



Family League of Baltimore Community Schools Evaluation: A Three-Year Retrospective Study of Implementation and Results

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Executive Summary

- This report details findings from an evaluation conducted by Inciter of Family League-funded community schools in Baltimore City and school-specific programming including Out-of-School Time (OST) programs over three school years of implementation (SY 17-18, SY 18-19, and SY 19-20). Included in the evaluation are 44 community schools and 42 OST programs.
- The Community Schools strategy is an approach that positions public schools as hubs of integrated service delivery for students, families, and the broader community. A community school is both a place and set of strategic partnerships among schools and other resources that promote student achievement, positive conditions for learning, and the well-being of families and communities. Through the work of a Lead Agency, each community school leverages unique community resources to meet needs and maintain a core focus on children, while recognizing that children grow up in families, and that families are integral parts of communities. This integrated approach is designed to lead to student success, strong families, and healthy communities.
- OST programming in Baltimore City is intentionally aligned with the Community Schools strategy. OST programs are sited within community schools. They provide homework help, enrichment opportunities, nutritious meals, and high-quality care during out-of-school time, extending the support services of community schools beyond the school day. High-quality OST programs incorporate a youth development approach and ensure that young people have the opportunity to use discretionary time to continue building knowledge and skills to help them succeed in the future.
- The evaluation methodology involves two tools, a Maturity Scale with three levels (Emerging, Formalizing, and Mature) and a Strengths Index with eight strengths (Case Management, Culturally Relevant programming, Data Inquiry, Digital Outreach, Early Childhood, Economic Support, and Newcomer Integration). While each school is categorized by a single maturity level, schools may have more than one strength. The categorizations emerged from an in-depth analysis of key documents, especially action plans and partnership reports.
- Matching the Maturity Scale and Strengths Index to cleaned and pre-processed data allows us to glean multiple views into data while avoiding direct comparisons across schools. This approach also recognizes that there are differences, and potentially meaningful ones, between programs, both in the maturity of the site-based implementation of the Community Schools strategy, and in their areas of substantive focus. The programming offered by each school is intentionally unique, tailored specifically to the needs of the community served, so comparing schools to one another would be misaligned to the strategy itself.

Maturity Scale and Strengths Index

- Schools in the *Emerging* (n=9) category may have inconsistency in the tenure of the Community School Coordinator due to turnover in the role during the evaluation period, inconsistency in the demonstrated engagement of the Community School Steering Committee or similar governing body, *and* absence, inconsistency, or underdevelopment of key reporting documents. Schools in this category leave the general impression of having room for growth in their implementation of the model.
- Schools identified as *Formalizing* (n=18) are developing well, but may have inconsistency in the tenure of the Community School Coordinator due to turnover in the role during the evaluation period, inconsistency in the demonstrated engagement of the Community School Steering Committee or similar governing body, *or* absence or inconsistency in key reporting documents. Schools in this category have clearly identifiable program strengths, average-level evidence of meaningful strategic partnerships, and leave the general impression of a school that is working steadily to implement the model.
- Schools identified as *Mature* (n=17) have a consistent Community School Coordinator, an engaged Community School Steering Committee or similar governing body, detailed and consistent reporting documents, high-quality data that demonstrate the development and leveraging of meaningful strategic partnerships, and clearly identifiable program strengths. Mature schools, while they are still evolving and have room for growth, leave the holistic impression of a school that stands out as exemplary in its implementation of the model.
- In addition to placement at one level of the Maturity Scale, schools' particular strengths were also identified. Strength placements were made on the basis of qualitative analysis of key reporting documents, especially action plans and partnership reports. As stated above, eight strengths were included in the Strengths Index (Case Management, Culturally Relevant programming, Data Inquiry, Digital Outreach, Early Childhood, Economic Support, and Newcomer Integration). While many schools had offerings in these areas, only those with a preponderance of evidence available in reporting documents were assigned to the strength area. Generally speaking, Mature schools tended to have more strengths than Formalizing schools, which had more strengths than Emerging schools. This is a function, at least in part, of the detail and consistency of their reporting documents.

Key Findings

- Family engagement as measured by parent participation on school leadership teams fluctuated over the evaluation period.
- Family engagement as measured by parent and family volunteer hours generally decreased over the evaluation period among Emerging and Formalizing schools, and slightly increased among Mature schools. Qualitative evidence suggests that Covid-19 related social distancing guidelines affected volunteerism. By strength category, parent and family volunteer hours were overall highest in schools with strength in Mental Health.
- OST programs are providing a safe and supportive environment for the students who attend them, based on the YPQA and School-Age PQA. There is room for improvement in the areas of interaction and engagement.
- When examined by maturity category, chronic absenteeism generally increased over the evaluation period, except among Mature schools where it held relatively consistent.
- Chronic absenteeism, when examined by strength category, decreased among schools focused on Culturally Relevant programming, as well as Newcomer Integration. Most schools in these strength areas are in the Mature category.
- School readiness as measured by scores on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) generally decreased over the evaluation period in all maturity categories and strength areas. However, schools with strength in Early Childhood had the highest percentage of students demonstrating readiness in two of the three years of the evaluation period.
- Retention rates, or rates of students not being promoted to the next grade, generally decreased (that is, improved) over the evaluation period in all maturity categories and strength areas. Schools with strengths in Case Management, Digital Outreach, and Mental Health had the lowest (that is, the best) retention rates.
- Scale PARCC scores, both ELA and math, improved very slightly in all maturity categories over the evaluation period. Grouped by strength category, and focusing on the portion of students meeting expectations on PARCC, schools with strengths in Culturally Relevant programming and Newcomer Integration performed notably better than schools overall, in both ELA and math.
- Measures of a safe school environment improved among schools in the Emerging maturity category.

- The top goal domains across all schools are youth development and OST-related goals (19% of total goals), parent and family engagement (17% of total goals), career and college access (16% of total goals), academic support and attendance (15% of total goals), and physical and mental health (12% of total goals).
- Across all community schools, over half of all goals (56%) identified in action plans were aimed at students. An additional third of total goals (33%) were directed at parents, communities, and families. The fewest number of goals were directed at strategic partners (4%) and teachers (1%). Mature schools focus more than schools in other maturity categories on goals related to their strategic partnerships.
- While the number of strategic partnerships increases with maturity level, the proportion of strategic partnerships aligned with community needs and priorities decreases with maturity level. In general, schools that are more mature in their implementation of the site-based Community Schools strategy tend to have a greater number of partners, and more diverse emphases among these partnerships.
- In terms of support services and activities, schools in the Emerging category engage in a relatively high proportion of one-time interventions, while Formalizing and Mature schools tend to focus more on regularly recurring interventions.
- In OST programs, rates of student attendance decreased in all three maturity categories over the course of the evaluation period, though least so in OST programs in schools rated Mature.
- In OST programs, retention rates, a metric of students' persistent participation, decreased in all three maturity categories over the course of the evaluation period, though least so in OST programs in schools rated Emerging.
- Overall, students feel safe in their OST programs and report that their OST programs help them find better ways to fix their problems.

Recommendations

- Continue to encourage meaningful and consistent parent participation on school leadership teams. Deep collaboration benefits from trusting relationships, and these take time and consistent effort to build. In addition, promote parent agency and create opportunities for parents to give input into schools' decisions. In meaningfully engaging parents and families in agenda-setting and decision-making, schools benefit from their insight, wisdom, and energy. When community schools value the experience of people of diverse backgrounds who are committed to the school community, and when they intentionally focus on embracing families and mobilizing their assets, it increases the resources and relationships available to support student success.
- For OST site leaders, prioritize growth in the areas of Interaction and Engagement. In other words, design OST to encourage active learning, leadership, and youth voice and agency. For Family League, consider offering professional development opportunities to build capacity in these areas.
- For schools with many one-time interventions, consider integrating more regularly-recurring interventions into activity and event calendars. Recurring interventions often require less planning time to implement, and thus create efficiencies, while also cultivating community trust and interdependence.
- When setting goals, continue to focus less on the total number of goals and more on goal quality. Results-based accountability invites schools to define their own metrics of success, and work backwards from these to specific actions and interventions. Schools can also revisit their goals and metrics of success periodically, adjusting them in response to progress and changing contexts. A continuous improvement orientation means taking the time to reflect individually and collectively and make changes when warranted.
- Consider implementing working groups, participatory professional development sessions, focus groups, and/or site visits to better understand how schools in various strength categories are supporting student and family success. For instance, schools with strengths in Culturally Relevant programming and Newcomer Integration could be convened to explore how they use strategic partnerships, supports, and resources to reduce chronic absenteeism and increase student achievement. A similar strategy could be used for schools with strength in Mental Health with regard to parent and family volunteerism, for schools with strength in Early Childhood with regard to school readiness, and for schools with strengths in Case Management, Digital Outreach, and Mental Health with regard to retention. Use these insights to support continuous improvement, maximize impact, and build capacity of schools across the maturity continuum and across strength areas.

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Introduction

Family League of Baltimore serves as a partner for community schools, including those providing Out-of-School Time (OST) programs, in Baltimore, Maryland. The community schools in this evaluation are currently funded by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City.

The Community Schools strategy is an approach that positions public schools as hubs of integrated service delivery for students, families, and the broader community. A community school is both a place and set of strategic partnerships among schools and other resources that promote student achievement, positive conditions for learning, and the well-being of families and communities. Through the work of a community-based partner, or Lead Agency, each community school leverages unique community resources to meet needs and maintain a core focus on children, while recognizing that children grow up in families, and that families are integral parts of communities. This integrated approach is designed to lead to student success, strong families, and healthy communities.

The work of a community school is guided by national standards developed by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL). These standards are designed to engage and support the community schools movement as a standards-driven, evidence-based strategy to promote equity and educational excellence for every child and to strengthen families and communities. Lead Agencies partner with schools to develop strategic partnerships with other service providers in the community and bring additional resources to the school to help meet the needs of students and families.

Lead Agencies also provide a full-time Community School Coordinator (CSC) to each school. The CSC is responsible for leveraging resources, completing a structured periodic needs assessment, and aligning action plans and partnerships to meet the particular needs of students, families, and the entire school community. This typically involves organizing food pantries, bringing needed medical care into the school building, coordinating volunteer programs, securing donations and sponsorships, and creating tutoring and mentorship programs, among other initiatives. The Community Schools strategy is intended to promote student achievement, improve learning conditions, and provide for the well-being of families and the community-at-large. Areas of particular focus vary from school to school as they are directly responsive to each community's specific needs and priorities. In addition, there is intentional alignment between the Community Schools strategy and OST programming, which is designed to provide a safe and enriching environment and give youth an opportunity to explore new interests, experience success, and exercise their voice and agency.

OST programs in Baltimore City provide students with additional educational, recreational, and enrichment opportunities when school is not in session. This is thought to contribute to student success in and outside of the school setting. OST programs also aim to help the community by providing meals to children and giving them a reliable, safe place to go after school.

Family League of Baltimore contracted the evaluation consulting firm Inciter (Washington, DC) for an external evaluation of the Community Schools strategy and school-specific packages of programming including OST programs over three school years of implementation (SY 17-18, SY 18-19, and SY 19-20). The evaluation was designed to be a retrospective assessment of the quality of program implementation over these three years and of resulting outcomes for students and families.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide insights and data-driven feedback on the last three years of program implementation in the 44 community schools (including 42 with OST programs), in order to inform work happening in community schools and support continuous improvement efforts in community schools.

Scope of Work

To develop the scope of work, the evaluators worked in close collaboration with Family League staff and selected other stakeholders including youth, CSCs, Community School Directors, OST Site Managers, and CS and OST Lead Agency Representatives to develop a logic model illustrating how the Community Schools strategy is intended to function. (Refer to Appendix A for the logic model.)

This process resulted in a theory of how the Community Schools strategy works that then informed the development of a set of research questions within three main areas of focus: implementation questions, outcome questions, and OST-specific outcome questions.

Implementation Questions

RQ1. Which schools have what key Community Schools components aligned to National Standards, and implemented at what points in time?

RQ2. Specifically, what activities are schools implementing to engage families in supporting their children's education?

RQ3. With what quality are OST programs being implemented?

Outcome Questions

RQ4. How have school-level rates of chronic absenteeism varied over time (i.e., students attend school consistently)?

RQ5. How has school-level family engagement varied over time, in terms of (a) two key measures on the Baltimore City Public Schools parent questionnaire, and (b) parent volunteerism/participation hours?

RQ6. How have school-level school readiness rates varied over time (i.e., children enter school ready to learn; based on KRA scores), considering specific Pre-K programming offered?

RQ7. Long Term - How have student achievement rates varied over time (i.e., students succeed academically)?

RQ8. Long Term - How have selected measures of a safe school environment varied over time (i.e., students learn in a safe, supportive, and stable environment)?

RQ9. Long Term - How have schools worked to realize the community needs goals they set out to meet, considering their mixed-method needs assessments, benchmarks, and measures of success for their targets?

OST-Specific Outcome Questions

RQ10. With what rates are enrolled students attending those programs, over time?

RQ11. With what rates are students being retained in those programs, over time?

RQ12. How does social and emotional learning vary over time for OST students for whom data are available?

Hybrid Evaluation Approach

Rather than comparing schools to one another, the evaluation team took a holistic approach to conducting this evaluation. We developed a *typology*, or heuristic schema, which was used to categorize schools across two dimensions of difference: *maturity* and *strengths*. The *Maturity Scale* assesses fidelity to the IEL National Standards, while the *Strengths Index* categorizes schools by salient program features. Rather than analyzing implementation and outcome data by individual site, this typology helps us to analyze changes at the group-level considering attributes that make schools similar.

We used the Python pandas library to pre-process, clean, and analyze all data. Pandas is an open-source data analysis and manipulation tool useful for managing large data sets. Steps taken to pre-process the data included: removing and renaming columns, joining tables/sheets based on each school's unique identifier, handling missing values, ensuring consistency of data types (i.e. if a column contains numbers, ensure that the data type is numeric to allow for mathematical operations like sum, mean, max, etc.), transposing data (helpful for switching the x-axis of a visual once data has been processed), and pivoting/grouping data (used to get aggregate values using mean, sum, count, etc. based on groups). In most cases, the typology table was merged with another data source to allow for groupings based on school maturity and strengths. The Python bokeh data visualization library was then used to generate interactive visualizations.

Implementation Findings

This section presents the results of analyses of program implementation data that describe aspects of the implementation of the Community Schools strategy and OST programs across 44 schools and 42 OST programs.

RQ1. Community Schools Components

Which schools have what key Community Schools components aligned to National Standards, and implemented at what points in time?

Family League-funded Community Schools are strongly grounded in the standards of the IEL National Model. The tenets of the model used in this evaluation report are depicted in the table below.

