MEMORANDUM April 21, 2010

TO: Board Members

FROM: Terry B. Grier, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

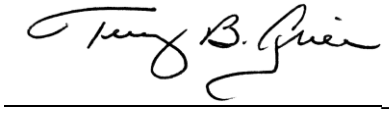
SUBJECT: **2009 FAMILY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT**

CONTACT: Carla Stevens, 713-556-6700

The Family Leadership Institute (FLI) is an educational curriculum aimed at parents and caregivers, with the goal of providing them with family leadership skills in order to support academic achievement and life success for their children. The program has been offered in the district since the 2004–2005 school year and is provided through an arrangement with Education Achievement Services, Inc., of Las Vegas, Nevada. Attached is an evaluation report summarizing the program's impact on participants as well as on their HISD-enrolled children.

The report contains data from the first five years in which the program has been in operation, through 2008–2009. Included are enrollment and demographic data for program participants, information on how the beliefs, attitudes and skills of program participants have been affected, data on the impact of the program on the academic performance of the children of FLI participants, as well as evidence concerning the impact of the program on the beliefs of the children of program participants.

A total of 544 parents have participated in the FLI program, with 842 of the district's students having a parent involved. Results showed that children whose parents have participated in the FLI had statistically significant improvements on the reading, mathematics, and language subscales of the Stanford 10 relative to a randomly matched control group. Furthermore, these students were less likely to have repeated a grade than were students whose parents were not involved in the program. In addition, parents reported improved skills following program participation, with parents and students showing more positive attitudes and beliefs.



TBG

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RESEARCH

Educational Program Report

HOUSTON Independent School District

Creating a College-Bound Culture

Family Leadership Institute Program Evaluation

2008-2009

Department of Research and Accountability
Houston Independent School District

2010 Board of Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FAMILY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (FLI) 2008–2009

Program Description

The Family Leadership Institute (FLI) is an educational curriculum for parents and caregivers, with the goal of providing them with family leadership skills in order to support academic achievement and life success for their children. The program has been offered in the Houston Independent School District (HISD) since the 2004–2005 school year. It is composed of ten modules, taught in a group setting in separate sessions, usually one per month throughout the school year. The curriculum and program materials are obtained from Education Achievement Services, Inc., of Las Vegas, Nevada.

The FLI was originally designed to serve immigrant and migrant Hispanic families. Its two main areas of emphasis are, first, to provide participating parents and caregivers with the skills and inspiration needed to enhance their own personal success and to allow them to serve as role models for their children. Second, the program places strong emphasis on parental engagement, and attempts to increase parents' involvement in their children's education.

The series of ten workshops offered by the FLI are normally conducted in Spanish, with bilingual presentation if needed.[1] The topics of the ten workshops are as follows:

1. *Home: Where Leadership Begins:* participants identify their own leadership styles and preferences;
2. *Self-Identity: Past, Present, & Future:* self-identity, self-esteem and its effects on the family;
3. *Living in Two Worlds: Cultural & Generational Perspectives:* cultural pride and traditions highlighted; parents learn about pressures children face (drugs, peer pressure, teen pregnancy, etc.);
4. *Storytelling & Journaling: Valuing Literacy Through Family History:* placing value on reading and its effect on children's acquisition of reading skills;
5. *Education: The Key to a Better Future:* essential role of education in economic, social, and intellectual well-being of their children;
6. *College Field Trip: What Does Success Look Like?* participants visit a local college in order to understand that a college education for their child is an attainable goal;
7. *Improving Family and School Relationships: Partnerships for Success:* strategies for building relationships with teachers, staff, and administrators; parents as advocates;
8. *Facing Challenges at Home: Coping Strategies for Success:* identify barriers to personal and family success, setting goals;
9. *Creating a Family Action Plan: Roadmaps to Success:* parents develop vision, mission, goals, & objectives; action plan for their children's success; and
10. *Celebrating Family Academic Excellence: Success as a Way of Life:* families make presentations to educational administrators; share successes and their children's academic progress.

