The Link Between School Environment and Attendance

Kent School Services Network  FALL 2013
KEY FINDINGS

The primary goal of the Kent School Services Network (KSSN) is to ensure students are at school and ready to learn. A key indicator of success to KSSN is in-school attendance.

The initiative aims to decrease chronic absenteeism in its schools by providing a community school coordinator, co-located behavioral health services, and in many schools, a Department of Human Services worker and a nurse. By placing these service providers in the school, it is hoped that the school becomes a community hub where parents and students engage in learning and their needs can be more easily met to allow students to succeed.
The following report details an analysis of the attendance data of KSSN from the 2010 through 2013 school years in six of the seven KSSN districts. Data on Grand Rapids Public Schools was not available for this timeframe. This report begins with overall KSSN key findings, then details overall KSSN results for attendance, parent, teacher, and student surveys. This report also provides a brief summary of interviews with Community School Coordinators on their role, leadership support, and job satisfaction. Lastly, this report provides a profile of each of the schools this report includes and each school’s student and teacher survey results.

**Attendance continues to improve overall within KSSN.** The 2012-2013 school year saw a seven percent increase in satisfactory attendance. Satisfactory attendance can be defined as attending 95 percent or more possible days. As satisfactory attendance increases, attendance rates in categories of chronic absenteeism decrease, which is promising evidence for the progress of KSSN. As many schools in this analysis are still early in their adoption of KSSN, researchers anticipate attendance results will continue to improve over time as each school further implements elements of the community school model.

**A main objective of this report is to assess how attendance is associated with student perceptions of school environment and parent/teacher support.** To assess this relationship students completed surveys about KSSN and their opinion of their school. There are several significant relationships between student surveys and chronic absenteeism categories. Students who had satisfactory attendance reporting talking to adults about events, college, and grades more than students with lower attendance rates. Additionally, the feeling that teachers want to help students, the opinion of students on whether they can talk to teachers, whether teachers listen to and care about students, whether teachers trust students, and whether teachers are good at teaching were all associated with higher attendance rates. These statistically significant associations suggest that having positive adult relationships and a positive view of the school are more common with students who attend school regularly than those who do not. Students who were involved in school clubs and outside school hobbies, who get along with others, felt like part of the school, and felt like students can do well in school were also more likely to attend school at higher rates than students who rated those questions lower. Feeling like a leader and having friends who help make good choices were not associated with higher levels of school attendance.

It is important to note that these are correlations rather than causal relationships. Meaning, the results cannot tell researchers if attending school more results in higher ratings of adult relationships and the school environment or vice versa.

**Overall, parents and teachers appear to rate schools and KSSN positively.** Parents and teachers also completed surveys about KSSN and perceptions of the school. During data collection, several teachers noted being unsure how to answer questions because they felt the attributes were present at the school, but it may not be a result of KSSN. Several schools also reported some confusion regarding why all students were surveyed rather than “just KSSN students”. Both of these responses suggest some confusion or lack of understanding that KSSN is a whole school intervention, rather than services for select students. As most students did not know who the community school coordinator was (by title, they were not asked by name) and were unsure if their school was a part of KSSN, additional efforts for brand recognition may be needed. Future surveys can better assess this by asking if students know who their community school coordinator is (by title) and also asking if they know by name (ex. Do you know Ms. Smith?).
ATTENDANCE
As attendance is a key indicator for KSSN success, this report assesses attendance rates from the 2010 through 2013 school years. Nationally recognized categories of absenteeism are used to group students. These categories consider students attending 95 percent or more of the possible days to attend as having satisfactory attendance, those attending 90-94.9 percent of days as moderate, 80-89.9 percent as chronically absent, and those attending less than 79.9 percent of days as extremely chronically absent. Satisfactory attendance was higher in 2013 than in previous years (increasing by seven percent) and all other absenteeism categories decreased in 2013. This is a statistically significant difference.

SURVEY ANALYSIS
CRI collected survey data from parents, teachers, and students in early 2013 to assess non-attendance related impacts of KSSN. The data presented here are only one time point of data; CRI will collect surveys again in the 2014-2015 school year. The hope is a second time point of survey data will show greater impacts of KSSN. It is also important to note that schools have had KSSN for varying lengths of time, and thus KSSN has had more time to impact some schools more than others.