Table 1: IEL National Model, and Family League Version

IEL National Model	Family League Version
A dedicated full-time Community School Coordinator facilitates alignment of school, family, and community resources.	A dedicated full-time Community School Coordinator facilitates alignment of school, family, and community resources.
A representative Site-Based Leadership Team, including families, students, community partners, and school personnel guides collaborative planning, implementation, and oversight.	A representative Site-Based Leadership Team, including families, students, community partners, and school personnel guides collaborative planning, implementation, and oversight.
A needs and assets assessment of the school, students, families, and neighboring community is conducted regularly and informs the school improvement plan.	A needs and assets assessment of the school, students, families, and neighboring community is conducted regularly and informs school priorities.
A mechanism for measuring progress toward desired results and indicators is defined in the school improvement plan.	A mechanism for measuring progress toward desired results and indicators is clear in the action plan.
The school improvement plan identifies and aligns a range of evidence-based programs and practices to achieve desired results.	Alignment is evident between evidence-based programs and practices and school priorities.
The Community School Coordinator facilitates school and partnership data collection, sharing, and analysis.	The Community School Coordinator facilitates school and partnership data collection, sharing, and analysis.

Given these priorities, we undertook a thorough review of key documents collected over the course of the three school years of the evaluation period: 2017-2018 (SY 17-18), 2018-2019 (SY 18-19), and 2019-2020 (SY 19-20), including action plans and other reports on community needs goals and strategic partnerships, in order to determine which schools have what key components of the Community Schools strategy, and when the components were implemented. The Inciter evaluators immersed themselves in these program documents in an intensive process of discerning patterns and types within the wide variety of ways the Community Schools strategy is being interpreted and implemented in Baltimore City Public Schools.

We systematized our findings by creating a Maturity Scale with three levels: *Emerging*, *Formalizing*, and *Mature*. Placement on the scale reflects the evaluators' holistic assessment of how completely the model-as-implemented within any particular school aligns with national Community School model standards, considering the priorities established by Family League of Baltimore. Major features determining placement included:

- presence of a dedicated and full-time community school coordinator (CSC);
- governance by a site-based leadership team (CSSC);
- evidence of a planning process, whether before or while becoming a community school;
- evidence of the cultivation of strategic partnerships;
- the degree of consistency in the implementation of the model across the three school years of the evaluation period;
- the availability and level of detail of data and key planning and reporting documents.

In addition to the Maturity Scale, our document review process also resulted in the creation of a Strengths Index.

The Strengths Index encompasses areas of programming and implementation focus that are sufficiently rare as to have explanatory power and analytic potential, and sufficiently common that they do not identify the schools with which they are associated. We developed this index in an iterative manner and assigned schools to strength categories based on a holistic assessment of partnership reports and action plans supplemented by a review of other extant materials including school websites and social media feeds.

Maturity Scale and Strengths Index

Schools in the **Emerging** (n=9) category may have inconsistency in the tenure of the Community School Coordinator due to turnover in the role during the evaluation period, inconsistency in the demonstrated engagement of the Community School Steering Committee or similar governing body, *and* key reporting documents with ample room for growth and improvement. Schools in this category leave the general impression of having room for growth in their implementation of the model.

Schools identified as **Formalizing** (n=18) are developing well, but may have inconsistency in the tenure of the Community School Coordinator due to turnover in the role during the

evaluation period, inconsistency in the demonstrated engagement of the Community School Steering Committee or similar governing body, *or* absence or inconsistency in key reporting documents. Schools in this category have identifiable program strengths, average-level evidence of meaningful strategic partnerships, and leave the general impression of a school that is working steadily to implement the model.

Schools identified as **Mature** (n=17) have a consistent Community School Coordinator, an engaged Community School Steering Committee or similar governing body, detailed and consistent reporting documents, high-quality data that demonstrates the development and leveraging of meaningful strategic partnerships, and identifiable programming strengths. Mature schools, while they are still evolving and have room for growth, leave the holistic impression of a school that stands out as exemplary in its implementation of the model.

Cross-cutting strengths in the Strengths Index include: Case Management, Culturally Relevant programming, Data Inquiry, Digital Outreach, Early Childhood, Economic Support, Mental Health, and Newcomer Integration. Many schools were identified as having several strengths. The operative definition of the strength categories and the number of schools in each category appear below.

- **Case Management:** Case management services provided by skilled counselors with at least masters-level training (n=10);
- **Culturally Relevant:** Advocacy and/or culturally relevant programming focused on themes of autonomy are strongly evident in action plans and other reporting documents, suggesting centrality to the school's way of articulating its mission and vision (n=9);
- **Data Inquiry:** Demonstrates particularly strong attention to metrics of improvement and a high degree of documentation (n=13);
- **Digital Outreach:** Exemplary family engagement efforts through one or more online channels, for ex: Instagram, Facebook, and/or Twitter and app-based methods (n=16);
- **Early Childhood:** Focus on early childhood education, wellbeing and family cohesion, association with a Judy Center, and/or focus on teen pregnancy and parenting (n=11);
- **Economic Support:** Emphasis on programming focused on economic stability, such as housing support, and financial coaching and literacy (n=13);
- **Mental Health:** Strong emphasis on social- emotional wellness, mental health, and restorative practices (n=26);
- **Newcomer Integration:** The preponderance of programming focuses on integrating a newcomer / Spanish-speaking / ELL population (n=11).

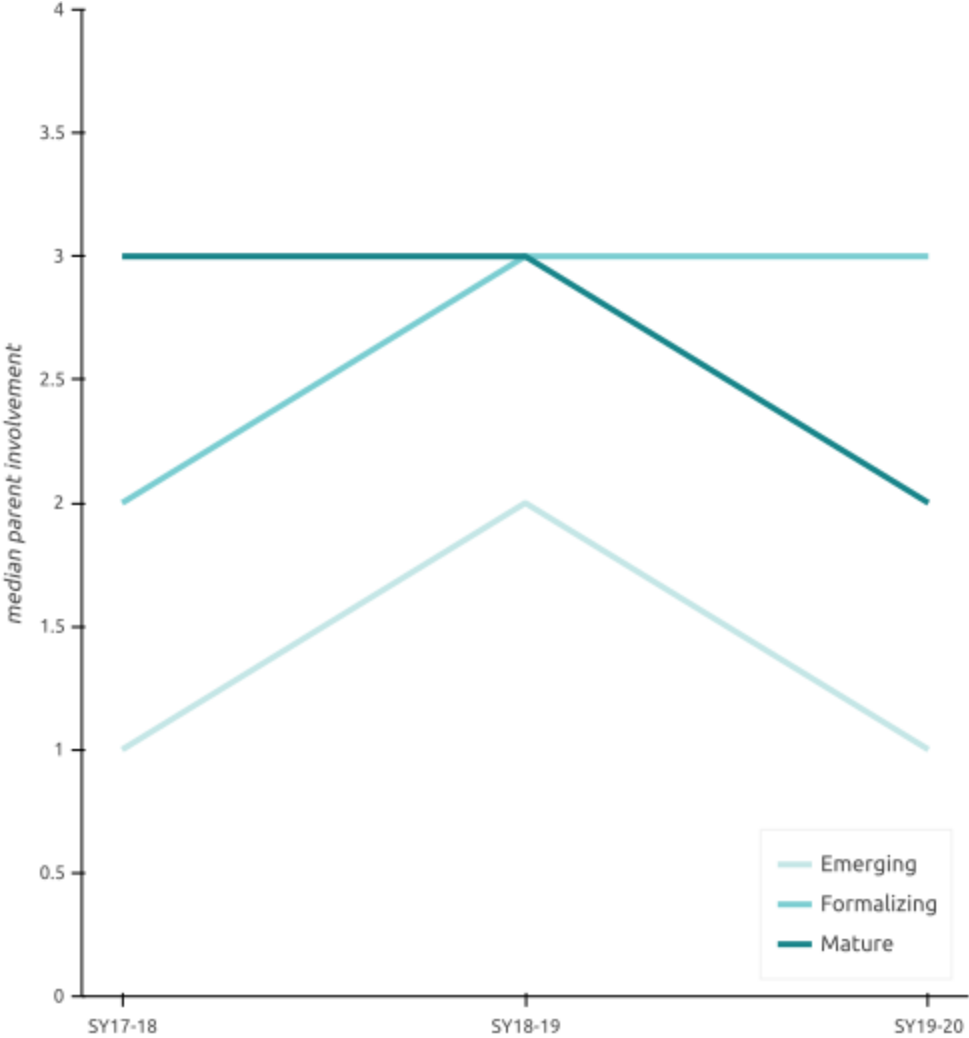
RQ2. Engaging Families

Specifically, what activities are schools implementing to engage families in supporting their children's education?

In order to assess how schools are engaging families in supporting their children's education, we analyzed the extent of parent involvement on school-level teams like Community School Steering Committees (CSSCs) and School Family Councils (SFCs). These are the bodies tasked with governance of the Community Schools strategy. Some schools reported parent participation in CSSCs, some reported parent participation in SFCs, and some reported both. This is consistent with the reality on the ground, in which some schools have one or the other, while other schools may have both.

To assess change in family engagement, we first calculated change in parent committee membership in each school by comparing the greatest figure from SY 17-18, SY 18-19, and SY 19-20. Then we calculated the mean and the median across all schools within each maturity category.

Figure 1: Median Parent Involvement in School Leadership Teams by Maturity



Among schools in the Emerging category, representation increased from a median of one in SY 17-18 to a median of two in SY 18-19, dropping again to a median of one in SY 19-20. Within Formalizing schools, parent representation increased from a median of two in SY 17-18 to a median of three in SY 18-19 and SY 19-20. And within Mature schools, representation dropped from a median of three in SY 17-18 and SY 18-19 to a median of two in SY 19-20.

Interestingly, from SY 17-18 to SY 18-19, as schools become more mature in their site-based implementation of the Community Schools strategy, they also have greater parent representation on decision-making and planning committees. This finding is consistent with the overarching logic of the Community Schools strategy which prioritizes family involvement and engagement. However, this trend reversed in SY 19-20, with Emerging schools on average returning to SY 17-18 parent representation levels, and Mature schools losing ground.

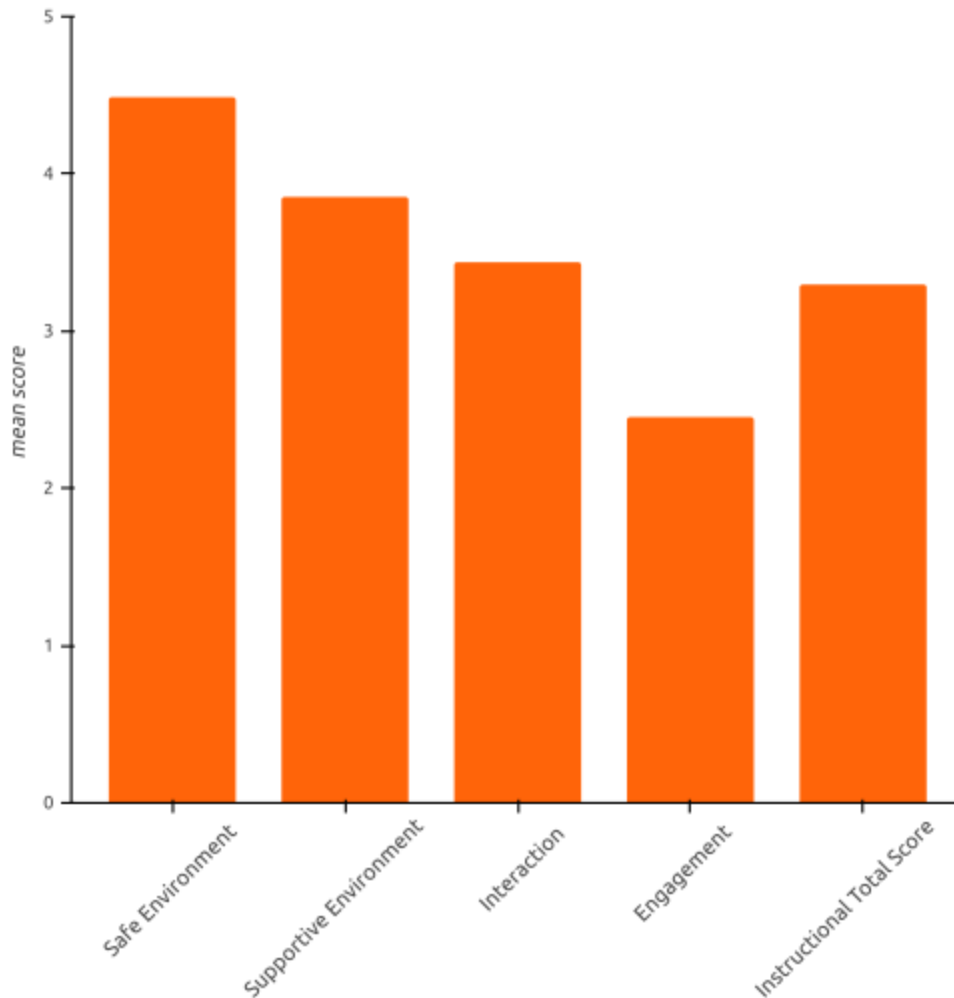
RQ3. OST Program Implementation Quality

With what quality are OST programs being implemented?

OST programs provide students with additional educational, recreational, and enrichment opportunities when school is not in session, extending the integrated supports addressing community needs beyond the actual school day.

To assess the quality of OST program implementation, we drew on selected measures from the Youth and School-Age Program Quality Assessments (YPQA). The YPQA is a validated instrument designed to measure the quality of youth programs and inform staff training needs. It is an evidence-based assessment tool used to inform continuous improvement efforts. It involves observing program activities, taking notes, and interviewing program administrators to collect evidence on program quality. The YPQA's constructs include: Safe Environment, Supportive Environment, Interaction, and Engagement. Combining scores in these four areas results in the Instructional Total Score.

Figure 2: Mean YPQA Scores, External Reviewers



Across all maturity categories, the highest scores are for Safe Environment, followed by Supportive Environment, Interaction, and then Engagement.

The establishment of a *Safe Environment*, including a clean, well-lit, and well-ventilated space with appropriate safety equipment and access to food and water is a critical prerequisite for positive youth development, and these features seem to be prioritized and well in place across OST programs as a whole.

A *Supportive Environment*, where young people are greeted warmly and treated respectfully by staff and where learning activities are well-planned and appropriately paced, is a cornerstone of high-quality youth programs, and these features also seem to be well-established in OST programs across the board.

The constructs of *Interaction* and *Engagement* are areas where there is potential for growth within OST programs. Interaction can be fostered by providing opportunities for youth to work cooperatively with one another as well as to take on leadership roles. Engagement can be fostered by providing youth opportunities to reflect on their learning and building in opportunities for young people to provide feedback on learning activities and have a voice in program design.

The data above reflect scores given to programs by external reviewers only.