At the conclusion of the series of FLI workshops, there is a graduation ceremony for parents who have completed the program. The ceremony is an opportunity for participants to showcase and present their family plans, and in addition there are keynote speakers, with each graduate receiving a certificate.

From 2004–2005 through 2008–2009, four cohorts of parents and caregivers have completed the FLI program. The present report summarizes the findings from an evaluation of the FLI, with results from all five cohorts included.

Basic demographic data on program participants is included, as are data concerning the academic progress of children of FLI participants as well as results of parent and student surveys.

Key Findings

1. How many parents and caregivers have participated in the FLI, and what are their demographic characteristics?

- Counting only parents who were eligible for graduation from the program, a total of 544 parents and caregivers have participated in the FLI (162, 131, 127, 84, and 40 in the school years 2004–2005 through 2008–2009, respectively).
- FLI participants were almost exclusively Hispanic (approximately 99%).

2. How many children of FLI participants were enrolled in HISD schools, and what were their demographic characteristics?

- A total of 842 children of FLI participants were enrolled in HISD during the same school year that their parents or caregivers took part in the program.
- The majority of these students were male (54.2%), while 45.8 percent were female.
- The majority of FLI students were Hispanic (99.4 percent).
- Nearly 70% of FLI students were considered LEP at the time their parents participated in the FLI.

3. What was the impact of the FLI program on the academic achievement of the children of FLI participants?

- Stanford 10 performance of students showed NCE gains on the reading, math, language, science, and social science subtests, which exceeded gains observed in a matched control group of non-FLI students. The math and language gains were statistically significant.
- FLI students who were also LEP showed statistically significant NCE gains in reading, math, and language, in comparison with matched controls (non-FLI LEP students).
- Performance on the 2009 English TAKS also revealed significant differences between FLI students and matched controls in reading and mathematics.
- FLI students were less likely than matched controls to have repeated a grade since their parents participated in the FLI, and this effect was largest for students at the middle and high school levels.
- Matched non-FLI students showed a larger increase in the number of disciplinary incidents than did FLI students, but this trend was not statistically significant.
- There were fewer dropouts, and a lower dropout rate, for FLI students in comparison with matched controls, although this difference was not statistically significance.

4. Did participating in the FLI change the attitudes, beliefs, or skills of parents and caregivers?

- Including survey results from 2008–2009 FLI participants with those from previous years, 87 percent of FLI participants reported that they were involved in parent-related activities at their child's school.
- Almost all parents (98.3%) said they used strategies learned from the FLI program in their own homes.
- 95.5 percent of parents reported that the FLI had influenced how much time they spent with their children.

- 97.1 percent also reported that the FLI had affected their child's school performance.

- 92.0 percent of parents indicated that their perceptions of school leaders had changed, and 92.5 percent that their interactions with school leaders had changed as a result of the FLI.

5. Did the FLI have an impact on the beliefs of children of FLI participants?

- FLI students participating in an FLI-related student leadership program showed more positive attitudes towards school than did a comparison sample of LEP high school students in the district.

Recommendations

1. Since benefits in parental attitudes, as well as in student achievement and discipline, are apparent, the district should investigate all options regarding alternative funding sources for the program. Funding for the FLI program continues to be a challenge, and therefore more stable sources of program support should be sought to sustain the program

2. The FLI program should be expanded and made available to other populations besides the Hispanic parents and students who have been the focus. In particular, offering a version of this program for parents of other ethnic groups should be considered a priority.

3. The district should make some attempt to resolve difficulties with scheduling of the FLI sessions. Currently, the program is held during the daytime only, which is problematic for many parents. Scheduling the program for evenings would raise other issues (e.g., child care, family meals), but these obstacles should be weighed against the possibility that more parents might have the chance to participate in the program if alternative scheduling were available.

FAMILY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (FLI)
2008–2009

Introduction

Program Description

The Family Leadership Institute (FLI) is an educational curriculum aimed at parents and caregivers, with the goal of providing them with family leadership skills in order to support academic achievement and life success for their children. The program has been offered in the Houston Independent School District (HISD) since the 2004–2005 school year. It is composed of ten modules, which are taught in a group setting in separate sessions, usually one every 2-3 weeks throughout the school year. The curriculum and program materials are obtained from Education Achievement Services, Inc., of Las Vegas, Nevada (EAS, 2009).