OVERALL RESULTS

Given how early many of the schools are in implementing KSSN, this is extremely promising.
STUDENT SURVEYS

CRI aimed to collect surveys of all students at KSSN schools. Most survey collection was done on one day, with the whole school completing the survey during a set time period. For those schools, the only missing surveys should be from students who were not present on that particular day. Students in grades 4 through 12 completed their own surveys on paper or electronically. Students in first through third grades completed a simpler form of the paper survey. Kindergarten classes completed a simpler “show of hands” survey, with one survey collected per classroom. Information on each school’s surveys is available in each school’s section of this report. The KSSN overview data will only focus on the 4-12th grade surveys.
Most students (78 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that their neighborhood was a good place to live.

Sixty-six percent of students agreed or strongly agreed their neighborhood is a safe place to live.

Ninety two percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that there was a caring adult at home.

Sixty nine percent of students said they strongly agreed that the adults in their lives believe they can do good work.
Fewer students reported talking to an adult outside of school about school, with 59 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with that statement.

Similarly, 62 percent of students reported agreeing or strongly agreeing they talk to an adult outside of school about school events.

Forty-four percent of students agree or strongly agree they have an adult they can talk to about college and jobs.

Similar to reports of talking to adults about school work, 60 percent of students agreed or strongly agreed they talked to an adult about grades.

Results were very mixed regarding students attending school events outside of school time. Twenty-two percent of students strongly agreed with this statement while 19 percent strongly disagreed. Results ranged from 15.9 percent to 22.5 percent.

Most students also felt they could trust their teachers, with 72 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.
Similarly, most students reported teachers are easy to talk to, with 42 percent agreeing and 25 percent strongly agreeing to this statement.

Very few students felt teachers did not listen to them, with only eight percent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement.

Nearly all students also felt teachers care about students, with 79 percent of students agreeing or strongly agreeing and 12 percent neither agreeing or disagreeing.

Most students also felt they could trust their teachers, with 72 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

Most students also felt teachers do a good job teaching, with 78 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

Students frequently reported being involved in group activities outside of school, with 70 percent of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.
Most students also reported having their own hobbies outside of school. Forty-seven percent of students strongly agreed with this statement and 26 percent agreed.

Thirty-eight percent of students strongly agreed they were good leaders, while 35 percent agreed with this statement.

Results were less positive than other questions when asked if students felt they were a part of their school, but most students still agreed. Forty-one percent of students agreed which 26 percent strongly agreed with this statement.

Most students felt they got along well with others, with only 12 percent of students not agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

Most students felt their friends helped them make good choices, with 73 percent of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

Sixty-five percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that people at school notice when they do good work.
Most students (79%) agreed or strongly agreed they are confident in their ability to do good work.

Results regarding feeling included in school activities were more mixed than most statements, but similar to feeling included in the school overall. Sixty-two percent of students agreed or strongly agreed they felt included, but 22 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Sixty-five percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that they are treated with respect at school.

Similarly, most students (76%) agreed or strongly agreed they do well on their school work. This may be reflective of different definitions of ‘do well’, as this may not be related to actual measures of school achievement.

Most students (82%) agreed they attend school regularly, but very few strongly agreed with this statement.

Most students reported people at their school were friendly, with 67 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.
Similar to their awareness of KSSN, 49 percent of students were not sure if they had ever received KSSN services. Only approximately half of students reported being aware they were a part of a KSSN school. This may be an area for improvement if brand recognition is a goal of KSSN. This may also be an important factor in students being able to access resources through KSSN without a referral from a school staff member.

Those who reported receiving services after having contact with the community school coordinator typically reported being happy or very happy with those services.
PARENT SURVEYS

CRI conducted surveys of KSSN school parents. While the goal was to expose all parents to the surveys, CRI understood that the ability to engage parents and receive desired response rates would be difficult at some schools. The parent survey included parent perspectives on non-attendance related impacts of KSSN such as attitudes and beliefs about the importance of education and support for their child's education at home, parental engagement with the school, barriers to being involved or spending time at their child's school and awareness of KSSN.

Across the included KSSN schools, parents completed 704 surveys. Due to low response rates at most schools, this report shows only overall KSSN results. The figure below shows the number of surveys received for each school. Parents were encouraged to complete the survey in various ways. Some schools sent blank surveys home with students. Most schools allowed researchers to solicit survey responses during parent/teacher conferences.