Outcome Findings by Research Question

This section presents the results of analyses of outcome data measuring persistent changes for stakeholders in communities served by community schools and OST programs. Findings are presented by research question and in aggregate form by maturity and/or strength categories. It is not the intent of this outcome analysis to compare community schools to one another. This would be inappropriate since as a first principle, the site-based implementation of the Community Schools strategy means that programming is supposed to be tailored specifically to the communities that schools serve, and guided by a community-level needs assessment, stakeholder input, and guidance by school-based leadership teams.

Instead, the following questions aim to compare the relative utility and results of models of service provided by the site-based implementation of the Community Schools strategy, looking across schools implementing similar supports within the Community Schools model framework and contrasted with dissimilar implementations of the various program components that might be employed at the community school site level.

Outcomes for all Community Schools

RQ4. Chronic Absenteeism

How have school-level rates of chronic absenteeism varied over time (i.e., students attend school consistently)?

Combating chronic absenteeism is a key priority of many of the community schools in this evaluation. Of the 44 schools, 26 included goals related to reducing absenteeism in their action plans for SY 17-18 and SY 18-19. (This is the period during which Family League employed a SMART objectives approach. More details on the shift from a SMART objectives approach to a Results Based Accountability approach can be found in the RQ9 section.)

The analysis in this section is based on administrative data provided by Family League on chronic absence rates at the school level. The chronic absence rate is calculated as the percentage of students who miss ten percent or more of enrolled days, including both excused and unexcused absences. The calculated rate includes only those students who are enrolled ten or more days.

Figure 3: Mean Chronic Absence Rate over Time by Maturity

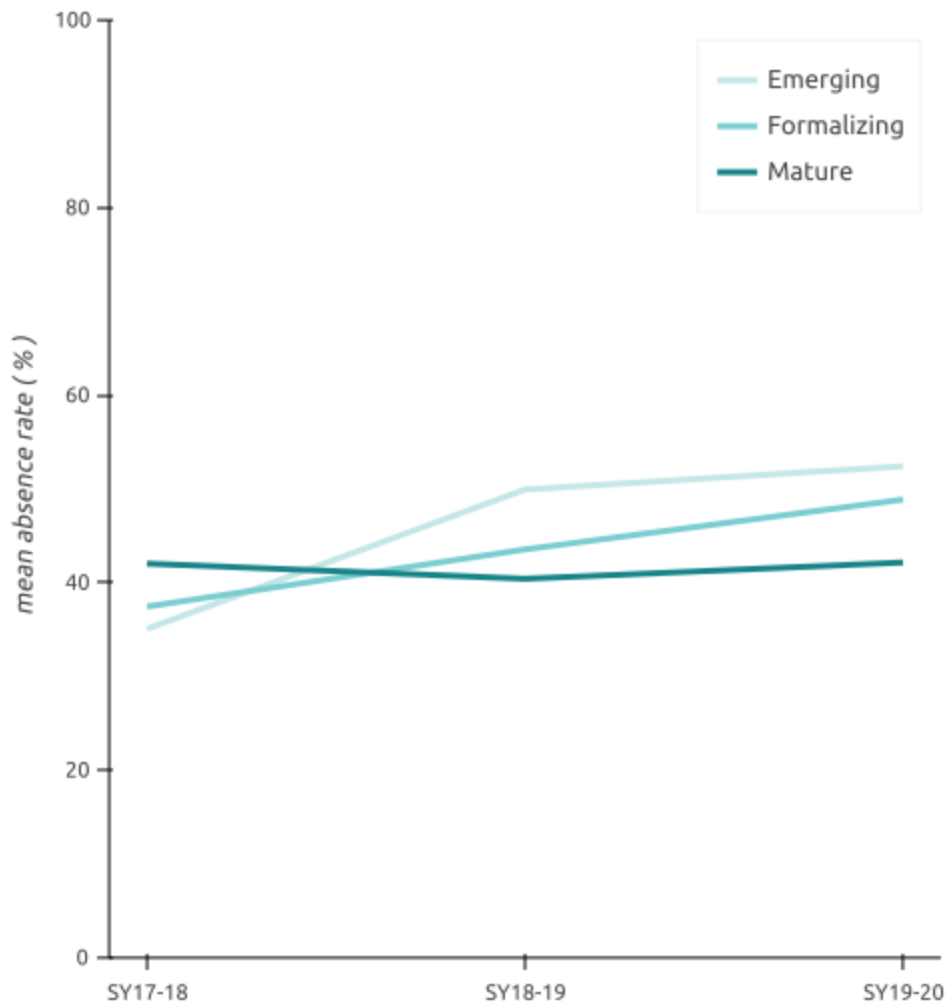


Table 2: Mean Chronic Absence Rate over Time by Maturity

	Emerging	Formalizing	Mature
SY 17-18	35.08%	37.46%	42.04%
SY 18-19	49.95%	43.56%	40.42%
SY 19-20	52.43%	48.88%	42.16%

Among schools in the Mature category, rates of chronic absenteeism held roughly consistent at 40-42% over the evaluation period even in consideration of Covid-19 in the second half of SY 19-20. Rates of chronic absenteeism increased the most among Emerging schools, from a

low of 35% to a high of 52% during Covid-19. Rates also increased among Formalizing schools, although not as much.

Figure 4: Mean Chronic Absence Rate over Time by Strength

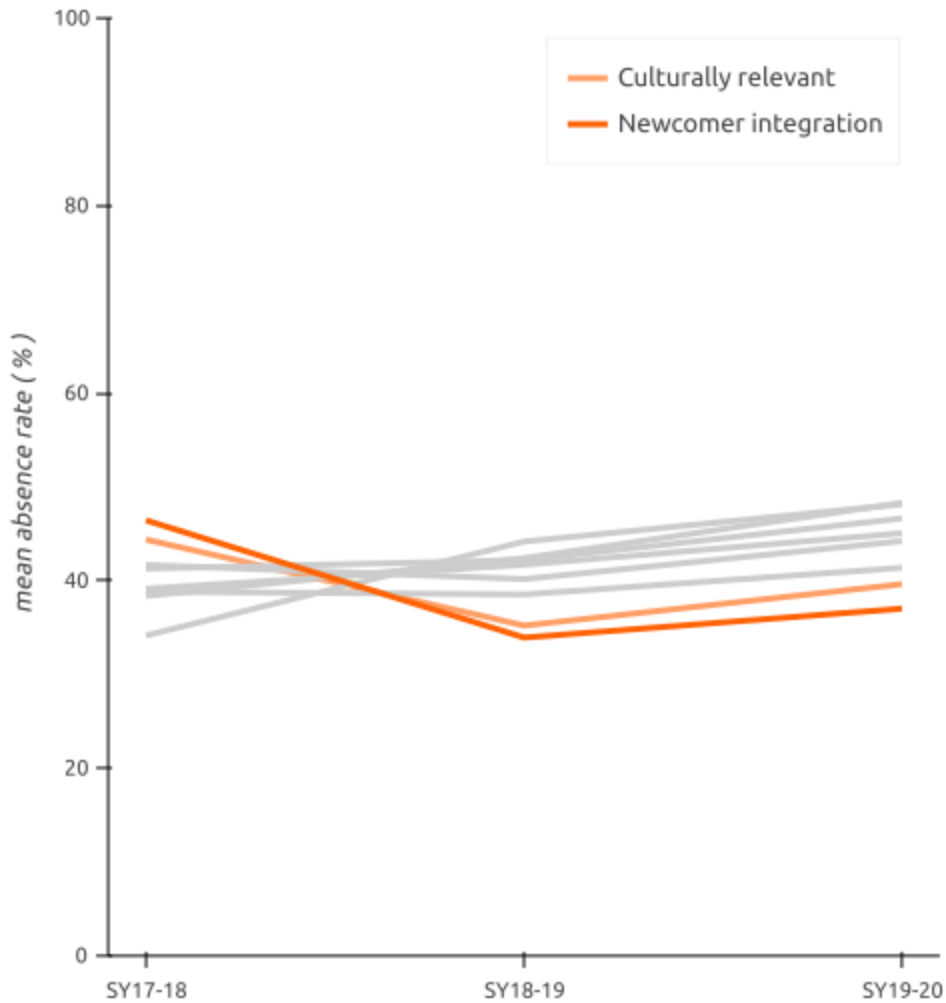


Table 3: Mean Chronic Absence Rate over Time by Strength

	Culturally Relevant	Newcomer Integration	All Schools
SY 17-18	44.40%	46.44%	38.85%
SY 18-19	35.22%	33.94%	43.40%
SY 19-20	39.64%	37.03%	46.88%

In Figure 4, and in all figures depicting differences among strength categories, orange lines indicate strength categories discussed in the text, and grey lines indicate other strength categories.

Grouped by strength, the greatest reductions in chronic absenteeism are associated with two strengths: Culturally Relevant programming, and Newcomer Integration. Among schools offering a cluster of programming designed to integrate recent immigrants, refugees, and language minorities into their school communities, rates of chronic absenteeism decreased from 46% in SY 17-18 to 34% in SY 18-19 before increasing somewhat to 37% in SY 19-20. Similarly, among schools with strength in Culturally Relevant programming, those whose action plans and partnership reports suggest that politically-engaged and/or culturally relevant programming is central to the school's articulation of mission and vision, rates of chronic absenteeism decreased from 44% in SY 17-18 to 35% in SY 18-19 before increasing to 40% in SY 19-20. (Data on the other strengths is available in Appendix B.) On average across all schools, chronic absenteeism increased from 39% in SY 17-18 to 43% in SY 18-19 and finally to 47% in SY 19-20.

These indicators suggest that intensive focus on addressing the whole family needs of newcomer and recent immigrant youth is a good investment of resources in schools with large newcomer and recent immigrant populations. Culturally-relevant programming, whether for English language learner populations or for native-born Black Americans, also seems positively associated with improvements in attendance. There is also considerable overlap between these two strength areas, with seven schools (n=7) having strength in both areas.

RQ5. Family Engagement

How has school-level family engagement varied over time?

Qualitative evidence suggests that family engagement is a high priority among the schools. According to the strategy's theory-of-action, increased family engagement supports student success and is an integral part of the site-based implementation of the Community Schools strategy. The national Community School standards define authentic family engagement as those practices that embrace families and mobilize family assets. Out of 44 community schools in this evaluation, 41 listed goals related to parent/family engagement in their action plans for SY 17-18 and SY 18-19.

We used two different bodies of data to evaluate how school-level family engagement has varied over time among community schools: parent volunteer hours and parent responses on the Baltimore City Public Schools' School Survey (previously known as the School Climate Survey), administered annually to parents.

For SY 17-18 and SY 18-19, data on parent volunteer hours was compiled at the school level and submitted at monthly intervals. For SY 17-18, there is some variability in the regularity of each schools' reporting, with some schools submitting reports monthly including over the

summer, other schools reporting monthly exclusive of the summer, and others missing data for school year months. For SY 18-19, there is little variability in the regularity of reporting, with most schools submitting data each month. For SY 19-20, data is reported quarterly. This change was made to reduce the reporting burden on schools. Data for this question is calculated annually in order to align these three school years' worth of data.

Figure 5: Parent and Family Annual Volunteer Hours over Time by Maturity

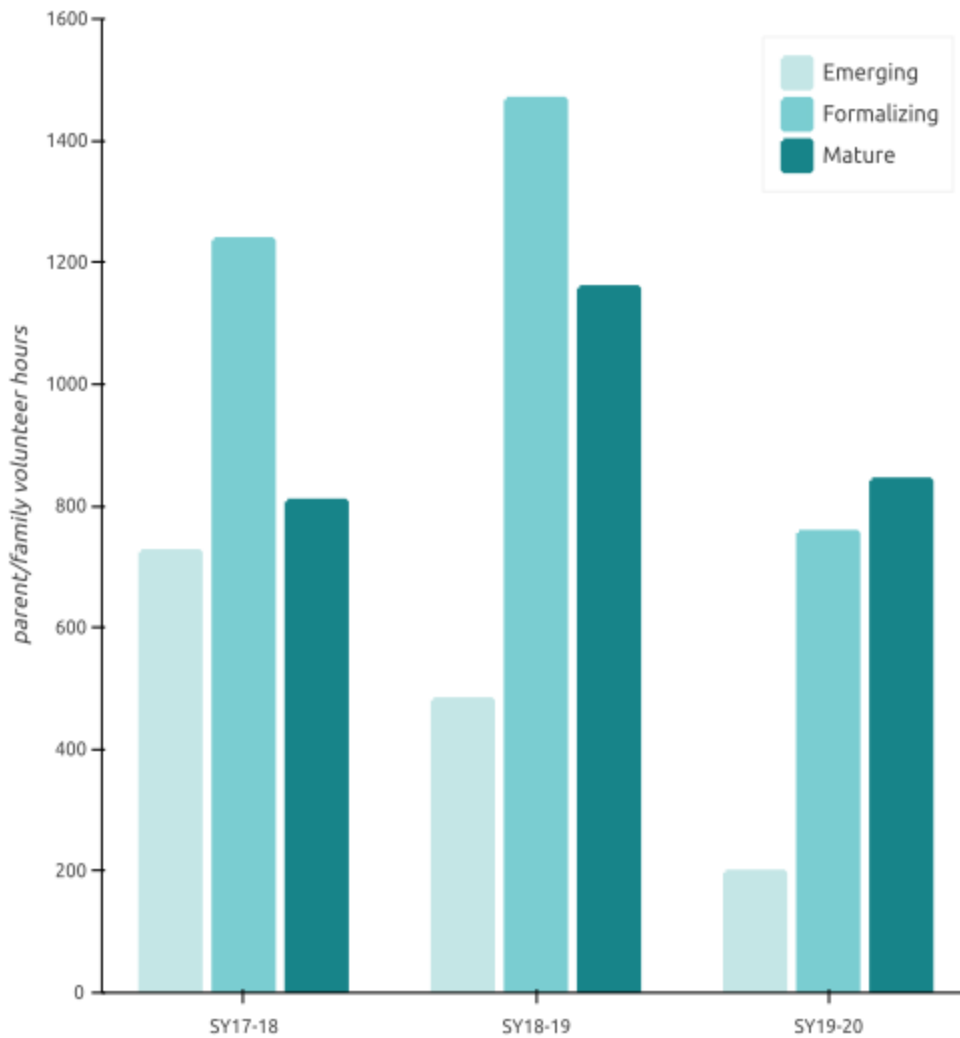
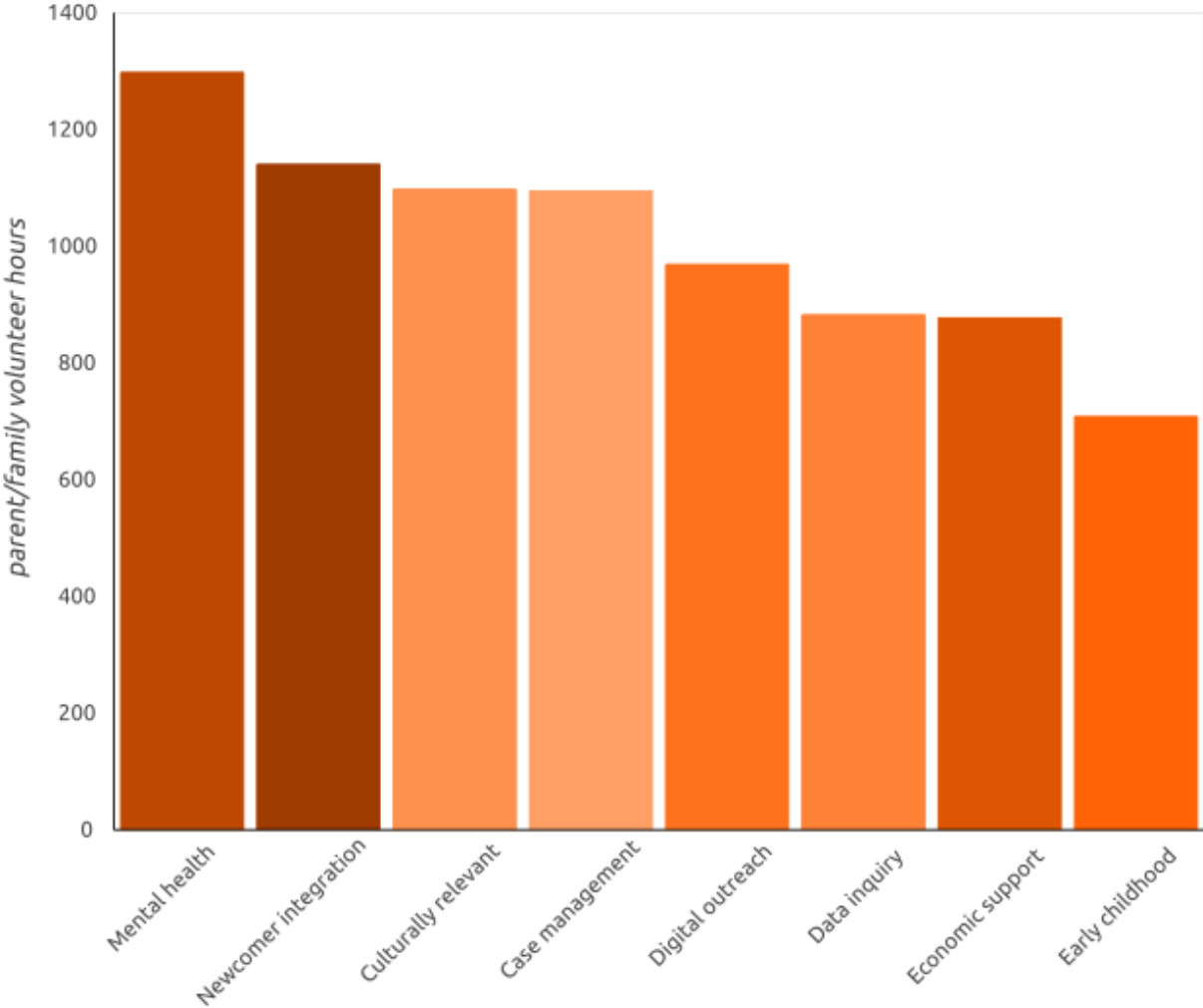


