

Central Falls School District

We Are A Village

DID WE ARE A VILLAGE IMPROVE THE ATTENDANCE AND SOCIAL SKILLS OF PRE-K TO FIRST GRADE STUDENTS?

Project Overview

THE PROBLEM: What Challenge Did the Program Try to Address?

Families, especially those of students with Individualized Education Plans, Limited English Proficiency, and Hispanic background, often feel marginalized by their children's schools. "We Are A Village" attempts to help these families become more actively engaged in their children's' education with the hope that this will improve student attendance and social behavior.

THE PROJECT: What Strategies Did the Program Employ?

Central Falls School District (CFSD) in Rhode Island was awarded an i3 development grant¹ to implement and evaluate We Are a Village. The goal of the project was to create a climate of family engagement that would, in turn, boost student attendance and social skills acquisition. The project used several core frameworks to think about family engagement and supportive school environments. Primary project activities were focused on family-friendly schools, building parent leadership, and better supporting teachers, staff, and families to engage with one another. To gauge the program's effect on student attendance and behavior, the evaluators used a pre-post design with descriptive quantitative measures.

¹ Development grants provide funding to support the development or testing of novel or substantially more effective practices that address widely shared education challenges. All i3 grantees are required to conduct rigorous evaluations of their projects. The quality of evidence required to demonstrate a project's effectiveness depends on a project's level of scale or grant type. Central Falls School District received an i3 development grant supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation program through Grant Number U411C120033.

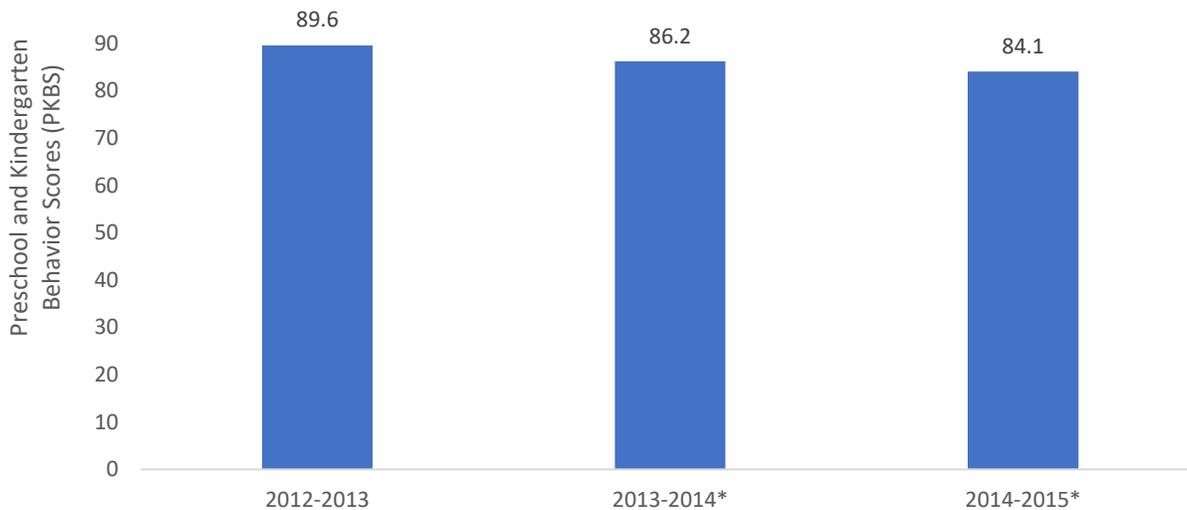
THE WE ARE A VILLAGE MODEL

- **Resource Rooms.** Schools created spaces where parents could connect with one another, receive assistance, and participate in group (“Village”) activities.
- **Family Coffee Hours.** Established regular meetings where parents could hear from school administrators, guest speakers, and connect with one another.
- **Kindergarten Transition Support.** Parent-to-parent support groups for the families of children transitioning to kindergarten.
- **Parent Peer Navigators.** These individuals were paid a small stipend to commit 12 or more hours per week to provide leadership in their schools and communities.
- **Parent Governing Boards.** Monthly meetings consisting of parent peer navigators, parent volunteers, i3 collaborators, and school leadership.
- **Cross-System Parent Workshops.** Provided three times per year on topics selected by families.
- **Incredible Years Training.** A 36-hour training to build teachers’ skills in creating an effective learning environment and generating collaborative relationships with families.
- **Collaborative Working Groups.** Established to ensure ongoing support for the implementation of the Incredible Years approach.