The survey asked parents to indicate the number of children under age 18 living in their home, the number of children living in their home who attend this school, and the number of adults living in their home. Most KSSN families have between one and four children living in their home. The majority of the families have one child attending this KSSN school. Most of the parents indicated one or two adults live in their home, with 18 percent having one adult and 69 percent having two adults in the home. Responses varied significantly across schools for nearly all other questions.
The majority, 95.3 percent, of parents indicated they feel it is their responsibility to be involved in their child’s education; three percent of parents strongly disagreed with the statement.

Most of the parents, 84.5 percent, indicated they know how to help their child with his/her homework.

Similarly, most of the parents, 85.5 percent, felt comfortable giving their thoughts about how things work at their child’s school. Parents also agreed or strongly agreed (84.6 percent) with the statement that “teachers and school staff let me know about my child’s progress and/or problems”.

While the majority of parents, 81 percent, said the school let them know about school programs, a few (8.7 percent) disagreed with the statement, and ten percent neither agreed nor disagreed. The range of responses is relatively consistent across all schools.

A higher percent of parents, 89 percent, felt the school lets them know about their child’s progress.

Overall, 88 percent of parents indicated they feel welcome at their child’s school.

Parents indicated they felt the teachers and school staff value their culture and community; 82 percent agree or strongly agreed with the statement.

The majority of parents, 89 percent, also felt that teachers and staff treat them and their child with respect.

Most parents, 83 percent, indicated their child has at least one adult in the school he or she can turn to when there is a problem.

The survey asked parents to share how often they help their child with school related activities. Although most of the parents, 63 percent, indicated they read to their child at least once a week or almost every day, 24 percent read to their child less than once a month or never.

However, almost all the parents, 90 percent, encourage their child to read books and 94 percent ensure their child finished all of his/her homework and 84 percent helped with homework.

The survey asked parents to rate statements about the importance of education-related activities for promoting their child’s learning and healthy development. Most of the parents completed a paper version of the survey (474) that asked parents to indicate their agreement or disagreement (on a five point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree) with statements about their attitudes and beliefs. About a third of the parents (33 percent) completed the survey on-line, which asked them to indicate the importance of doing things to promote their child’s learning and healthy development on the following scale: not important, not very important, somewhat important and very important. Below is a summary of all the responses.

Consistent with parents’ responses about encouraging their child to read and ensuring their child finished all his/her homework, almost all parents:

97 percent (of 474 parents) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, it is important to talk about the importance of education with their child;

99 percent agreed or strongly agreed it is important to support school rules;

98 percent agreed or strongly agreed it is important to ensure their child completes homework assignments;

99 percent agreed or strongly agreed it is important to ensure that their child gets sufficient rest and nutrition to succeed at school and be sure their child goes to school regularly.
Parents’ responses using the categories: not important, not very important, somewhat important, and very important were consistent with the responses to the agree/disagree categories.

• Almost all the parents, 96 percent, indicated it is very important to talk about the importance of education with their child;

• 94 percent indicated it is very important to support school rules for student behavior;

• Ensuring that their child gets sufficient rest and nutrition to succeed at school was rated as very important by 97 percent of parents responding on-line;

• 99 percent of online respondents rated “Be sure your child goes to school regularly” as very important.

The survey asked parents about the importance of contacting teachers about any academic, social, or other problems that might interfere with their child’s schoolwork. Almost all paper survey respondents, 97 percent, agreed or strongly agreed with the statement and 93 percent of online survey respondents rated it as very important.

Responses to the item, “be available to meet with teachers about your child’s progress and needs” were consistent between the paper survey and online surveys as well: 98 percent of paper survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement and 97 percent of online respondents rated it as very important.

More than half (54 percent) of the parents indicated they were not aware their child’s school is part of the Kent School Services Network (KSSN). Consistent with this, 78 percent indicated they do not know or were not sure who the community school coordinator is at their child’s school and 22 percent indicated they received services or had some contact with the Community School Coordinator.

The survey asked parents to identify barriers to being involved or spending time at their child’s school. The following are listed with the highest number of responses at the top.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARRIER</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PARENTS WHO INDICATED THIS IS A BARRIER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work schedule</td>
<td>414</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child care for younger children</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not aware of opportunities for involvement</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel welcome at the school</td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not feel comfortable at the school</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not interested in being involved</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not interested in the involvement opportunities that are available</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TEACHER SURVEYS

Surveys from teachers had a much higher response rate than from parents. CRI conducted all the teacher surveys online. The figure below shows the number of responses per school.

