even as a single mom.
13. The FLI has helped me focus on what is important in my life, the future of my kids. I had taken them for granted.
14. I am grateful to have attended the FLI. Even my husband is glad I attended. He tells me I have changed for the better and our relationship is much stronger. I thank the FLI for helping me.
15. I now feel more confident talking with teachers.
16. It has been good to learn that other parents are struggling just like me. But it's been just as great to know that they can be helpful to me and I can be helpful to them. This has been

going on for me the past six months and it has made all the difference. This never would have occurred had I not had the chance to meet other parents at the FLI workshop.

17. *From a facilitator:* Since the FLI event, I continue to meet with parents almost weekly and have taken various courses through the Parent University. This has been very helpful for me.
18. *From a parent leader:* I have seen parents change a lot the past year. While I don't know how this will reflect greater achievement for their kids right now, I am sure it will at some point. It's got to make a difference.
19. *From a community worker:* Nobody's stuff is solid. To say the curriculum meets all our needs would be unfair. It's Consuelo's story and while my story is different, I've learned to pull out my story from hers. This was refreshing for me.
20. *From a teacher:* I see the parents that have come back to be more involved in my school. This is great to see, especially among parents that were not at all involved.
21. *From an administrator:* As I look across the district, I now see hundreds of parents involved this past year in one activity or another. This is great, given that I hardly saw parent involved five years ago. The change has been great. I hope this continues and doesn't die.
22. *From school staff:* The school district often does things top-down, the FLI does it bottom-up. There is much our district needs to yet learn.
23. I attended the workshop about a year ago and it was recently that one of my kids came up to me and said, "Mom, you have changed a lot since that day. I like who you have become ... and then I cried my heart out in joy!"

## Appendix E: Statistical Tables<sup>25</sup>

### Tables for Two-Year Student Cohorts: FLI and Control Group<sup>26</sup>

Student totals for key variables: grade level, school type, ethnicity, gender, SES, and ELL Status<sup>27</sup>

Exhibit E-1  
Two-Year Cohort, by Grade: FLI and Control Group<sup>28</sup>

Grade Level	FLI Group	Control Group	Total
K	3 (4%)	13 (4%)	16 (4%)
1	7 (9%)	22 (8%)	29 (8%)
2	5 (6%)	11 (4%)	16 (4%)
3	7 (9%)	12 (4%)	19 (5%)
4	8 (10%)	21 (7%)	29 (8%)
5	5 (6%)	18 (6%)	23 (6%)
6	7 (9%)	23 (8%)	30 (8%)
7	4 (5%)	17 (6%)	21 (6%)
8	7 (9%)	35 (12%)	42 (11%)
9	5 (6%)	18 (6%)	23 (6%)
10	9 (12%)	50 (17%)	59 (16%)
11	8 (10%)	33 (11%)	41 (11%)
12	3 (4%)	17 (6%)	20 (5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>368</b>

Exhibit E-2  
Two-Year Cohort, by School Type: FLI and Control Group (n=38 schools)<sup>29</sup>

School Type	FLI Group	Control Group	Total
Elementary	37 (47%)	97 (33%)	134 (36%)
Middle	16 (21%)	75 (26%)	91 (25%)
High School	24 (31%)	117 (40%)	141 (38%)
Recovery HS	1 (1%)	1 (<1%)	2 (<1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78 (100%)</b>	<b>290 (100%)</b>	<b>368 (100%)</b>

<sup>25</sup> These tables represent the number of students in the FLI group as compared to students in the control group for key variables. The appendix represents two sets of data, one for each cohort: two-year and one-year.

<sup>26</sup> Percentages refer to column percentages only, rounded to the nearest whole number. As a result, percent totals do not always add to 100%.

<sup>27</sup> Two other variables, school representation and home language, were used to identify control groups, but not included in this appendix.

<sup>28</sup> As the number of IEP students was low, the experimental group was not controlled for IEPs. It should be noted, however, that the FLI group had 6 IEPs (or 8%), as compared to the control group with only 4 IEPs (just over 1%), bringing the ratio of IEPs to almost eight times greater for the FLI group.

<sup>29</sup> A total of 38 schools are represented for this group of students, as the two-year cohort.

Exhibit E-3  
Two-Year Cohort, by Race/Ethnicity:  
FLI and Control Group

Race/Ethnicity	FLI Group	Control Group	Total
African American	2 (3%)	7 (2%)	9 (2%)
Hispanic	74 (95%)	283 (98%)	357 (97%)
Mixed or other	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78 (100%)</b>	<b>290 (100%)</b>	<b>368 (100%)</b>

Exhibit E-4  
Student Representation, by Gender:  
FLI and Control Group

Gender	FLI Group	Control Group	Total
Male	44 (56%)	139 (48%)	183 (50%)
Female	34 (44%)	151 (52%)	185 (50%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78 (100%)</b>	<b>290 (100%)</b>	<b>368 (100%)</b>