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The series of ten workshops offered by the FLI are normally conducted in Spanish, with bilingual presentation if needed.[1] The topics of the ten workshops are as follows:

1. *Home: Where Leadership Begins:* participants identify their own leadership styles and preferences;
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At the conclusion of the series of FLI workshops, there is a graduation ceremony for parents who have completed the program. The ceremony is an opportunity for participants to showcase and present their family plans, and in addition there are keynote speakers, with each graduate receiving a certificate.

From 2004–2005 through 2008–2009, five different groups of parents and caregivers have completed the FLI program. The present report summarizes the findings from an evaluation of the FLI, with results from all five cohorts included.

For ease of explication, rather than repeated use of the phrase "parents and caregivers", this

report will rely on the simpler term "parents" to refer to FLI participants. It must be emphasized, however, that this term should be interpreted as including a child's actual parents as well as any non-parental caregivers.

Program Goals

The main website of the Family Leadership Institute opens with the following statement: "The objective of the Family Leadership Institute is to teach parents and caregivers the art and skills of family leadership in support of academic achievement and life success for their children by using a practical ten-step approach" (Education Achievement Services, 2009). The following goals are, specifically, delineated:

- increase engagement of families in their children's education;
- provide purpose, tools, and direction to parents and their children to achieve academic success as well as life success; and
- produce a cadre of knowledgeable and committed parents & caregivers who actively support school/community efforts that benefit their children in addition to encouraging other families to do the same.

Program Participants

During the five years in which the program has been in place, the number of parents participating in the FLI has varied. In the school years 2004–2005 through 2008–2009, there have been 162, 131, 127, 84, and 40 parents who met the requirements for graduating from the FLI. Most of the decline throughout this period can be attributed to budgetary factors as funds available for the program have declined.

The FLI has, generally, been based in or focused on specific regions in the district. The precise region and campuses have varied, based on student achievement patterns and need. Parent recruitment occurs via parent coordinators at campuses within the targeted region. Flyers describing the FLI as well as registration materials are left at the school or are distributed to parents by the parent coordinators. Recruitment targets for each year are set (based on available budget), but parents are not turned away if they show up.[2]

Many FLI participants bring along their friends or relatives after they have started attending the workshops and begin to see the value in them. Word of mouth spreads once the series begins or even beforehand. Current and former FLI participants may be the program's best recruiters. However, any new participants must meet enrollment criteria in order to continue participation (see below).

The main criterion for participation in the FLI is that the parent must have at least one child enrolled in HISD who is considered LEP[3]. Parents who attend all ten sessions receive a Certificate of Completion at the conclusion of the program. Parents who miss one or more sessions receive a Certificate of Participation at the same graduation ceremony. The present report includes data from both sets of parents, and their HISD enrolled children. It does not include results from parents who started participating in the program but who stopped attending at some point.

Purpose of the Evaluation Report

The purpose of this evaluation report was to examine whether the two overall objectives of the FLI program were being met. Namely, whether parents who participated in the FLI reported changes in their attitudes, beliefs, or skills, which might reflect improved "leadership skills"; and whether parents' FLI participation had an effect on the academic performance or attitudes of their children.

Research Questions

1. How many parents and caregivers have participated in the FLI, and what are their demographic characteristics?
2. How many children of FLI participants were enrolled in HISD schools, and what were their demographic characteristics?
3. What was the impact of the FLI program on the academic achievement of the children of FLI participants?

4. Did participating in the FLI change the attitudes, beliefs, or skills of parents and caregivers?
5. Did the FLI have an impact on the beliefs of children of FLI participants?

Literature Review

Parental involvement in the education of their children has long been shown to have a positive impact on various indicators of school performance and student attitudes (Epstein, et al., 2002; Epstein, 1995; National Middle School Association, 2003, 2006; Fan & Chen, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Positive effects on students include; higher grade and test scores, improved attendance, higher graduation rates, greater enrollment in post-secondary education, lower rates of suspension, decreased use of drugs and alcohol, and increased motivation and self-esteem.