This section of the report focuses on overall KSSN results. Each school’s results are shown in their respective section. Responses varied significantly across schools for nearly all questions. Questions that did not vary by school are noted below. Most responding teachers had been teaching for six to 20 years (58.9 percent). Most responding teachers were Caucasian (97.4 percent).
Overall, teachers felt like their schools were good, very good, or excellent in assisting families with parenting skills and setting home conditions to support children (73% of responses).

Teachers also reported their schools were good, very good, or excellent in communication with parents.

Though still positive, teachers rated their school as being less good at involving parents with their children on homework and other curriculum-related activities, and the same amount for involving parents in decisions in general, with 35 percent of all teachers reporting that schools were just “good” at doing this.

Teachers reported their schools were very good or excellent (57 percent) in teaching students how to become active participants in their own learning.

Most teachers said their schools were very good or good (63 percent) at providing families with helpful ideas on how to help their child learn at home.

Similarly, most teachers reported their schools excelled, were very good or good (82 percent combined) it encouraging parental involvement in school-wide activities and events.

Overall, teachers report that very few school attributes have changed in the past two years. Notably, 43.6 percent of teachers reported discipline disruptions have decreased in the last two years. The survey asked about this time period since most schools have had KSSN implemented for two years or more.

Additionally, 38 percent of teachers reported that the number of students who were present and ready to learn has increased in the past two years.

Very few teachers (24 percent) reported the number of students who have the supports and resources they need to be ready to learn had decreased in the past two years. This is a key goal of KSSN.

However, most teachers (78 percent) reported feeling like time to focus on teaching and improving in the classroom has stayed the same or decreased.

Most teachers reported their time to reflect on content and pedagogy and improve their teaching skills has stayed the same. A nearly equal amount reported it increased as those who reported it decreased.

An overwhelming majority of teachers reported that their time available to teach has remained the same (57 percent). It is a goal of KSSN to increase the amount of time available to teach by ensuring students are coming to school and are ready to learn, thus removing some of the barriers teachers typically need to deal with. This survey response suggests KSSN needs to improve more on this goal area. This is one of the few questions where responses did not vary significantly across schools.

Forty four percent of teachers reported their school’s work to create a supportive learning environment has increased in the last two years, while 48 percent reported it has remained the same.

Nearly all teachers reported they felt it was very important or absolutely essentially for teachers to be responsive to parents’ requests for information, be flexible to meet with parents at different times of the day, provide guidance on what parents can do to help their children succeed, and share information about homework policies and school procedures.

Most teachers (91 percent) reported agreeing or strongly agreeing to feeling confident they can motivate their students.

Teachers also reported they do not agree with the statement that if a child does not want to learn there is not much they can do (44 percent disagree).

Teachers overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed (73 percent strongly agree, 99 percent agree or strongly agree combined) that every child can learn.

Most teachers (67 percent) also reported feeling like teachers at their school trust their students.

Teachers were less certain that teachers at their school could trust parents, with 19 percent either disagreeing or responding that they neither agree or disagree.

Similarly, results were mixed regarding how reliable parents were in their commitments, with 43 percent reporting they neither agree or disagree.
Results were less positive regarding teachers counting on parent support. Only 25 percent of teachers responded that they agree or strongly agree that they can count on parents.

The majority of teachers felt that most parents do a good job, with 54 percent reporting they agree or strongly agree.

32 percent of teachers agree or strongly agree that parents encourage the good habits of school. 40 percent reported neither agreeing or disagreeing.

Teachers were then asked to rate how many parents engage in variety of activities. For all four items, most teachers reported that “some” parents engaged in these activities. Responses for how many parents are interested in helping their child learn were slightly more positive.

87 percent of teachers said their school was good, very good, or excellent in coordinating resources and services with the community. While this response cannot be entirely attributed to KSSN’s efforts, this is encouraging for the community school model.

No teachers reported disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that they were proud to be part of the faculty at this school.

Most teachers reported that they strongly agreed or agreed to administration, teachers, students and parents working toward the same goals, and that the school has a welcoming environment.

54 percent of teachers reported that the number of students leaving during the school year to go to another school was the same this past year as in previous years. 35 percent reported a decrease.

44 percent of teachers reported that the number of students being bullied or harassed at school was the same this past year as in previous years. 47 percent reported a decrease.

55 percent of teachers reported professional development opportunities being the same as last year.

Similarly, 60 percent reported reassignments of teachers and staff has stayed the same.