Exhibit E-5  
Student Representation, by English Language Learners (ELLs):  
FLI and Control Group<sup>30</sup>

ELL	FLI Group	Control Group	Total
English only	9 (12%)	43 (15%)	52 (14%)
Initially fluent	7 (9%)	2 (1%)	9 (2%)
English learning	20 (26%)	37 (13%)	57 (15%)
Declassified fluent	42 (53%)	208 (71%)	250 (69%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78 (100%)</b>	<b>290 (100%)</b>	<b>368 (100%)</b>

Exhibit E-6  
Student Representation, by Socio-Economic Status (SES):  
FLI and Control Group<sup>31</sup>

SES	FLI Group	Control Group	Total
Low income	68 (87%)	253 (87%)	321 (87%)
Other	10 (13%)	37 (13%)	47 (13%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78 (100%)</b>	<b>290 (100%)</b>	<b>368 (100%)</b>

<sup>30</sup> The only home languages were English and Spanish, the rest were mixed, but with Spanish as the dominant home language for the overwhelming majority (96%) of the FLI households.

<sup>31</sup> Free-and-reduced lunch is the major indicator the district utilizes.

**Tables for One-Year Student Cohorts: FLI and Control Group<sup>32</sup>**

Student totals for key variables, by grade level, school type, ethnicity, gender, SES, and ELL Status. These are parallel tables to those presented for two-year cohorts.

**Exhibit E-1a**  
**Student Representation, by Grade:**  
**FLI and Control Group<sup>33</sup>**

Grade Level	FLI Group	Control Group	Total
TK	2 (3%)	2 (1%)	4 (1%)
K	1 (1%)	5 (2%)	6 (2%)
1	6 (8%)	25 (10%)	31 (9%)
2	11 (14%)	32 (12%)	43 (13%)
3	10 (13%)	35 (13%)	45 (13%)
4	6 (8%)	24 (9%)	30 (9%)
5	7 (9%)	19 (7%)	26 (8%)
6	11 (14%)	40 (15%)	51 (15%)
7	1 (1%)	5 (2%)	6 (2%)
8	6 (8%)	21 (8%)	27 (8%)
9	4 (5%)	16 (6%)	20 (6%)
10	5 (7%)	11 (4%)	16 (5%)
11	4 (5%)	8 (7%)	22 (7%)
12	2 (3%)	9 (3%)	11 (3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>338</b>

**Exhibit E-2a**  
**Student Representation, by School Type:**  
**FLI and Control Group (n=25 schools)**

School Type	FLI Group	Control Group	Total
Elementary	50 (66%)	165 (63%)	215 (64%)
Middle	14 (18%)	49 (19%)	63 (18%)
High School	11 (14%)	43 (16%)	54 (16%)
Recovery HS	1 (2%)	5 (2%)	6 (2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>76 (100%)</b>	<b>262 (100%)</b>	<b>338 (100%)</b>

**Exhibit E-3a**  
**Student Representation, by Race/Ethnicity:**  
**FLI and Control Group**

Race/Ethnicity	FLI Group	Control Group	Total
African American	3 (4%)	14 (5%)	17 (5%)
Hispanic	71 (93%)	247 (94%)	318 (94%)
Mixed or other	2 (3%)	1 (<1%)	3 (1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>76 (100%)</b>	<b>262 (100%)</b>	<b>338 (100%)</b>

<sup>32</sup> A total of 25 schools are represented for this cohort of students, as the one-year cohort group.

<sup>33</sup> As the number of IEP students was low, the experimental group was not controlled for IEPs. It should be noted, however, that the FLI group had 8 IEPs (or 11%), as compared to the control group with only 6 IEPs (or 2%), bringing the ratio of IEPs to five times greater for the FLI group.

Exhibit E-4a  
Student Representation, by Gender:  
FLI and Control Group

Gender	FLI Group	Control Group	Total
Male	35 (46%)	127 (48%)	162 (48%)
Female	41 (54%)	135 (52%)	176 (52%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>76 (100%)</b>	<b>262 (100%)</b>	<b>338 (100%)</b>

Exhibit E-5a  
Student Representation, by English Language Learners (ELLs):  
FLI and Control Group<sup>34</sup>

ELL	FLI Group	Control Group	Total
English Only	6 (8%)	20 (8%)	26 (8%)
English Learning	41 (54%)	124 (47%)	165 (49%)
Declassified fluent	29 (38%)	118 (45%)	147 (43%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>76 (100%)</b>	<b>262 (100%)</b>	<b>338 (100%)</b>

Exhibit E-6a  
Student Representation, by Socio-Economic Status (SES):  
FLI and Control Group

SES	FLI Group	Control Group	Total
Low income	75 (99%)	247 (94%)	322 (95%)
Other	1(1%)	15 (6%)	16 (5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>76 (100%)</b>	<b>262 (100%)</b>	<b>338 (100%)</b>

<sup>34</sup> The only home languages were English and Spanish, the rest were mixed, but with Spanish as the dominant home language for the overwhelming majority (98%) of the FLI households



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