

ENGAGING FAMILIES, EMPOWERING CHILDREN

30 Projects Drive Progress in Schools and Communities

Caregivers—including parents and grandparents—are vital to children’s learning and development. They’re often the first teachers in a child’s life. Research shows that students with caregivers who are involved in their schools are more likely to do well socially and perform better academically. In turn, communities thrive when children receive a quality education that is relevant to their culture and home life.

Family engagement in many schools advances through opportunities to volunteer, coordinate events, and attend meetings. But this arrangement creates meaningful disparities. Working-class and poor families—especially families of color—are routinely thwarted by inflexible work schedules, limited transportation and other resources, language differences and other barriers.

As the country becomes more diverse, schools that successfully engage all families will transform learning. That’s why the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) set out to support and create environments where teachers, families and community members share responsibility for student success.



BRIDGING CULTURAL DIVIDES

From 2014 to 2017, WKKF funded 30 projects in 17 states and tribal nations, as well as the District of Columbia, intentionally reaching acutely underserved communities in their Family Engagement initiatives. The goal was to inspire innovation and leadership among organizations, school administrators, teachers, civic leaders and policymakers to make positive changes in children’s lives.

Family Engagement prioritizes healthy relationships between families and teachers with a focus on student learning. When families are successfully engaged in their child’s education, they become culture-bearers, helping schools restore broken trust and evolve into places that families see as extensions of their homes.

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT ACROSS AMERICA

Each of the 30 projects found creative ways to build system capacity in schools by addressing power dynamics, involving caregivers as experts for their children and communicating openly with families. They also developed family leadership by incorporating caregivers’ feedback into decision-making and being more transparent about students’ rights.

“I’m not afraid to fight for my own rights, for my children’s rights, my family and for



those of my community,” said one parent with OneAmerica, the largest immigrant and refugee advocacy organization in Washington state.

Examples of projects include:

- ◆ **Chicago, Illinois.** The ChiS&E program provided year-round classes in STEM to African American and Latino students from poor and working-class families, with close involvement from parents.
 - ◆ **East Oakland, California.** At a school that reported consistently low reading levels, the Parent Leadership Action Network created on-site workshops to help parent volunteers improve their understanding of early literacy.
- ### BOOSTING STUDENT SUCCESS
- In just three years, these cohorts made impressive strides in schools and communities. The outcomes represent a range of growth in confidence and capability.
- ◆ **Children** began to advocate for themselves in the classroom—including autistic and English Language Learner students who were often the targets of bias. Students felt more connected to their family history and culture and even took new pride in their schools. They experienced increases in both literacy and social well-being.
 - ◆ **Teachers** built trust with families by keeping the lines of communication open. And schools reported increases in student attendance, parent-teacher conference participation and parent volunteerism—all indicators of stronger relationships between home and school.
 - ◆ **Families** became more confident as they gained new skills and knowledge. They also became more informed of school policy at local, state and federal levels. Many immigrant families even spoke openly about challenges like fear of deportation. “I actually feel as though my input was heard and will make a difference,” said one parent involved in the K’é Early Childhood Initiative in Denver, Colorado.
- WKKF continues to support initiatives that see families as leaders and experts to further encourage trust building and knowledge sharing. When families, teachers and communities share a passion for improving children’s lives, the challenges they face no longer hold them back.

Increasing Family Engagement, Improving Student Outcomes

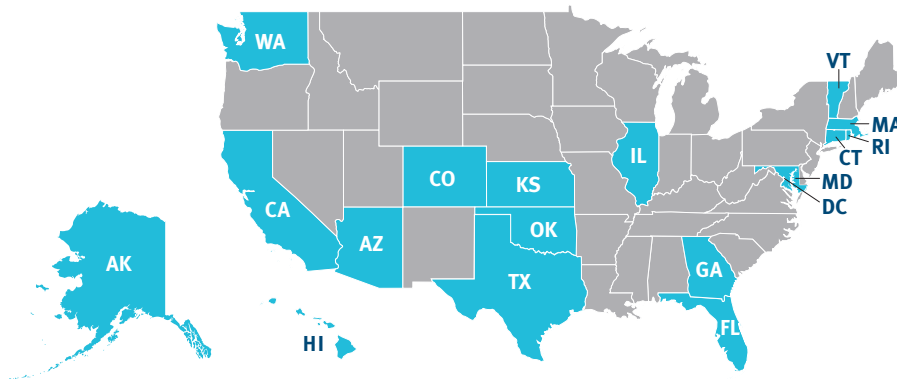
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We gave out

30 GRANTS



In 17 states and tribal nations,
as well as Washington, D.C.



For a total of **\$13.7 MILLION**

These programs strengthened Family Engagement with a range of focus areas specific to their student, family and community needs, including



School gardens



Summer camps



Non-traditional
parent-teacher meetings



Weekend
STEM classes



Heritage
celebrations



Art museum
outreach



Literacy
workshops

In just 3 years, programs celebrated outstanding results

CHILDREN



Advocated for themselves
in the classroom



Increased literacy levels



Improved social well-being



Felt more connected to
their culture and history

TEACHERS



Built trust with families



Incorporated families'
feedback into curriculum



Facilitated open communication
across communities



Recorded increases in
student attendance

FAMILIES



Became more aware of
legislative policies affecting
their children's education



Spoke openly about challenges



Attended more meetings and
conferences with teachers

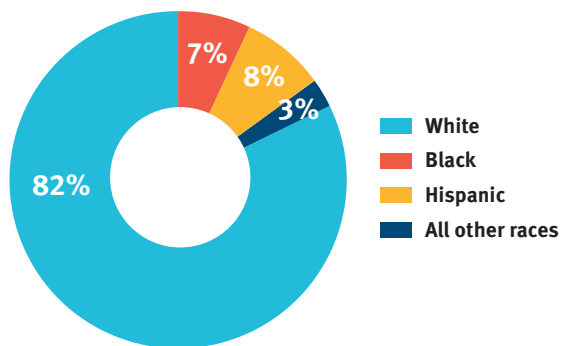


Volunteered at more
school events

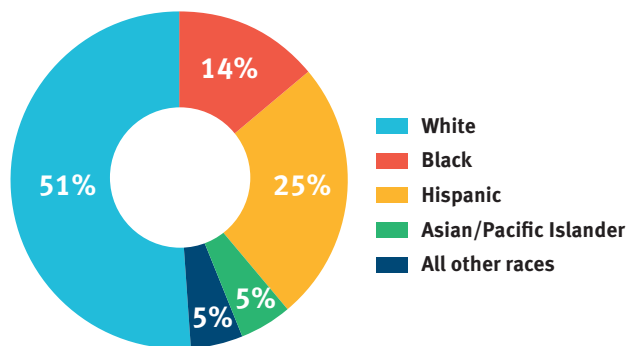
Teacher & Student Demographics Demonstrate the Need for Culturally Relevant Training

Only 20% of teachers are teachers of color at a time when students of color make up the majority of K-12 classrooms. Every state has more students of color than teachers of color—and over 40% of public schools have no teachers of color.

TEACHERS AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS



STUDENTS AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Demographic trends point to an increasingly diverse student population. By 2024:

The **white** student population is projected to decrease by 5%.



The **black** student population is projected to decrease by 1%.



The proportion of **Hispanic** students is projected to increase by 5%.



The proportion of **Asian/Pacific Islander** students is projected to increase by 1%.