Responses were split regarding any change in the amount of time available to collaborate with other teachers. 50 percent of teachers reported it had stayed the same, while 22 percent said it increased and 27 percent said it has decreased.

Results were similar regarding the number of students coming to school hungry, with 49 percent reporting no change.

Most teachers (56 percent) report the number of families needing health and social support services has increased in the past year. This shows the great need that KSSN can assist in filling.

Most teachers (61 percent) report that parent engagement has stayed the same in the past year.

41 percent of teachers felt community engagement has increased in the past year, while 53 percent felt it has stayed the same.

89 percent of teachers reported being satisfied with their job as a teacher in the public schools.

Teachers were then asked a series of questions about the school staff/administration’s level of engagement.

65 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that faculty and staff are inquiring into the effective use of out of school time (OST) to meet students learning and developmental needs. While this is good, this continues to be an opportunity where KSSN could encourage more teacher engagement with OST programming.

75 percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that the school provides a safe place for students to go before school begins and after school ends.

Similarly, most teachers (65 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that faculty and staff are engaged in ongoing conversations about ways to meet the holistic needs of students during out of school time.
79 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that before school and afterschool programs enrich students’ learning.

54 percent of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that the school provides adequate enrichment programs for students during the summer.

55 percent of teachers said they agreed or strongly agreed that teachers regularly integrate out of school learning into the school day teaching and curriculum.

Similarly, 48 percent of teachers said they agreed or strongly agreed that out of school time (OST) programs are available to all students. This is another area where KSSN may potentially be able to help.

43 percent of teachers said they believed OST programs are well coordinated and align with the curriculum. Notably, 39 percent of teachers said they neither agreed or disagreed to this question. This suggests teacher not have all of the information they need about OST programs to make this judgment.

Teachers also appeared unsure if OST programs appeal to students’ interests, with 39 percent reporting they neither agreed or disagreed while 41 percent agreed or strongly agreed.

Again showing a potential lack of understanding of OST programming, 48 percent of teachers reported neither agreeing or disagreeing that the implementation and effectiveness of out of school time activities are annually assessed and evaluated.

49 percent of teachers reported agreeing or strongly agreeing that the school had formed partnerships and procured financial resources to sustain out of school time programs and activities.
Community School Coordinator
Interview Summary

A Michigan State University intern in collaboration with the Johnson Center for Philanthropy’s Community Research Institute at Grand Valley State University conducted semi-structured interviews with the Community School Coordinators on behalf of KSSN. The interviewer conducted the interviews with 15 KSSN Community School Coordinators (coordinators) in the spring of 2013 to learn more about their roles, activities, and perceptions of progress and recommendations for improvements after the first three years of implementation of the KSSN model. The Coordinators discussed two themes at length: parental engagement and clarifying their role as Community School Coordinators. Full reports on these two themes are available for more detail.
Community School Model

The community school concept is the foundation of the Kent School Services Network, which brings health and human services into the school building to provide services to students and their families. Community schools intend to meet the social, behavioral, and health needs of the students and their families. As such, the emphasis at each school may be a little different, yet the infrastructure for addressing the schools' needs is similar.

The interviewer asked coordinators to describe KSSN at each of their schools to ascertain the variability of their roles, activities, and implementation of KSSN. Coordinators unanimously described their role as connecting students and their families to health and human services, promoting family engagement, and building community partnerships. Coordinators described a successful coordinator as a 'people person', one with outstanding ability to build relationships. They described successful coordinators as having good customer services skills, networkers, identifying individuals' strengths and building on them and celebrating them, genuine, visionary, motivated, tenacious, tireless in their advocacy for students and their families, creative and flexible, highly organized, respectful, culturally responsive, and willing to ask questions. These are just a few of the outstanding traits of coordinators.

Many of the coordinators expressed that the support of the school principal made a tremendous difference in their ability to successfully coordinate services. Coordinators expressed that support from the Principal created a vision, focus and common purpose at the school.

Coordinators are employed by three mental health providers. Some coordinators expressed a strong emphasis on providing mental health services and a little confusion about how to approach expanding the services and activities to meet other needs of the students, their families and the community. In addition, coordinators expressed interest in more interaction with the other coordinators to share about successes and reduce duplication of efforts and/or competing for resources in the community.

Some coordinators felt documentation of their efforts was a long and tedious process. They acknowledged the need and importance of documentation but felt KSSN could streamline and standardize the process. Coordinators were also interested in being able to produce reports and use data to help them in their jobs. To address the production of reports and use of data, Coordinators suggested a new centralized database all KSSN schools could share.