Parental involvement can be of many types, and Epstein and colleagues (1995, 2002) proposed a six-category framework, which includes (among others) *parenting* (e.g., supervision of time and behavior, expressing expectations about student's education), *communicating* (particularly, about school performance), and *learning at home*. Ho Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) suggest a similar model, with *discussion of school activities* and *monitoring of out-of-school activities* figuring prominently. In general, anything that increases the amount of parental involvement in home learning activities, allows parents to serve as models for their children, or involves setting up a home environment of encouragement and educational support, has been shown to be beneficial. In addition, establishing high but realistic expectations for student achievement, and opening channels of communication with school staff and teachers is important; the latter because it allows the student to see school as an extension of their home life, and not a separate entity.

The FLI program is focused on promoting many of the skill sets and parental behaviors that the research literature has shown to impact student academic achievement and attitudes. Thus, it is expected that the FLI should have a positive effect on both of these variables, as well as on parental attitudes and behavior.

Methods

Data Collection

Data collection began by compiling rosters of parents who participated in the FLI. This was done for each of the five years in which the FLI was offered. These lists were then put into a Microsoft Access database where families and participants were given unique code numbers. Next, children of each FLI participant were identified from lists provided with the original parent rosters. Identities were confirmed by consulting the district's School Administrative Student Information (SASI) and Chancery databases,[4] in order to verify that students were enrolled in district schools. This was accomplished by cross-referencing parent information provided by FLI staff with that of children using phone numbers and home addresses. The SASI and Chancery databases were then used to extract student identification numbers, gender, ethnicity, grade level, home language, and LEP status.

Student performance data were collected from the Stanford Achievement Test (Stanford 10), as well as the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

Other data were collected using two surveys. One was administered to all parents attending the FLI. A second survey was administered to a subset of children whose parents attended the FLI, specifically, those students who participated in the SLiCK program (this program is described later, see p.15).

Counts of parents reflect only those who graduated from the FLI. Demographic data are not normally collected from FLI participants. However, these data are available for all parents who complete the parent survey, which is equivalent to approximately 57 percent of all potentially eligible. Thus, parent demographic data are taken from the responses collected at the time the parent survey was administered, and should closely reflect the actual demographics for the group as a whole.

Assessment Instruments

The Stanford 10 is a norm-referenced, standardized achievement test in English used to assess students' level of content mastery. The reading, mathematics, and language subtests of the Stanford 10 are included in this report for grades 1 through 11. Reported are mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores for each subject. The NCE is a normalized standard score most often used when interpolating or averaging scores. Like the National Percentile Rank (NPR), the NCE is a norm-referenced score, but in contrast to the NPR, the NCE provides an equal-interval scale that allows computations such as averaging or subtraction, which are useful when studying academic progress over time, especially when comparing different subject areas or student groups.

The TAKS is a state-mandated, criterion-referenced test administered for the first time in the spring 2003 as a means to monitor student performance. The English language version measures academic achievement in reading at grades 3–9; English language arts at 10 and 11; writing at grades 4 and 7; social studies at grades 8, 10, and 11; and science at grades 5, 8, 10, and 11. Students in the 11th grade are required to take and pass an exit-level TAKS in order to graduate. For the purposes of this report, only English language assessments were of interest. Thus, no data from the Spanish language version of TAKS are included. Data reported are the Lexiles and Quantiles of students on the reading/English language arts and mathematics TAKS tests [5].

Qualitative Data Collection

Informal interviews with key stakeholders in the FLI program were conducted to gather information on program goals, objectives, and activities. In addition, surveys were conducted with FLI parents and FLI children.

Sample

Enrollment data were based on the SASI (for the school years 2004–2005 and 2005–2006) and Chancery databases (for school years 2006–2007 to 2008–2009). Student lists were limited to those students whose parents had met the graduation requirements for that year's FLI. Parents were included if they attended enough FLI workshops to qualify for either a Certificate of Completion or a Certificate of Participation.