Table 4: Parent and Family Annual Volunteer Hours over Time by Maturity

	Emerging	Formalizing	Mature
SY 17-18	724	1236	807
SY 18-19	480	1467	1158
SY 19-20	197	756	842
% Change	↓ 72%	↓ 38%	↑4%

In all three school years, Emerging schools have the lowest mean number of parent and family volunteer hours. Further, volunteer hours in Emerging schools decreased over the evaluation period, even prior to the Covid-19 related impacts in SY 19-20. Schools in the Formalizing category had the highest mean number of parent and family volunteer hours in the pre-Covid-19 period of the evaluation, and an understandable reduction in volunteer hours in SY 19-20, likely due to restrictions associated with Covid-19. Interestingly, mean annual parent and family volunteer hours in Mature schools actually slightly increased between the first and last years of the evaluation period. This suggests that schools in the Mature category were best able to withstand and adapt to Covid-19 related challenges, most notably the health and social distancing related guidelines.

Figure 6: Parent and Family Mean Volunteer Hours by Strength



Through the lens of the Strengths Index, and averaged across all three years, parent and family volunteer hours were highest for schools with strength in Mental Health (mean of 1298 hours per year), followed by Newcomer Integration (mean of 1140 hours per year), followed by Culturally Relevant programming (mean of 1097 hours per year), followed by Case Management (mean of 1094). This is not to say that parent and family volunteer hours were spent in these domains, but rather that schools with these strengths had more parent and family volunteer hours. All other strength areas logged average annual parent and family volunteer hours under 1000. (Detailed data on annual means for all strength areas, including yearly variation, can be found in Appendix B.)

Parent and family volunteer hours skew high when compared by strength areas in comparison to maturity levels, especially when compared to schools categorized as Emerging. This is because schools in the Emerging category tended to not have enough detail in action plans

and partnership reports to assign them to strength areas. The strength areas are more closely linked to Formalizing and Mature schools, because schools in these categories had sufficient data to justify assigning strengths.

Our second data source to measure parent engagement is the School Survey. Survey data is available for SY 17-18 and SY 18-19 but not for SY 19-20 due to Covid-19.

We measure family engagement through the Family Involvement Dimension score, which includes responses to 11 items ranging from “I feel that my input into my child’s education is valued” and “My child’s school sends me information in my native language” to “I know how to access information about how my child is performing in school.” Items are assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). The percentages reflect the number of positive responses (e.g. Agree or Strongly Agree) divided by the total number of responses (answered, not left blank).

Table 5: Mean Family Involvement Dimension Score by Maturity

	Emerging	Formalizing	Mature
SY 17-18	0.80	0.89	0.87
SY 18-19	0.84	0.88	0.85

Through the lens of the Maturity Scale, schools in the Emerging category have lower levels of Family Involvement than schools in either the Formalizing or Mature categories. However, Family Involvement Dimension scores increased in the Emerging category from SY 17-18 to SY 18-19 while they decreased in the Formalizing and Mature categories.

We also considered another survey item: “I have the opportunity to give input into the school’s decisions.” This item was selected because it references deep and substantive family engagement that goes beyond volunteerism and open lines of communication to real partnership in decision-making processes.

Figure 7: Mean Parent Input into Decisions by Strength

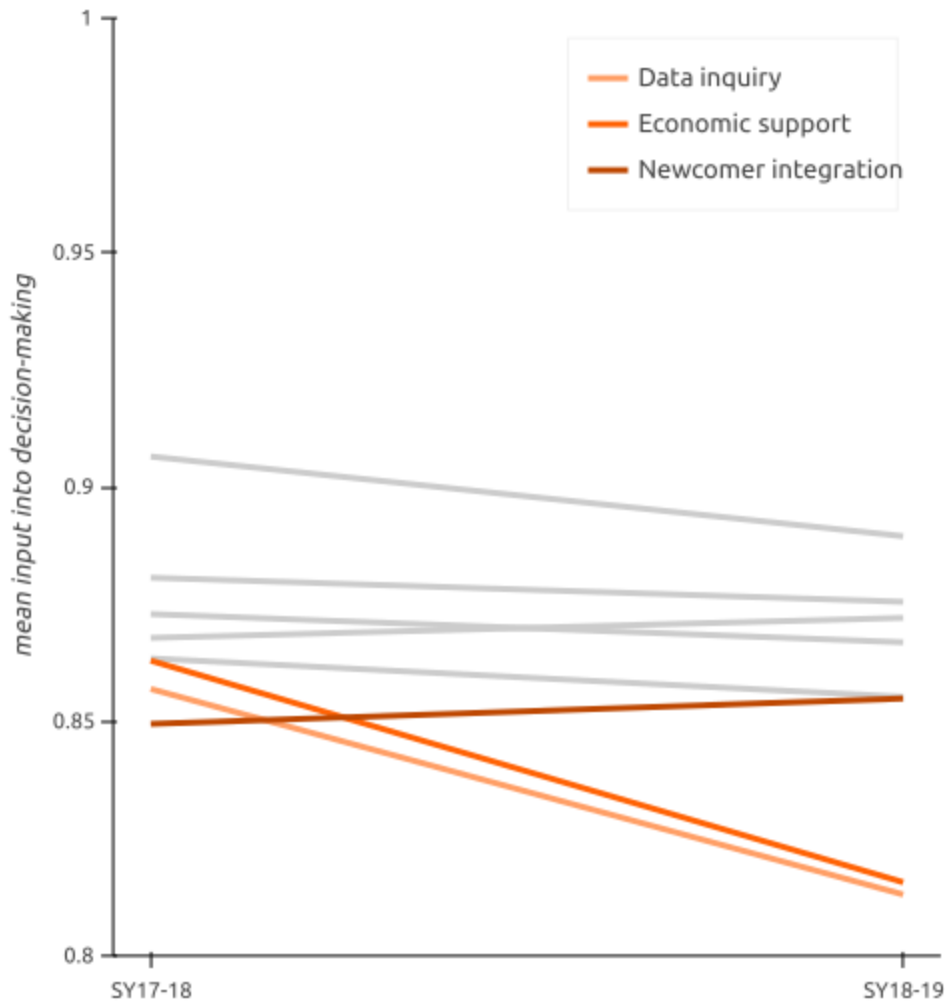


Table 6: Mean Parent Input into Decisions by Strength

	Data Inquiry	Economic Support	Newcomer Integration
SY 17-18	0.86	0.86	0.85
SY 18-19	0.81	0.82	0.85
Change	↓	↓	No change

When examined by strength category, the categories of Data Inquiry culture and Economic Support are associated with the lowest positive response rates for SY 18-19. In other words,

fewer parents at schools in these categories feel they have the opportunity to give input into their child's school's decisions. In SY 17-18, the lowest positive response rate is in the strength area of Newcomer Integration.

RQ6. School Readiness

How have school-level school readiness rates varied over time?

School readiness is defined as children entering kindergarten ready to learn. This question asks how school-level student school readiness rates have varied over time.

We assessed this using administrative data from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), a test given to new kindergarten students at the beginning of their first year of school. Community schools without kindergarteners are excluded from this analysis.

We drew on three data sets, relating to Pre-K cohorts from SY 17-18, SY 18-19, and SY 19-20, noting that the KRA applicable to each is administered during the school year after they receive their Pre-K services. As mean overall scores were not available for all three years, we looked at the percentage of students deemed categorically as "demonstrating readiness" as this indicator was available across all three years and measures the foundational skills and behaviors associated with being prepared for the kindergarten curriculum.

Figure 8: Mean Percent Demonstrating Readiness over Time by Maturity

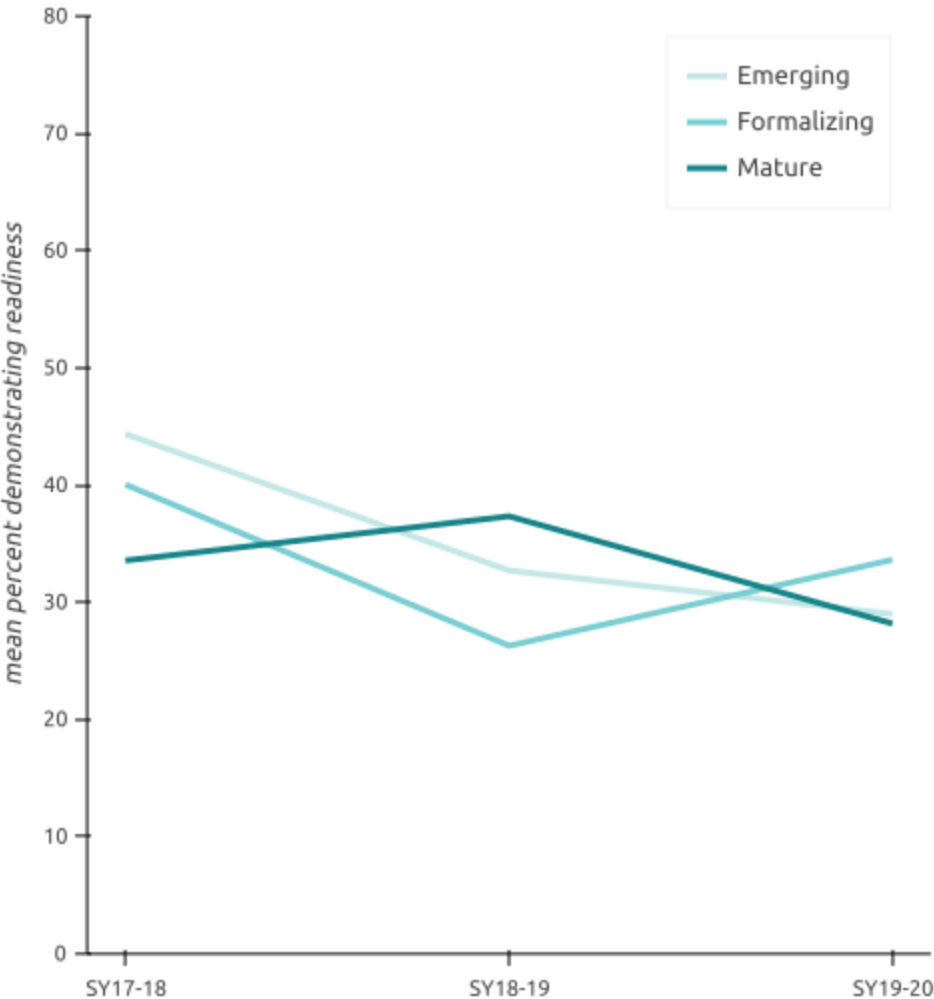


Table 7: Mean Percent Demonstrating Readiness over Time by Maturity

	Emerging	Formalizing	Mature
SY 17-18	44.34%	40.03%	33.56%
SY 18-19	32.70%	26.28%	37.33%
SY 19-20	28.99%	33.63%	28.17%
Change	↓	↓	↓

Overall, rates of school readiness decreased across all maturity categories between SY 17-18 and SY 19-20. Schools in the Emerging category started out with the highest rates of kindergarten readiness, 44% in SY 17-18, and saw drops in readiness in both SY 18-19 (33%) and SY 19-20 (29%). Schools in the Mature category started out with the lowest rates of kindergarten readiness in SY 17-18 (34%), rising slightly in SY 18-19 (37%), and dropping even lower to 28% in SY 19-20. Schools in the Formalizing category had a mean readiness rate of 40% in SY 17-18, dropping to 26% in SY 18-19, before partially recovering to 34% in SY 19-20.