Family Engagement

The Michigan Department of Education has been emphasizing the importance of parent involvement in education for more than a decade—citing higher grades, test scores and graduation rates, better school attendance, increased motivation, better self-esteem, lower rates of suspension, decreased use of drugs and alcohol, and fewer instances of violent behavior. The interviewer asked coordinators about their role and efforts to increase family involvement at their schools. They described different types of engagement, important conditions for engaging families, and barriers to engagement.

Strategies for Engaging Families

- Define engagement broadly. Almost all the interviewed coordinators indicated parent engagement did not require parents spending time at the school. Other types of engagement include providing homework support, rest, or assisting with projects at home.

- School culture that supports parent involvement. Coordinators discussed the importance of their role in creating a welcoming environment by providing translation services, being available to talk with students and their families, providing access to resources and services, etc. In addition, they said engagement needs to be a school-wide effort. Teachers need the skills and interest to engage parents and leadership needs to promote the importance of parent involvement.

- Build strong relationships. According to the coordinators, developing relationships is the best way to get parents to come to the school. Talking with them face-to-face is more effective than a call or a flier. Parents are more likely to come to the school if they know people at the school.

- Provide skills training for parents. Coordinators suggested they should provide parent classes so parents could become leaders in the school and/or take ownership of their child's education. The extent to which schools/KSSN are currently doing this was unclear.

- Incentives for parent involvement. Coordinators indicated that providing food and/or gift cards for parent attendance at events and activities was a successful practice. They also expressed hope that parents would start coming to events without incentives.
Techniques for Engaging Families

• **Create a comfortable atmosphere.** Make the school as welcoming as possible, serve refreshments, greet people personally, provide training and/or assistance with tools to learn more about school activities, resources, and assisting their child with school work.

• **Use effective communication.** Examples could be phone calls, robocalls, fliers, letters, social media, home visits, word of mouth, radio advertisements, signs, meeting agendas and minutes, webinars, newsletters, etc.

• **Offer multiple opportunities.** Offer events and activities at multiple times to accommodate various work schedules.

• **Coordinate events and activities.** Schedule parent meetings before sports games or recitals.

• **Offer a variety of events and activities.** Examples could be fun events, educational programs/classes, student performances or participation in sports.

• **Build parent networks.** Encourage parents to call other parents and/or bring them to events and activities.

• **Engage community partners in contacting and engaging parents.**

### Barriers to Engagement

**PERSONAL BARRIERS**

- **Language.**
- **Legal status, documentation.** Undocumented immigrants may fear exposure will be a threat to their staying in this country.

- **Teacher’s role.** Coordinators felt that some parents view teachers as authority figures who should not be challenged. Along with this, some parents expect the school to be responsible for their child while at school and parents going to the school would be perceived as an interference.

- **Race/ethnicity.** In some schools, the dominant group is most likely to be involved and smaller groups of parents of other races or ethnicities may feel uncomfortable attending events.

- **Family spokesperson.** Some coordinators indicated the caregiver they see at school with the student is not necessarily the spokesperson or decision-maker for the family and it is sometimes difficult to engage them. There may be cultural differences in who is the decision-maker for the family versus who engages in the children’s education. Coordinators noted the importance of understanding this and working to engage both parents when possible.

- **Value of engagement.** Some parents do not value being involved at the school for personal and/or cultural reasons.

- **Previous experience.** Parents who previously had a negative experience or had negative experiences as children may be uncomfortable being involved at the school.

- **Negative word of mouth.** Negative comments from other parents may serve as a deterrent to participation.

- **Age of students.** Parents of elementary school children are more likely to be actively involved in their child's education than parents of high school students.

- **Security clearance.** Schools may not allow parents who do not pass background checks to volunteer at the school or participate in some activities.

- **Personal circumstances.** Circumstances such as divorce or separation, illnesses, work schedules, military service, etc. may all be barriers to engagement.

**CAPACITY BARRIERS**

- **School-based help.** Many coordinators talked about teachers needing to learn more about how to engage parents and appreciating the value of parent involvement.

- **Changes in technology and education.** Coordinators suggested parents might not know how to help their child with homework or use technology to help them learn.

- **Parent leadership skills.** In some schools, parents may need additional skills to lead and facilitate meetings so they can be parent-led, rather than school administrators leading them.