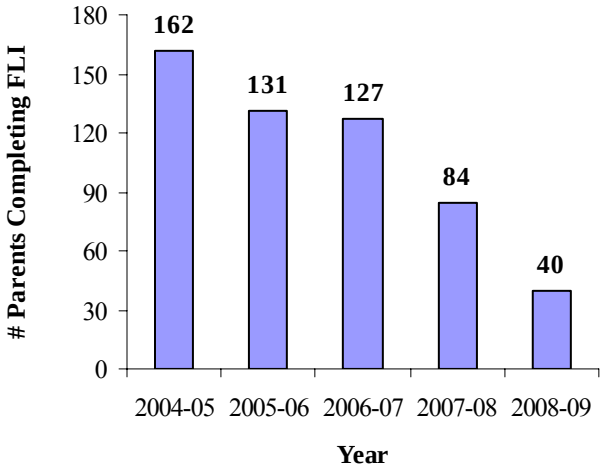

Figure 1. Number of parents completing the FLI for the years 2004–2005 through 2008–2009.

The analysis of academic achievement data was based on eligible students' Stanford and TAKS results, i.e., all students included in the spring administration of the respective tests who were listed as students in the SASI or Chancery database.

Results

How many parents and caregivers have participated in the FLI, and what are their demographic characteristics?

Through the first five years of the FLI, a total of 544 parents have graduated from the program. **Figure 1** (see above) shows the number of parents completing the FLI by year. It can be seen that the enrollment was highest during the first year, and has declined each year since. The principal reason for this is the availability of funding, which has declined over the course of the program.

Demographic data are not available for all parents who participated in the FLI. However, in spring of each year, a 21-item survey is distributed to all parents attending one of the last ses-

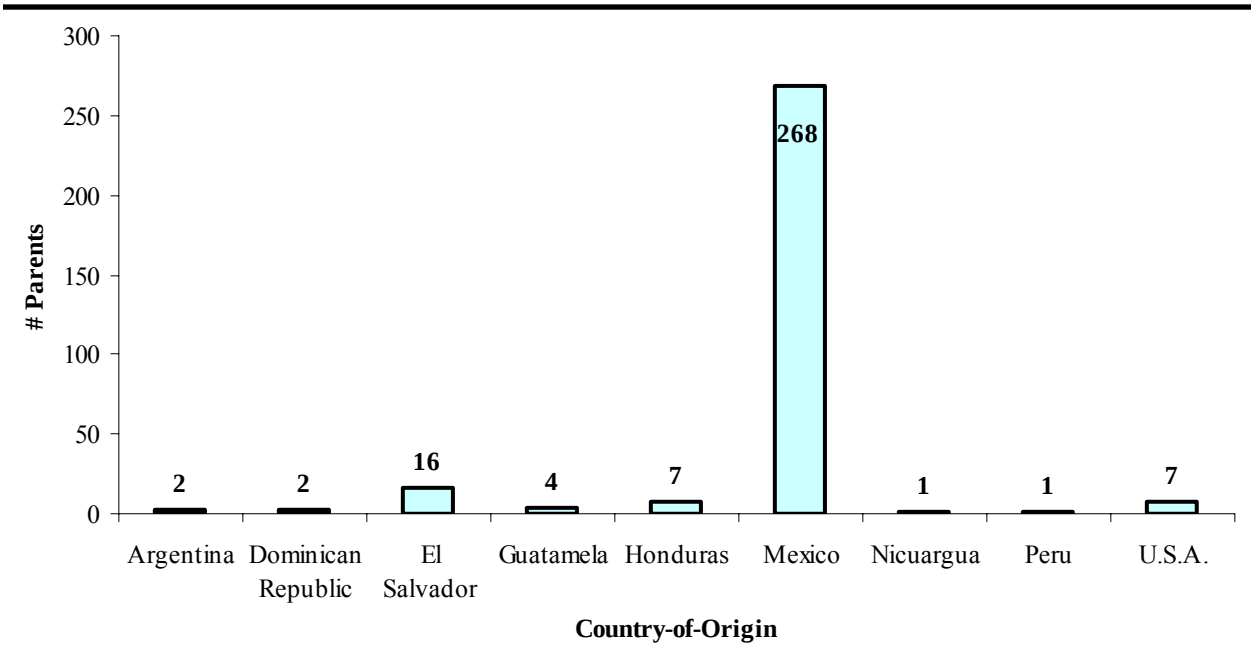

Figure 2. FLI parent country-of-origin (data from parent survey, cumulative over the last five years).