Figure 9: Mean Percent Demonstrating Readiness over Time by Strength

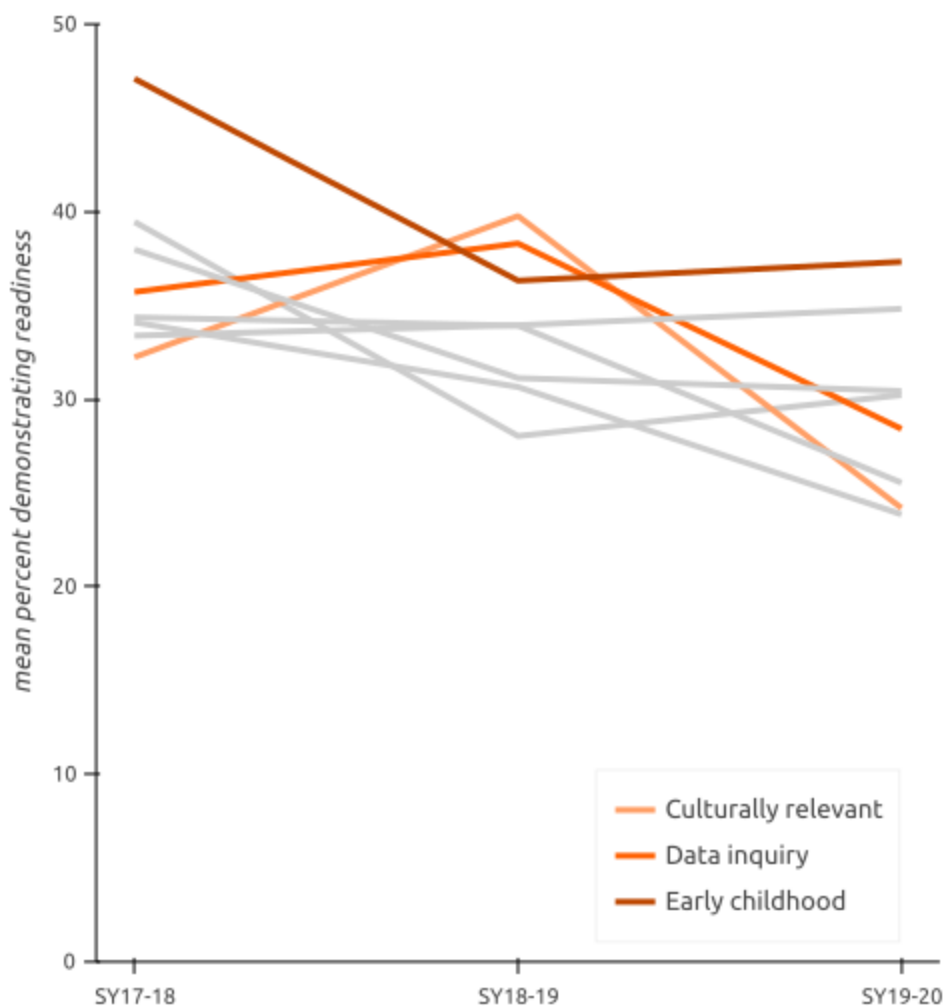


Table 8: Mean Percent Demonstrating Readiness over Time by Strength

	Early Childhood	Culturally Relevant	Data Inquiry
SY 17-18	47.09%	32.24%	35.72%
SY 18-19	36.32%	39.77%	38.31%
SY 19-20	37.33%	24.20%	28.42%
% Change	↓ 20.72%	↓ 24.94%	↓ 20.44%

The strength category associated with the highest percentage of kindergarten students demonstrating readiness in SY 17-18 and SY 19-20 are those emphasizing Early Childhood. (Data on the other strength categories can be found in Appendix B.) Nearly half (47%) of kindergarten students attending schools in this strength category were demonstrating readiness at the beginning of the evaluation period in SY 17-18. Rates of readiness decreased within this category over the evaluation period, dipping below schools with Culturally Relevant programming and Data Inquiry cultures in SY 18-19 (36%), but somewhat recovering in SY 19-20 to 37%, again the highest of any strength category.

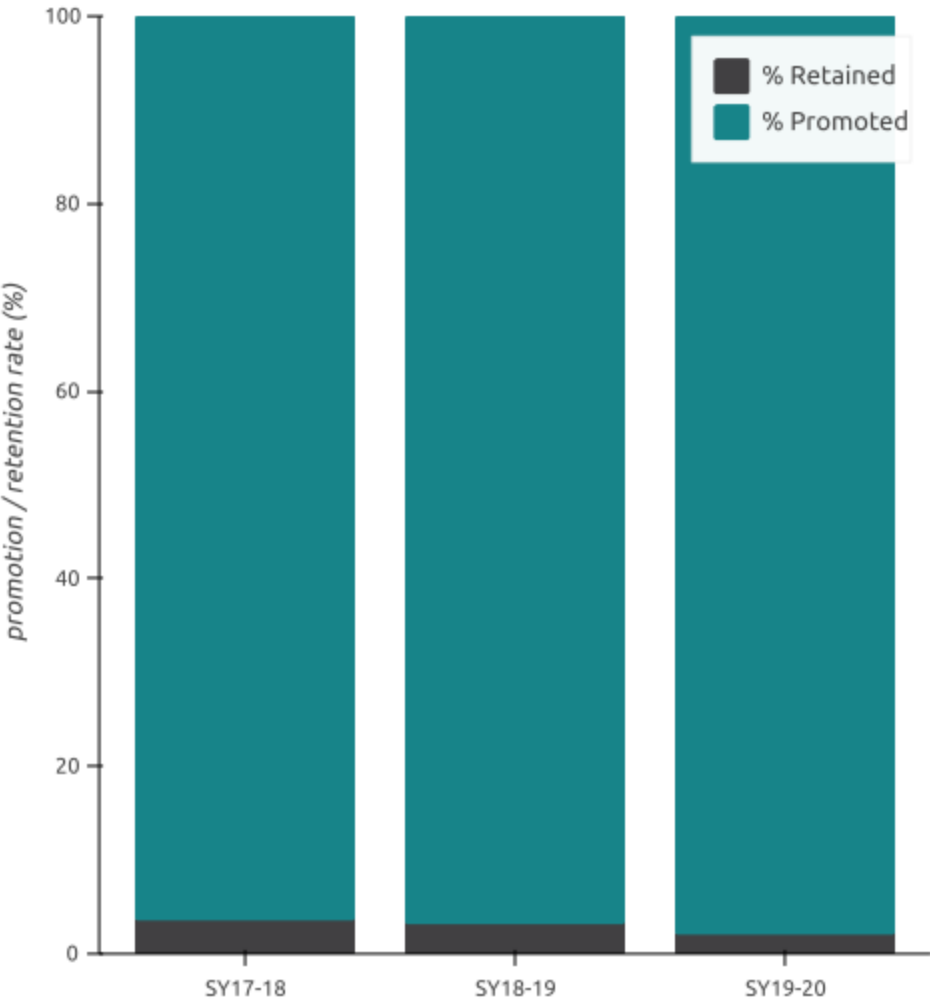
Schools in the Early Childhood strength are those who emphasize services for children ages birth through five years of age as well as their families, as specified in their action plans and as evidenced in their selection of strategic partnerships. Schools in this category are notably focused on providing whole family wraparound services to improve outcomes in the earliest years. They typically share evidence-based best practices with families, encouraging expectant mothers to seek prenatal care, eat healthily, and breastfeed. They have parenting education classes where they model and encourage reading to and talking with children as a way of also promoting school readiness. Many but not all of them are associated with Judy Centers. Judy Centers offer comprehensive, integrated, full-day and full-year early care and education services to low-income families. Though Judy Center funding is a separate stream and they are operationally distinct from the Community Schools strategy, their activities and priorities necessarily shape outcomes at the school level. Some schools in this strength category are also participants in the 21st Century School buildings program and may have dedicated parts of their building or campus for their early childhood outreach.

RQ7. Student Achievement

How have student achievement rates varied over time?

To assess student achievement we used retention rates—that is, rates of students being “held back” and not progressing to the next grade level—and scores on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) achievement test.

Figure 10: Promotion and Retention Rates over Time



Retention rates, or rates of students not being promoted to the next grade, are overall decreasing across all schools over the evaluation period as promotion rates increase.

Table 9: Retention Rates over Time

	Emerging	Formalizing	Mature	All schools
SY 17-18	5.43%	3.07%	3.81%	3.80%
SY 18-19	4.75%	2.52%	3.76%	3.40%
SY 19-20	3.60%	1.83%	2.16%	2.30%

Through the lens of the Maturity Scale, Formalizing schools have the lowest retention rates across all three years, followed by Mature schools, and then Emerging schools. This is an association, not a causal relationship, meaning that those schools coded as Formalizing in this analysis hold back fewer students than schools coded as Mature or Emerging. Across all community schools, 3.8% of students were retained in SY 17-18, 3.4% in SY 18-19, and 2.3% in SY 19-20.

Figure 11: Mean Percent Retained over Time by Strength

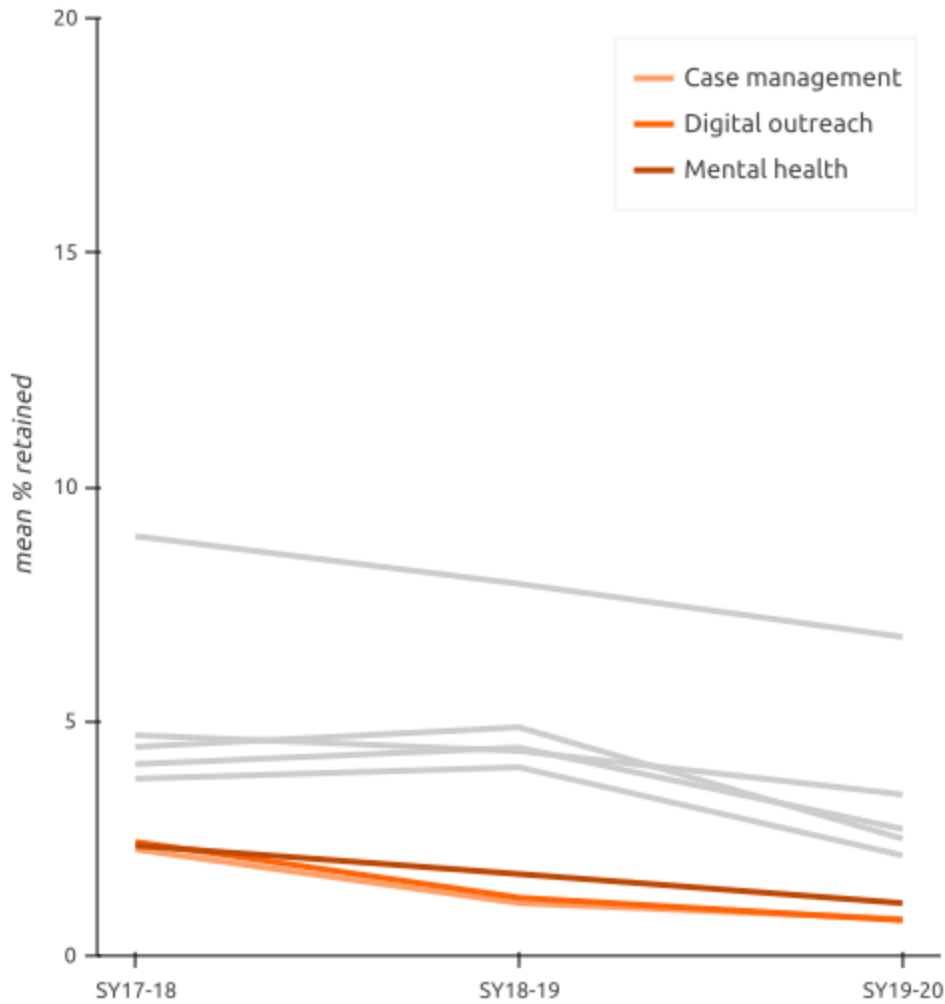


Table 10: Mean Percent Retained over Time by Strength

	Case Management	Digital Outreach	Mental Health
SY 17-18	2.26%	2.42%	2.35%
SY 18-19	1.12%	1.23%	1.74%
SY 19-20	0.78%	0.76%	1.12%

Through the lens of the Strengths Index, retention rates are overall best for schools emphasizing Case Management, Digital Outreach, and a strong Mental Health focus. (See Appendix B for detailed data on the retention rates for other strengths).

Next we looked at PARCC scores, reported on a scale from 650 to 850, in which scores of 750 or over meet or exceed expectations. The test was not administered in SY 19-20 due to Covid-19.

Figure 12: Mean Scale PARCC Scores by Maturity, ELA

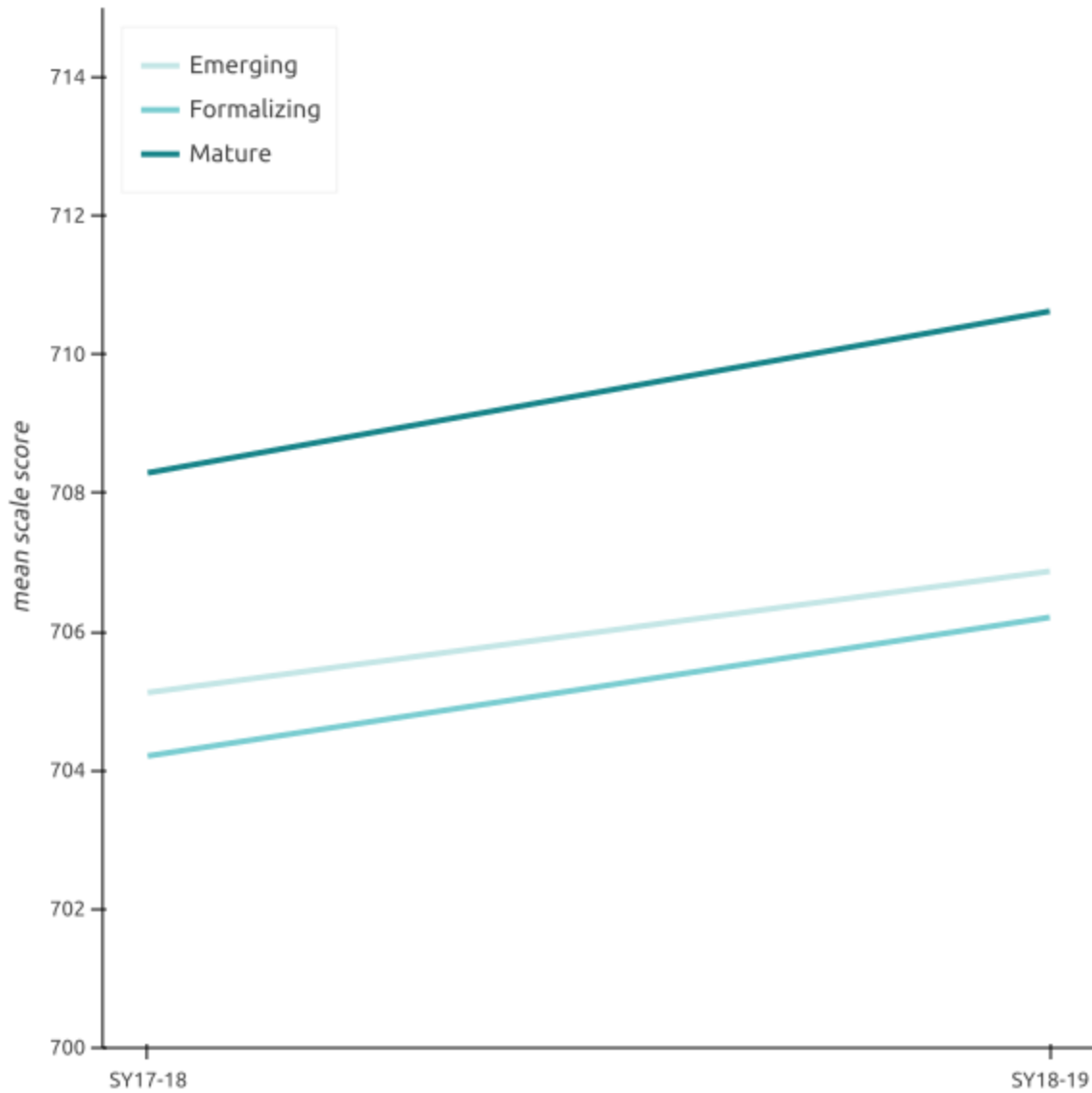


Table 11: Mean Scale PARCC Scores by Maturity, ELA

	Emerging	Formalizing	Mature
SY 17-18	705	704	708
SY 18-19	706	706	711

Examining student achievement through English Language Arts (ELA) PARCC scores, we see the strongest performance for schools categorized as Mature, followed by those categorized as Emerging, and then those categorized as Formalizing.