**RESOURCE BARRIERS**

- **Transportation.** Many parents walk and/or take public transportation to the school. In such circumstances weather and bus schedules can be a deterrent to involvement.

- **Child care.** Parents with other children, especially younger siblings or children with special needs express challenges to participating in school activities if they do not have child care for the student's siblings.

- **Space.** Some schools do not have extra space for meetings, events, or activities.
SCHOOL PROFILES
### School Profile: KSSN Average

**Grade Level:**

- PK
- K
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- A

**Number of Students:**

- 2010: 11,107
- 2011: 11,622
- 2012: 11,845
- 2013: 11,668

*Does not include East Lee High.

**Student Proficiency Based on 2013 MEAP Tests:**

- Math: 22%
- Reading: 48%
- Both: 35%

**Racial & Ethnic:**

- Hispanic: 5%
- American Indian: 4%
- Black: 36%
- White: 32%
- Multi: 23%
- Asian: 3%

**Gender:**

- Female: 51%
- Male: 49%

**Free and Reduced Lunch:**

- 90%

**Absenteeism:**

<table>
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<th>Percent of days attended</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
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<tr>
<td>91.4%</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
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**KSSN Average by National Absenteeism Category**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Chronic</th>
<th>Extreme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KSSN School Site Team Staffing

While the overall KSSN model includes a Community School Coordinator, Clinician, DHS workers, Nurse, and CHW, the actual full time equivalent (FTE) for those positions varies slightly across schools. The table below shows the number of full time equivalent workers for each category at each school. As this table shows, some workers serve more than one school or provide KSSN related services for only a portion of their job duties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency/ School District</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Coordinator</th>
<th>Clinician</th>
<th>DHS (CM/FIS/ES)</th>
<th>Nurse</th>
<th>Community Health Worker (CHW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbor Circle</td>
<td>Cesar Chavez</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SW Campus</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burton Elementary</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burton Middle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Springs</td>
<td>Cedar Springs Middle School</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cedar Springs Red Hawk</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cedar Springs Cedar View</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.A. Blodgett St. Johns</td>
<td>Colt Creative Arts Academy</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alger Middle School</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sibley Elementary</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harrison Park</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ford Middle School</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Martin Luther King Academy</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campau Elementary</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentwood</td>
<td>Kentwood Freshman Campus</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crossroads Alternative</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentwood</td>
<td>Kentwood High Campus</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Outreach Center</td>
<td>Lee Middle &amp; High School</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Lee Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godfrey-Lee</td>
<td>North Godwin Elementary</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>Parkview Elementary</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Department of Human Services (DHS) has workers on site at ten of the KSSN schools included in this analysis. There are two types of DHS workers on site: Family Intervention Specialists and Eligibility Specialists. Workers aid families in receiving needed support services and assist in tackling chronic absenteeism issues. The number of DHS workers in KSSN schools increased substantially between 2010 and 2012, which makes a lot of this work new to many of the schools.

**STAFF CONFIGURATION KSSN SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THE ANALYSIS (DOES NOT INCLUDE GRPS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency/ School District</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Coordinator</th>
<th>Clinician</th>
<th>DHS (CM/FIS/ES)</th>
<th>Nurse</th>
<th>CHW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table below shows total DHS activities for the 2011-2012 school year, the 2012 summer, and the 2012-2013 school years. DHS workers, on average, provided services to more than half the families in the schools where they are co-located. They completed over 500 assessments each year and sent out over 1,500 attendance letters. They were more likely to have face-to-face meetings with parents than team meetings or home visits. Most commonly, DHS workers referred students and families to community services, the next most common were referrals to counseling and employment, which were about equal in number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Enrollment in Schools</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of students receiving DHS assistance per month</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average percent of student population receiving DHS assistance per month</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERVENTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of assessments completed</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Letters for month</td>
<td>1777</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>1497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of phone contacts with parents</td>
<td>1254</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Face To Face Contacts for month</td>
<td>1262</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of parent face-to-face meetings</td>
<td>4464</td>
<td>1283</td>
<td>5357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of team meetings with parents</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of home visits</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number assisted with on-line applications</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REFERRALS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of referrals to Child Protective Services</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of referrals to counseling</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of referrals for employment</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of referrals to community resources</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of referrals to other services</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEETINGS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of attendance meetings</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of child study team meetings</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of leadership team meetings</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of attendance celebrations</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of parent teacher conferences</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of other meetings</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>