Summary of Results

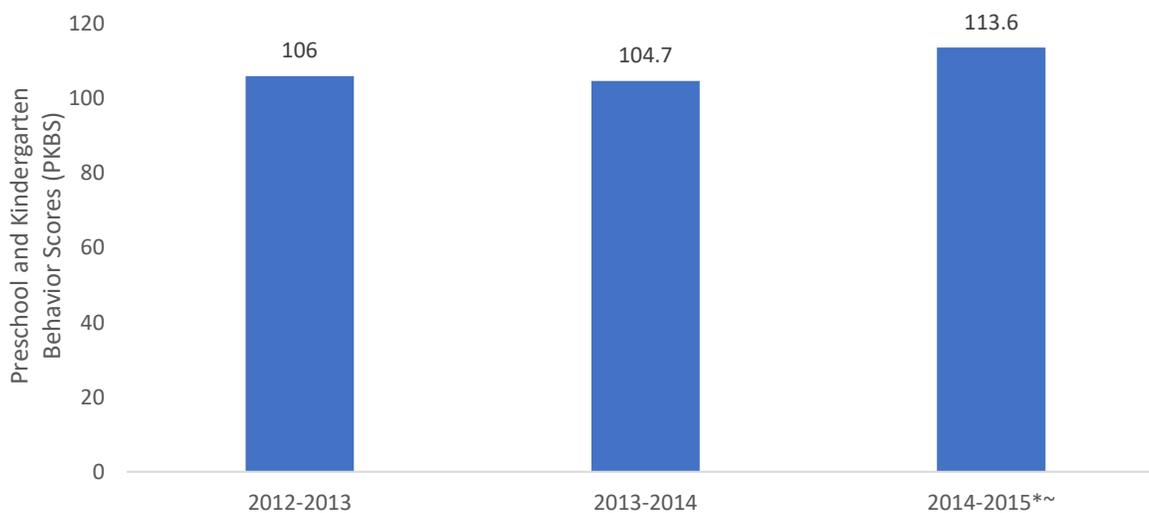
DID WE ARE A VILLAGE IMPROVE THE ATTENDANCE AND SOCIAL SKILLS OF PRE-K TO FIRST GRADE STUDENTS?

Average Teacher-Reported Problem Behavior in Kindergarten



*The change from 2012-2013 is significant

Average Teacher-Reported Social Skills among Kindergarteners



*The change from 2012-2013 is significant
~The change from 2013-2014 is significant

As students transitioned from Pre-K to Kindergarten to 1st grade, absenteeism declined significantly. However, prior research has demonstrated that this is likely in the absence of any program. The results for improvement in social skills were mixed.

- **ATTENDANCE.** Chronic absenteeism declined substantially, from 39% to 20% for the Pre-K to Kindergarten cohort and from 33% to 20% for the Kindergarten to first grade cohort. Both of these results were statistically significant. Attendance also improved by statistically significant amounts for both cohorts, from 87% to 93% for Pre-K to Kindergarten and from 90% to 93% for the Kindergarten to first grade cohort.
- **PROBLEM BEHAVIOR.** Problem behavior decreased (but not significantly) from Pre-K to Kindergarten, but increased significantly for the Kindergarten to 1st grade and 1st grade to 2nd grade cohorts.
- **SOCIAL SKILLS.** There was a statistically significant increase in the social skills of students in the Pre-K to Kindergarten cohort. However, students in the Kindergarten to 1st grade and 1st grade to 2nd grade cohorts exhibited statistically significant declines in their social skills.

Please see Appendices B and C for information about the evaluation's design and the quality of the evidence, respectively.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The grantees developed many recommendations as a result of the We Are A Village intervention, some of which are highlighted below:

- **IMPLEMENTATION.** The evaluators assessed and shared implementation challenges and successes for all program components. They suggested that when an intervention involves multiple partners, implementers should engage in conversation at the earliest planning stages to reach agreement in the following areas: the shared assumptions and purposes of the intervention; if systems themselves need to be changed and if leadership has the capability to make these changes; if relationships between major system players need to be altered or repaired; and to what extent staff have the capacity and buy-in to implement the intervention.
- **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT.** To ensure parents feel welcome, valued, respected, and connected to one another, programs like We Are A Village should develop: teacher capacity for family engagement through home visiting; culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy; leadership opportunities for teachers demonstrating a commitment to family engagement; and opportunities for parents to develop leadership skills.
- **STUDENT SUPPORT.** Programs like We Are A Village should enhance parent and teacher abilities to support children academically, socially, and emotionally by offering parents opportunities to volunteer; having bilingual staff (including teachers for family outreach); and offering families more opportunities to learn how to support their children academically.