Figure 13: Mean Scale PARCC Scores by Maturity, Math

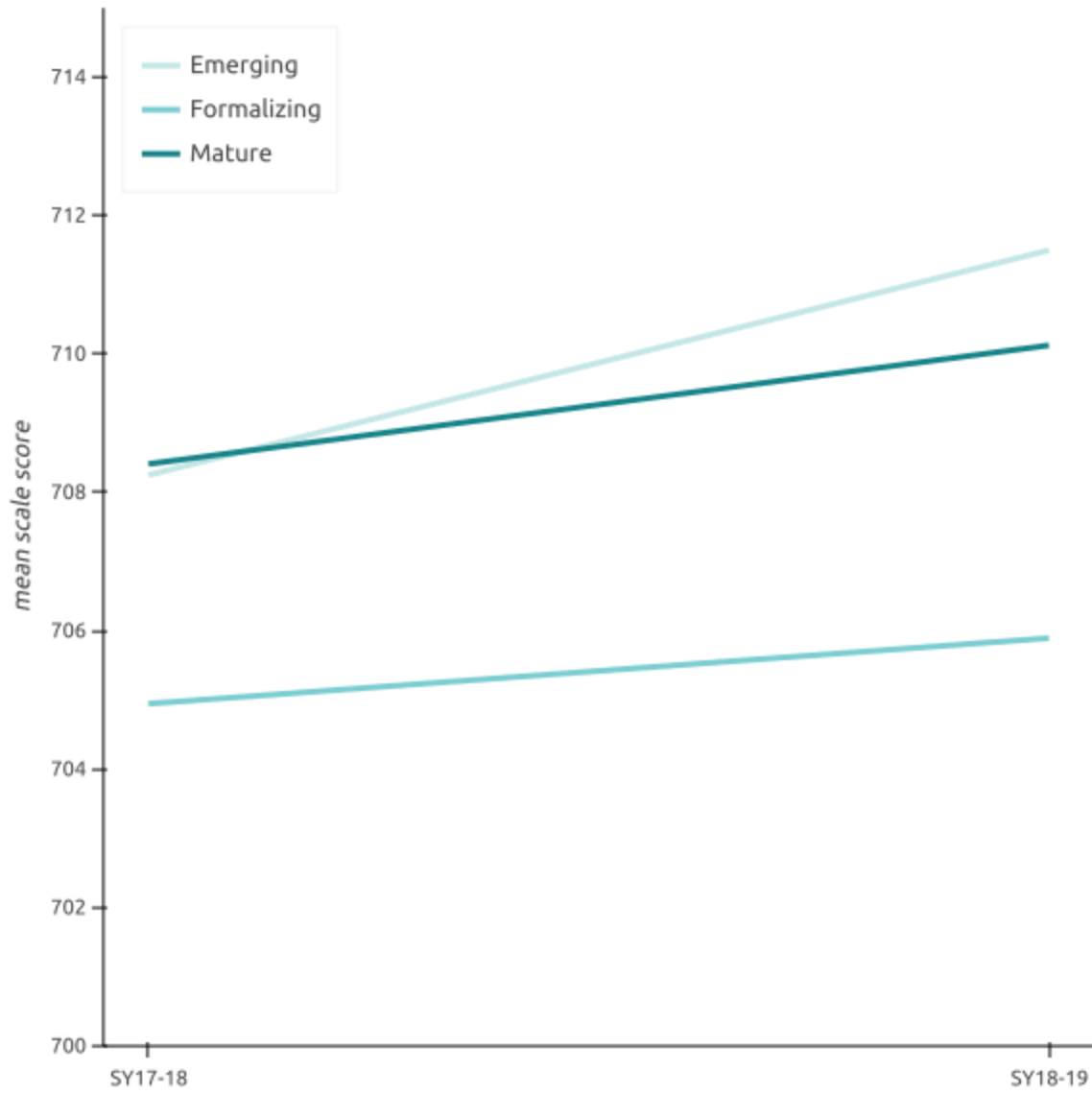


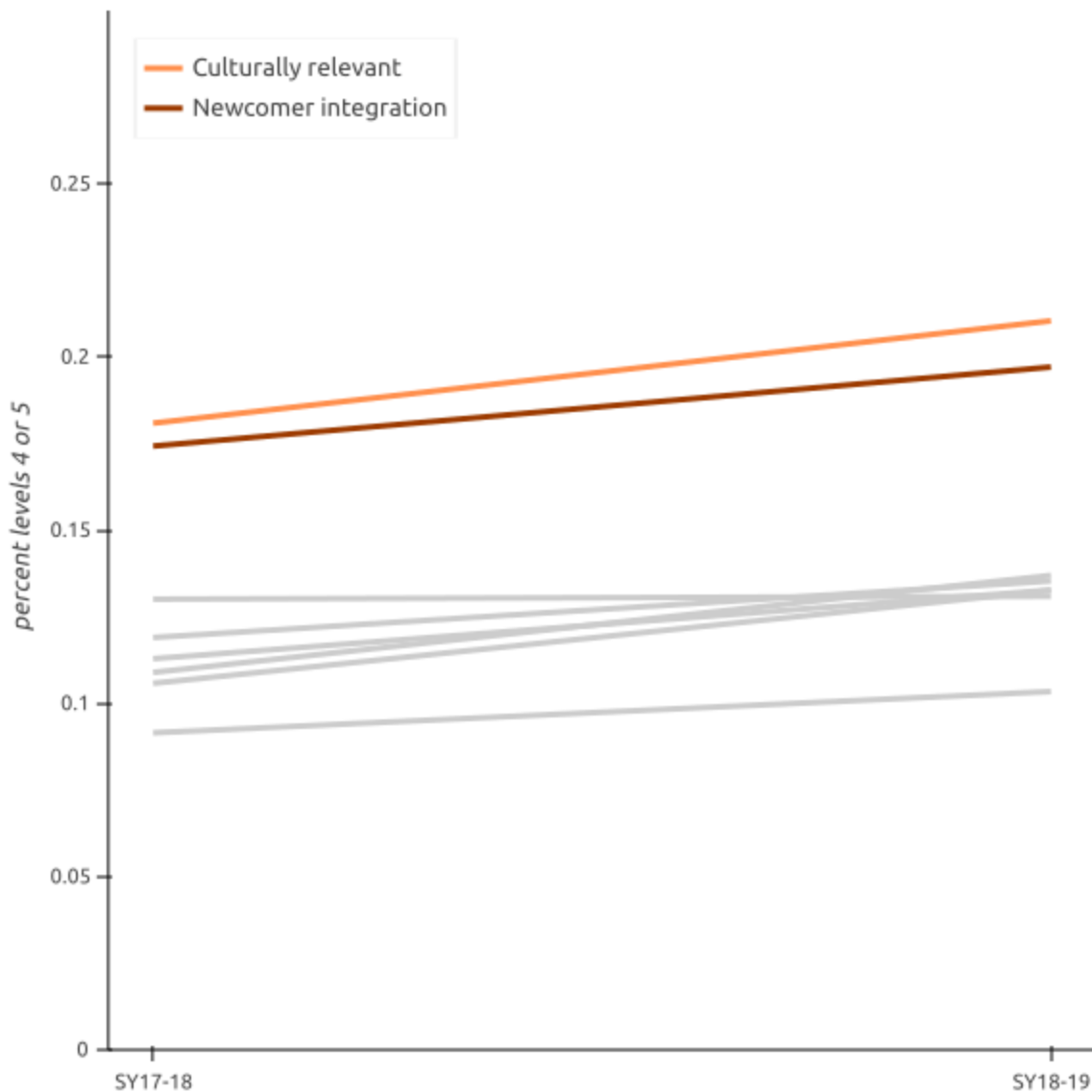
Table 12: Mean Scale PARCC Scores by Maturity, Math

	Emerging	Formalizing	Mature
SY 17-18	708	705	708
SY 18-19	712	706	710

Examining student achievement through math PARCC scores, we see the strongest performance for schools categorized as Emerging, followed by those categorized as Mature, and then those categorized as Formalizing.

The differences in ELA and math scores across the maturity categories is quite modest in comparison to the 200-point spread possible in PARCC scores. Mean scale scores for all maturity levels and all years fall in the range of partially meeting expectations, or level 2 of 5, for which the score range is 700-724.

Figure 14: Mean Percent Levels 4 or 5 by Strength (ELA)



Grouped by strength, and focusing on the portion of students meeting expectations on PARCC, that is, scoring a 750 or above, the best outcomes over time are associated with Culturally Relevant programming and Newcomer Integration.

Table 13: Mean Percent Levels 4 or 5 by Strength (ELA)

	Culturally Relevant	Newcomer Integration	All Schools
SY 17-18	18%	17%	12%
SY 18-19	21%	20%	14%

Figure 15: Mean Percent Levels 4 or 5 by Strength (Math)

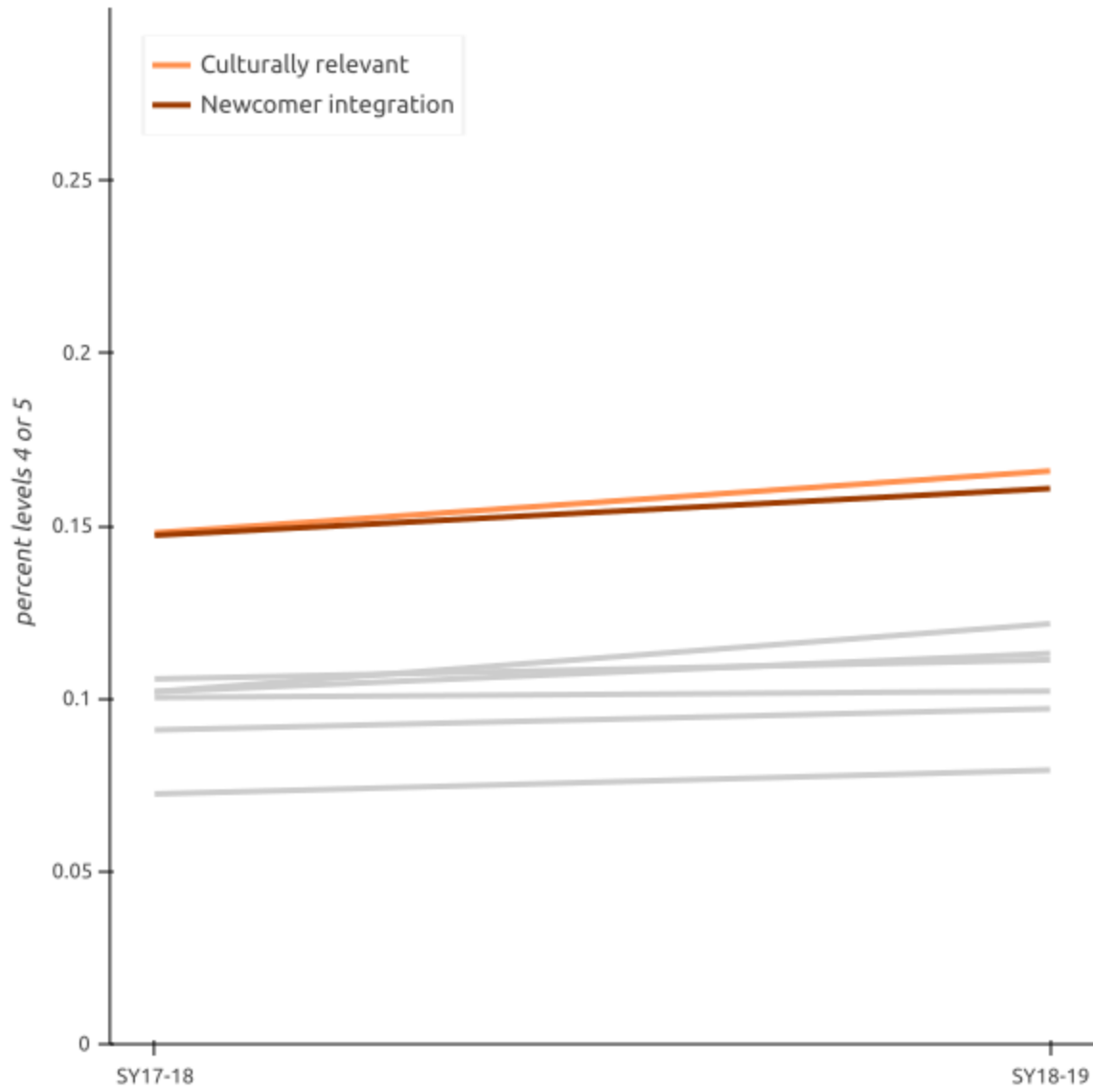


Table 14: Mean Percent Levels 4 or 5 by Strength (Math)

	Culturally Relevant	Newcomer Integration	All Schools
SY 17-18	15%	15%	11%
SY 18-19	17%	16%	12%

Over time, including prior to the evaluation period, schools in the strength categories of Culturally Relevant programming and Newcomer Integration had an increasing percentage of students meeting expectations. This finding mirrors the findings from RQ4, where the greatest reductions in chronic absenteeism were associated with these same strength categories. These results suggest that as students attend school more regularly, they have more of an opportunity to be exposed to and master required content. In addition, when students' identities and home cultures are embraced by their schools, they feel more invested in their education. (See Appendix B for details on the other strength categories.)