For More Information

Evaluation Reports

[Final Evaluation Summary](#) (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2016)²
[Final Evaluation Summary \(ERIC\)](#) (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2016)

Additional Reports

[Research Brief 1](#) (Voices in Urban Education, 2016)
[Research Brief 2](#). (Voices in Urban Education, 2016)

² The information and data for this result summary was collected from the most recent report as of 01/27/2020: Annenberg Institute for School Reform. (2016). *The i3 We Are A Village Grant: Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned About Supporting Family Engagement in Early Childhood*. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED574743.pdf>

Appendix A: Students Served by the Project³

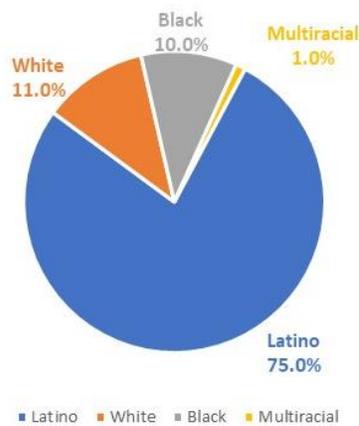
GRADE(S)													
PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

GENDER

RACE/ETHNICITY

COMMUNITY

Not Reported



Not Reported

HIGH-NEED STUDENTSⁱ

Free/Reduced-Price Lunch ⁴	English Learner	Students with Disabilities
90% (Years 1 and 2)	27% (Year 1); 24% (Year 2)	15% (Year 1); 19% (Year 2)

³These data reflect the entire student population served by the intervention, not just the evaluation sample used in the impact study.

⁴ The figures in this table are approximations based on the group average line shown in figure 4 of the final evaluation report.

Appendix B: Impact Evaluation Methodology⁵

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Design:	Pre-Post Design
Approach:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three cohorts of students were followed from spring 2014 to spring 2015. One cohort represented students transitioning from Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten, a second monitored students transitioning from Kindergarten to 1st grade, and the third contained students moving from 1st to 2nd grades. Analysis involved the comparison of pre-intervention to post-intervention outcomes using district records for attendance and teacher ratings of students' behavior and social skills.
Study Length:	Two academic years (2013-14 & 2014-15)

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Study Setting:	Three pre-schools and two elementary schools in the Rhode Island Central Falls School District
Final Sample Sizes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Cohort 1 (Pre-K to Kindergarten)</i> : Attendance – 77 Students; Behavior – 53 students <i>Cohort 2 (Kindergarten to first grade)</i>: Attendance – 123 Students; Behavior – 101 students <i>Cohort 3 (1st to 2nd grade)</i>: Attendance – 118 Students; Behavior – 58 students
Population Characteristics (district-wide):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximate Total District Enrollment: 2,800 Free/reduced price lunch: 81% White: 13%, Black: 12%, Hispanic: 73%, Other Race/Ethnicity: 2%
Data Sources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher surveys of student behavior and social skills School district records
Data Sources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intake questionnaire for parents: demographic information Brigance and Bader scores
Key Measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance (including chronic absenteeism) – District records Student Social Skills – Social Skills Improvement System (1st and 2nd grade) Student Behavior – Pre-Kindergarten Behavioral Scales (Pre-K and Kindergarten)

⁵ These data reflect only the evaluation sample in the impact study, not the entire population served.

Appendix C: Quality of the Evidence

Although an evaluation may not have been reviewed by the time of publication for this summary, it is possible that the study will be reviewed at a later date. Please visit the websites found in the footnotes on this page to check for updates.

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW⁶

STUDY	RATING
The Investing in Innovation Fund: Summary of 67 Evaluations. Final Report. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20184013/pdf/20184013.pdf	Unofficially Ineligible for WWC Review

EVIDENCE FOR ESSA REVIEW⁷

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 01/27/2020	N/A

NATIONAL CENTER ON INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS REVIEW⁸

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 01/27/2020	N/A

⁶ <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW>

⁷ <https://www.evidenceforessa.org/>

⁸ <https://intensiveintervention.org/>

Investing in Innovation (i3) Grantee Results Summary

Development 2012-2015

The [*Investing in Innovation Fund \(i3\)*](#), established under section 14007 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, is a Federal discretionary grant program at the U.S. Department of Education within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). i3 grants help schools and local education agencies work in partnership with the private sector and the philanthropic community to develop and expand innovative practices that improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, and/or increase college enrollment and completion rates for high-need students.

This summary was prepared by the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Program Dissemination Project. The project is conducted by the [*Manhattan Strategy Group*](#), in partnership with [*Westat*](#) and [*EdScale*](#), with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, [*Office of Elementary and Secondary Education*](#), under Contract No. ED-ESE-15-A-0012/0004. The evaluation results presented herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

ⁱ “High-need student” refers to a student at risk of academic failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, attend high-minority schools, are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, in foster care, have been incarcerated, have disabilities, or who are English learners. For more information see: [*Applications for New Awards; Investing in Innovation Fund-Development Grants, 81 FR 24070 \(April 25, 2016\)*](#).