RQ8. Safe School Environment

How have selected measures of a safe school environment varied over time (i.e., students learn in a safe, supportive, and stable environment)?

We measure this using parent responses to selected items on the Baltimore City Public Schools' School Survey. No survey data is available for SY 19-20 due to Covid-19.

We first analyzed the Learning Climate dimension score. This dimension encompasses measures of emotional structure and supportiveness, such as: "My child feels like she/he belongs at this school," "If students break rules, there are fair consequences," and "Teachers care about their students." Items are assessed on a 5-point Likert scale. The percentages reflect the number of positive responses (i.e., Agree or Strongly Agree) divided by the number of responses total.

Table 15: Learning Climate Dimension Score over Time by Maturity

	SY 17-18	SY 18-19	Change
Emerging	0.81	0.86	↑
Formalizing	0.90	0.88	↓
Mature	0.89	0.87	↓

Among schools in the Emerging category, Learning Climate dimension scores increased, whereas among schools in the Formalizing and Mature categories, Learning Climate dimension scores decreased. However, with only two data points, the direction of these trend lines should be confirmed as data from additional years become available.

We then analyzed the Safety dimension score, which is composed of the items “My child’s school is a safe place” and “My child is safe going to and from school.”

Table 16: Safety Dimension Score over Time by Maturity

	SY 17-18	SY 18-19	Change
Emerging	0.82	0.88	↑
Formalizing	0.90	0.91	↑
Mature	0.89	0.87	↓

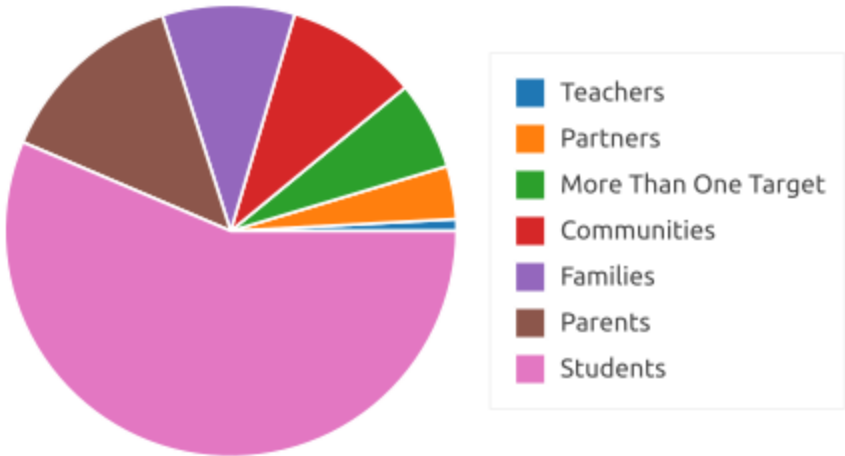
Among schools in the Emerging category, there was an increase in the perception of safety among parents. There was also a very slight increase among parents of children in schools in the Formalizing category, and a slight decrease in the perception of safety among schools in the Mature category. However, again, with only two data points, the direction of these trend lines should be confirmed as data from additional years become available.

RQ9. Meeting Community Needs

How have schools worked to realize the community needs goals they set out to meet, considering their mixed-methods needs assessments, benchmarks, and measures of success for their targets?

To understand how schools have been working to realize their community needs goals, we reviewed action plans and documentation of partnerships and supports from SY 17-18, SY 18-19, and SY 19-20.

Figure 16: Overall Percent of Goals by Target Audience, SY 17-18 and SY 18-19



Across all community schools, over half of all goals (56%) were directed at a student audience. An additional third of total goals (33%) were directed at parents, communities, and families. The fewest number of goals were directed at strategic partners (4%) and teachers (1%).

Table 17: Overall Count of Goals by Target Audience, SY 17-18 and SY 18-19

Target Audience	Count of Goals	Percentage of Total Goals
Students	268	56%
Parents	65	14%
Communities	45	9.5%
Families	45	9.5%
More than one	30	6%
Partners	18	4%
Teachers	4	1%

Table 18: Mean Annual Goal Count by Target Audience and Maturity

	Emerging	Formalizing	Mature
Students	1.80	1.24	1.21
Parents	1.67	1.09	1.38
Communities	1.42	1.41	1.14
Families	1.67	1.40	1.00
More than one	0.67	1.50	0.90
Partners	1.00	0.33	1.56
Teachers	N/A	0.67	N/A
Total	8.23	7.64	7.19

Schools in the Emerging category have the highest mean number of goals (8.23), followed by schools in the Formalizing category (7.64), followed by schools in the Mature category (7.19). The relative consistency in these goal counts, in which all maturity levels had mean goal counts between 7.2 and 8.2 goals, is likely related to guidance about the number of goals required. Emerging schools tend to focus on goals for students, parents and families. Formalizing schools are most likely to set goals that address multiple target audiences. Mature schools focus more than schools in the other maturity categories on goals related to their strategic partnerships.

Table 19: Overall Count and Percentage of Goals by Goal Domain (top 5)

Goal Domain	Count of Goals	Percentage of Total Goals
Youth development & OST	89	19%
Parent & family engagement	80	17%
Career & college access	76	16%
Academic support & attendance	73	15%
Physical & mental health	55	12%

The top goal domains across all schools are youth development and OST-related (19% of total goals), parent and family engagement (17% of total goals), career and college access (16% of total goals), academic support and attendance (15% of total goals), and physical and mental health (12% of total goals).

Table 20: Mean Goal Completion Rate by Maturity

	SY 17-18	SY 18-19	Change
Emerging	0.78	0.92	↑
Formalizing	0.51	0.74	↑
Mature	0.52	0.68	↑

Across all three maturity categories, rates of goal completion increased from SY 17-18 to SY 18-19, with rates of goal completion highest among Emerging schools. It is worth noting, however, that the standard for assessing whether or not a goal was completed tended to vary by school. For instance, it was sometimes noted that a goal was not completed because the school did not work to meet the goal. In other cases, there was evidence of work toward a goal, but the school did not meet the threshold it had set for itself, and so the goal was marked unmet.

In SY 19-20, Family League shifted from a SMART objectives approach, emphasizing goal achievement, toward a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework, recognizing improvement as an ongoing and incremental process. In this approach, the emphasis is less on whether goals are met (yes versus no) and more on to what extent and how well schools are meeting their self-identified needs and priorities. In the RBA framework, while schools articulate their own goals, there are two shared measures across all schools: how much, which reflects the raw number of strategic partnerships leveraged by the school; and how well, which reflects the percentage of those partnerships directly aligned to community school needs and priorities as identified in the Community School Needs Assessment.

Table 21: Mean Performance Measures by Maturity

	# of Strategic Partnerships	% Aligned to Needs
Emerging	13.14	90.22%
Formalizing	21.16	81.56%
Mature	34.12	74.36%

Table 20 depicts data from SY 19-20, after the shift to the RBA framework. Interestingly, while the quantity of strategic partnerships increases with maturity level, the proportion of strategic partnerships aligned with community needs and priorities decreases with maturity level. In general, schools that are more mature in their implementation of the site-based Community Schools strategy tend to have a greater number of partners, and more diverse emphases among these partnerships. Schools categorized as less mature in their implementation of the strategy tend to have fewer partnerships, but a greater emphasis on alignment with the identified needs and priorities of the school community.

The table below, which also draws on data from SY 19-20, depicts the mean frequency of supports, services, and activities by maturity level. Schools in the Emerging category engage in a relatively high proportion of one-time interventions, while Formalizing and Mature schools tend to focus more on regularly recurring interventions.

Table 22: Mean Count of Support/Service/Activity Frequency by Maturity

Support/Service/Activity Frequency	Maturity		
	Emerging	Formalizing	Mature
Annually	11.90	10.09	15.22
Daily	16.67	15.46	19.16
Monthly	10.71	16.09	11.29
One-time	20.24	10.41	8.66
Other	8.33	3.15	8.92
Quarterly	7.14	7.57	4.46
Semi-Annually	3.57	7.89	2.89
Weekly	21.43	29.34	29.4

OST-Specific Outcome Questions

Out-of-School (OST) programs in Baltimore City are intentionally aligned with Community Schools strategy. OST programs provide students with additional educational, recreational, and enrichment opportunities when school is not in session. When sited in community schools they extend the integrated supports addressing community needs beyond the actual school day. They provide recreation and enrichment opportunities, academic support and homework help, and nutritious snacks and meals to students. They give young people a reliable, safe, and supportive place to go after school. OST programs operate at least 100 days a year for at least 12 hours per week between the hours of three and six in the afternoon, for a total of at least 1200 hours per year.

RQ10. OST Attendance

With what rates are enrolled students attending OST programs over the three years of the evaluation?

Rates of attendance in OST programs are calculated beginning with the first day attended and ending with the last day attended. Dates when the program was closed or days during which a student was not enrolled are not counted as absences.

Figure 17: Mean OST Attendance Rate over Time by Maturity

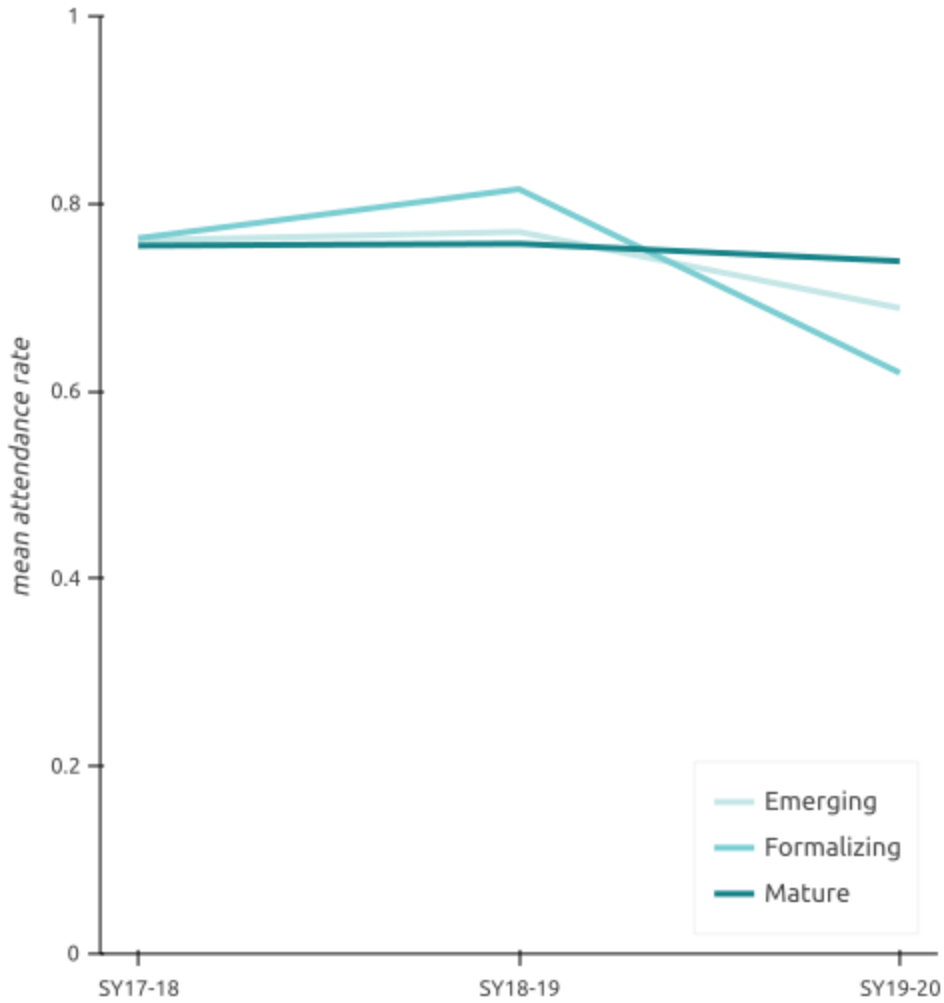


Table 23: Mean OST Attendance Rate over Time by Maturity

	Emerging	Formalizing	Mature	All OST
SY 17-18	76%	76%	76%	76%
SY 18-19	77%	82%	76%	78%
SY 19-20	69%	62%	75%	67%

Rates of student attendance decreased in all three maturity categories over the course of the evaluation period, though least so in OST programs in schools rated Mature. The most substantial decrease occurred in OST programs in schools rated Formalizing, which saw

attendance rates fall 20% between SY 18-19 and 19-20, and 14% between SY 17-19 and 19-20. It is worth remembering that all OST programs closed in March 2020 due to Covid-19, so attendance rates during this school year only cover the period from September 2019 to March 2020.

RQ11. OST Student Retention

With what rates are students being retained in their OST programs over the three years of the evaluation?

Retention is calculated as the percentage of students who attended the program at some point in the first four weeks of its operation and who still attended the program at some point during the last four weeks of its operation. Retention is calculated independently for each of the three years of the evaluation, as opposed to year over year.

Figure 18: Mean Retention Rate over Time by Maturity

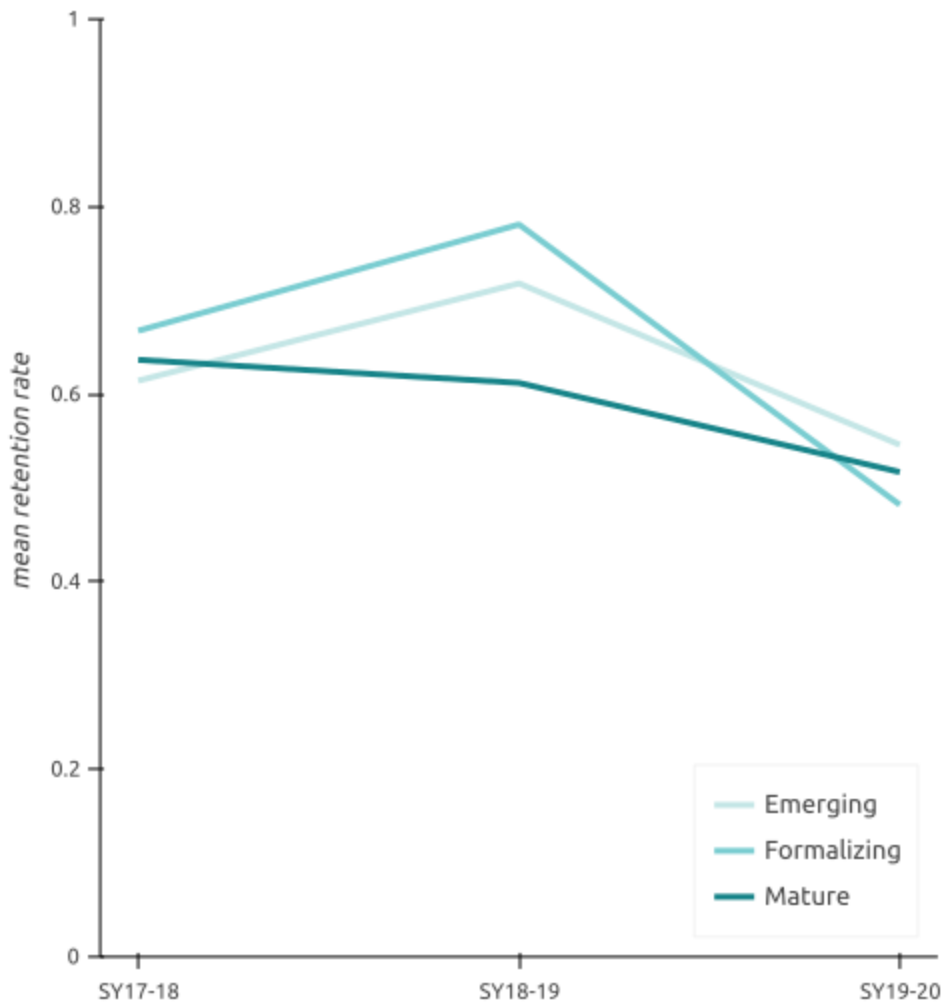


Table 24: Mean Retention Rate over Time by Maturity

	Emerging	Formalizing	Mature	All OST
SY 17-18	61%	67%	64%	65%
SY 18-19	72%	78%	61%	70%
SY 19-20	55%	48%	52%	50%

Retention rates, a metric of students' persistent participation, also decreased in all three maturity categories over the course of the evaluation period, though least so for OST programs in schools rated Emerging. The most significant decrease occurred for OST programs in schools rated Formalizing, which saw attendance rates fall 30% between SY 18-19 and SY 19-20, and 19% between SY 17-19 and SY 19-20. Again, it is worth remembering that all OST programs closed in March 2020 due to Covid-19, so retention rates during SY 19-20 only concern the period from September 2019 to March 2020.

RQ12. OST Student Social and Emotional Learning

How does social and emotional learning vary over time for OST students for whom data are available?

Data sources include student responses on the Family League OST Youth Satisfaction Survey for SY 17-18, SY 18-19, and SY 19-20. Items include such questions as: "In this program I work well with others," "In this program, I do not have fights with others when we do not agree," "In this program, I help others when they need help," "In this program I feel safe," and "This program helps me find better ways to fix my problems." Response options are Yes, No, and Don't Know.

On average, students feel safe in their OST programs. Among schools in the Emerging category, 97% reported feeling safe in SY 17-18 and 96% in SY 18-19. Among schools in the Formalizing category, 95% reported feeling safe in SY 17-18 compared to 96% in SY 18-19. In the Mature category, 94% of students reported feeling safe in SY 17-18 compared to 95% in SY 18-19.

On average, students also report that their OST programs help them find better ways to fix their problems. Among schools in the Emerging category, 94% responded positively in SY 17-18, 92% in SY 18-19, and 100% in SY 19-20. Among schools in the Formalizing category, 90% responded positively in SY 17-18, 93% in SY 18-19, and 100% in SY 19-20. Among schools in the Mature category, 89% responded positively in SY 17-18, 91% in SY 18-19, and 100% in SY 19-20.

Limitations

Evaluations of Community Schools interventions can present a range of challenges. The considerations listed below make it difficult if not impossible to determine direct causal impacts of the program on student outcomes:

- By design, the intervention provides support to each school that allows it to tailor the use of funds and specific programming activities as appropriate to the needs of the school, and their students, families, and community. Because of this, the intervention at each school can (and should) be unique, making the definition of comparison groups, a necessary prerequisite for statistical tests, difficult to the point of impossibility;
- It is necessary to assess each school program as a whole, as outcome data cannot illustrate what Community Schools program components bear on outcomes, or how much;
- Outcome data are generally reported at the school level, limiting the analyses that are possible. And given the high mobility rates in Baltimore City Public Schools, it can be difficult to track individual outcomes even when data are reported at the student level.

Other challenges encountered with this evaluation impose limitations on how findings can be interpreted, beyond confounding the use of statistical tests of group differences in outcomes:

- This study relies on retrospective data, meaning the findings can only reflect indicators and data that have already been collected;
- Student achievement measures are trailing indicators of school-level program success, meaning outcomes may require years to respond to programming;
- SY19-20 presents special challenges due to Covid-19-related school closures.

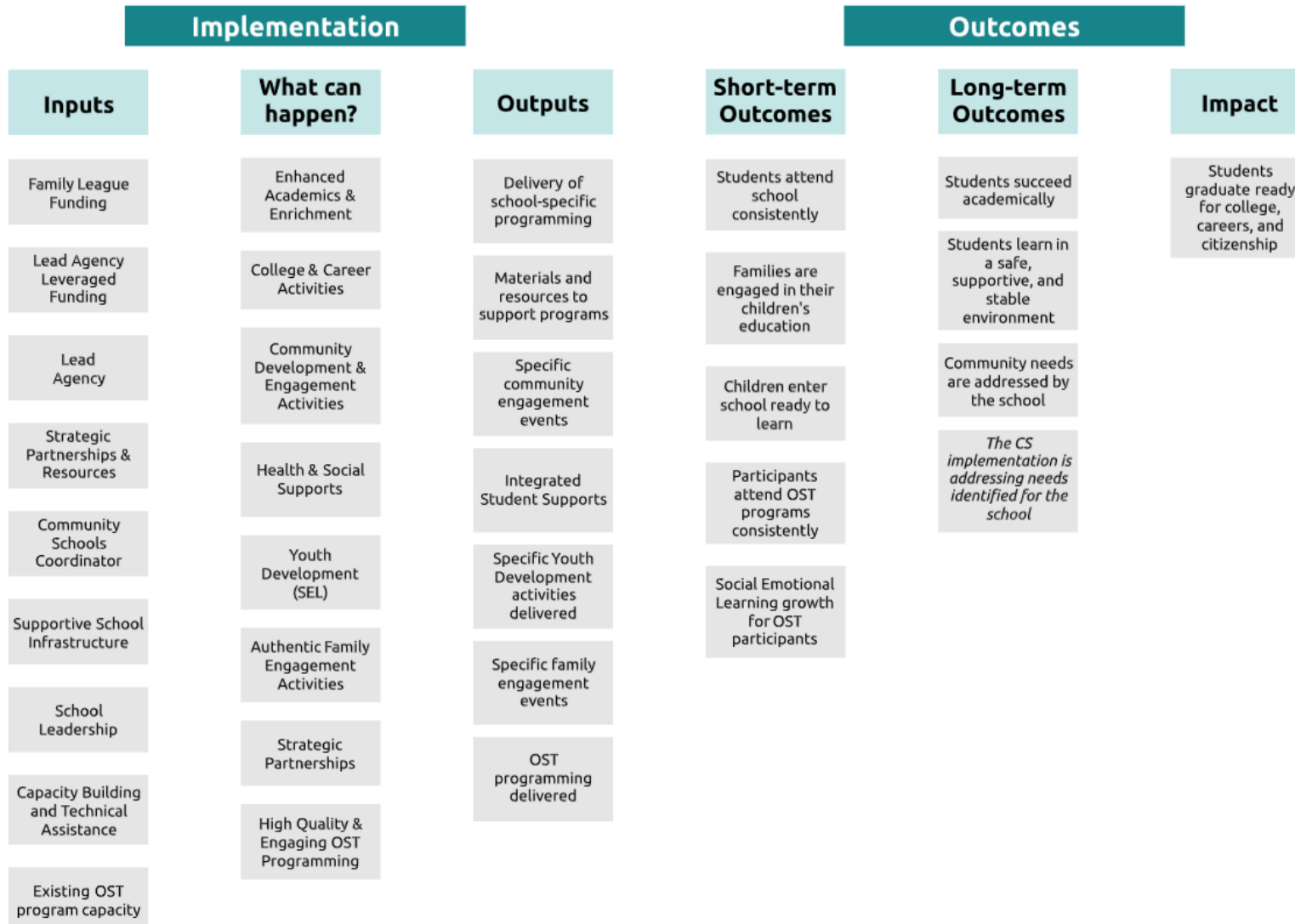
Our holistic evaluation approach turns some of these challenges into strengths. By developing a typology with two axes, a Maturity Scale and a Strengths Index, we are able to slice into the data and provide different views, or perspectives on it. This move helps to avoid making simplistic comparisons between individual schools and programs, one to another, while recognizing that there are differences, and potentially meaningful ones, between programs.

Recommendations

- Continue to encourage meaningful and consistent parent participation on school leadership teams. (Many schools fluctuated over the evaluation period in the extent of parent representation on collaborative advisory and decision-making bodies like CSSCs and SFCs.) Deep collaboration benefits from trusting relationships, and these take time and consistent effort to build. In addition, promote parent agency and create opportunities for parents to give input into schools' decisions. (Across all schools, there were decreases in the extent to which parents feel they have the opportunity to give input into schools' decisions over the evaluation period.) In meaningfully engaging parents and families in agenda-setting and decision-making, schools benefit from their insight, wisdom, and energy. When community schools value the experience of people of diverse backgrounds who are committed to the school community, and when they intentionally focus on embracing families and mobilizing their assets, it increases the resources and relationships available to support student success.
- For OST site leaders, prioritize growth in the areas of Interaction and Engagement. (The construct of Interaction is associated with opportunities for youth to work in cooperation with one another and to take on leadership roles. The construct of Engagement is associated with opportunities to reflect on learning, provide feedback on learning activities, and have a voice and a role in program design). In other words, design OST to encourage active learning, leadership, and youth voice and agency. For Family League, consider offering professional development opportunities to build capacity in these areas.
- For schools with many one-time interventions, consider integrating more regularly-recurring interventions into activity and event calendars. (Formalizing and Mature schools had more recurring interventions.) Recurring interventions often require less planning time to implement, and thus create efficiencies, while also cultivating community trust and interdependence.
- When setting goals, continue to focus less on the total number of goals and more on goal quality. (The number of goals was inversely related to school maturity in SY 17-18 and SY 18-19, prior to the shift to the RBA framework.) Results-based accountability invites schools to define their own metrics of success, and work backwards from these to specific actions and interventions. Schools can also revisit their goals and metrics of success periodically, adjusting them in response to progress and changing contexts. A continuous improvement orientation means taking the time to reflect individually and collectively and make changes when warranted.
- Consider implementing working groups, participatory professional development sessions, focus groups, and/or site visits to better understand how schools in various strength categories are supporting student and family success. For instance, schools

with strengths in Culturally Relevant programming and Newcomer Integration could be convened to explore how they use strategic partnerships, supports, and resources to reduce chronic absenteeism and increase student achievement. A similar strategy could be used for schools with strength in Mental Health with regard to parent and family volunteerism, for schools with strength in Early Childhood with regard to school readiness, and for schools with strengths in Case Management, Digital Outreach, and Mental Health with regard to retention. Use these insights to support continuous improvement, maximize impact, and build capacity of schools across the maturity continuum and across strength areas.

Appendix A - Logic Model



Appendix B - Data Tables

RQ4. Chronic Absenteeism

Mean Chronic Absence Rate over Time by Strength

School Year	Strength							
	Case Management	Culturally Relevant	Data Inquiry	Digital Outreach	Early Childhood	Economic Support	Mental Health	Newcomer Integration
SY17-18	38.39	44.40	41.68	38.84	34.16	41.30	39.15	46.44
SY18-19	42.41	35.22	40.17	38.54	44.18	42.20	41.71	33.94
SY19-20	48.31	39.64	44.24	41.39	48.16	46.65	45.07	37.03

RQ5. Family Engagement

Parent and Family Mean Annual Volunteer Hours over Time by Strength

Strength	SY 17-18	SY 18-19	SY 19-20	Mean
Mental Health	1195	1641	1062	1298
Newcomer Integration	1062	1338	1032	1140
Culturally Relevant	901	1193	1187	1097
Case Management	1098	1644	542	1094
Digital Outreach	875	1208	826	969

Data Inquiry	798	1136	706	882
Economic Support	889	1222	545	877
Early Childhood	449	1029	568	708

Family Involvement Dimension Score by Maturity

School Year	Maturity		
	Emerging	Formalizing	Mature
SY17-18	0.80	0.89	0.87
SY18-19	0.84	0.88	0.85

Family Involvement Dimension Score by Strength

School Year	Strength							
	Case Management	Culturally Relevant	Data Inquiry	Digital Outreach	Early Childhood	Economic Support	Mental Health	Newcomer Integration
SY17-18	0.90	0.90	0.86	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.89	0.88
SY18-19	0.90	0.90	0.84	0.89	0.87	0.86	0.89	0.88

Mean Parent Input into Decisions by Strength

School Year	Strength							
	Case Management	Culturally Relevant	Data Inquiry	Digital Outreach	Early Childhood	Economic Support	Mental Health	Newcomer Integration
SY17-18	0.91	0.87	0.86	0.85	0.86	0.86	0.88	0.87
SY18-19	0.89	0.87	0.81	0.85	0.86	0.82	0.88	0.87

RQ6. School Readiness

Percent Demonstrating Readiness over Time by Strength

School Year	Strength							
	Case Management	Culturally Relevant	Data Inquiry	Digital Outreach	Early Childhood	Economic Support	Mental Health	Newcomer Integration
SY17-18	39.45	32.24	35.72	34.37	47.09	34.10	33.39	37.98
SY18-19	28.04	39.77	38.31	33.93	36.32	30.65	33.95	31.13
SY19-20	30.23	24.20	28.42	25.54	37.33	23.86	34.82	30.44

RQ7. Student Achievement

Retention Rates Over Time by Strength

School Year	Strength							
	Case Management	Culturally Relevant	Data Inquiry	Digital Outreach	Early Childhood	Economic Support	Mental Health	Newcomer Integration
SY17-18	2.27	4.09	4.46	3.78	8.95	4.71	2.43	2.35
SY18-19	1.12	4.44	4.87	4.02	7.93	4.37	1.24	1.74
SY19-20	0.78	2.70	2.50	2.14	6.80	3.44	0.76	1.12

Meeting Expectations on PARCC Over Time by Strength (ELA)

School Year	Strength							
	Case Management	Culturally Relevant	Data Inquiry	Digital Outreach	Early Childhood	Economic Support	Mental Health	Newcomer Integration
SY17-18	0.09	0.18	0.13	0.11	0.12	0.11	0.11	0.17
SY18-19	0.10	0.21	0.13	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.13	0.20

Meeting Expectations on PARCC Over Time by Strength (Math)

School Year	Strength							
	Case Management	Culturally Relevant	Data Inquiry	Digital Outreach	Early Childhood	Economic Support	Mental Health	Newcomer Integration
SY17-18	0.07	0.15	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.15
SY18-19	0.08	0.17	0.11	0.11	0.12	0.10	0.10	0.16

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