sions of the program (the schedule has varied depending on the availability of staff to assist in administering the survey). Survey data has been collected from 310 of these parents, representing 56.9% of all FLI graduates, and these surveys do contain some questions on parent demographics. Results are summarized as follows.

The ethnicity of the parents attending the FLI is, overwhelmingly, Hispanic. As evidence for this, first, most parents choose to complete the survey in Spanish (97.1%) rather than in English (2.9%); the survey is printed in both languages. In addition, 98.7% of parents indicated that Spanish is their home language. Only 1.3% specified that English is their home language.

Figure 2 (see above) illustrates the country-of-origin of the 308 parents answering this question on the survey. Most of the parents (97.7%) indicated that their country-of-origin was somewhere other than the United States. As can be seen, a large majority of them list Mexico as the country-of-origin (87.0%). Other Latin American countries make up most of the remainder.

Other data from the parent survey reveal that the typical FLI attendee has multiple children. The mean number of children listed is 2.3 (range of 1 to 8). Seventy-two percent of parents reported family sizes between 2 and 4 children.

How many children of FLI participants were enrolled in HISD schools, and what were their demographic characteristics?

Analysis of student data was limited to students who were enrolled at HISD and whose parents met requirements for graduating from the FLI. A total of 842 students met this criterion. **Table 1** (see p. 10) summarizes basic demographic data for this group. Also included for comparison purposes are data from the general HISD population, as well as the overall LEP population in the district.

Data are summed across the five years of the FLI. It can be seen that the FLI student population is comparable in many ways to the overall LEP population in the district. Specifically, FLI students tend to be, overwhelmingly, Hispanic (99.4%), with a home language of Spanish (94.3%). The majority (69.8%) of FLI students are considered LEP (see note #3). Similarly, the percentages of FLI students who are considered immigrant (10.7%), at-risk (84.8%), are served by Title-I programs (98.2%), or are economically disadvantaged (95.1%), bear more similarity to the percentages seen with the overall LEP population than they do to those observed in the district as a whole.

Special education and gifted and talented status are two areas where FLI students differ from the general LEP population, however. Only 4.9% of FLI students have special education status, lower than either the LEP population or the district overall. In addition, the percentage of FLI students classified as gifted and talented (10.6%) is higher than in the LEP population, but close to the proportion observed in the general district student population.

What was the impact of the FLI program on the academic achievement of the children of FLI participants?

To assess the impact of the FLI program on the academic progress of students, results from both the Stanford 10 and English version of the TAKS were analyzed. Only data from English language assessments were considered, for two reasons. First, students who are considered LEP are tested in Spanish in their early grades (i.e., on the Aprenda 3 or the Spanish TAKS), but will, eventually, progress in English proficiency to the point where they are tested on English language assessments only. This reduces the amount of data available from Spanish language assessments. In fact, the amount of Spanish language data was so small that results proved too unreliable for evaluation purposes

A second reason for focusing on English language assessments is that a student's long-term academic success is best predicted by how well they do on English language assessments as opposed to ones in their native language. At a minimum, student performance in high school and their ability to meet state criteria for graduation both rely on English language assessments, since there are no Spanish language assessments at those grade levels.

Table 1. Demographics of FLI Student Sample, in Comparison With Statistics for Overall HISD Student Population and HISD LEP Population: Cumulative 2004–2005 Through 2008–2009.

	FLI		HISD	HISD-LEP
Gender	**N**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Male	456	54.2	51.0	52.4
Female	386	45.8	49.0	47.6
Ethnicity				
America Indian	0	0	<1	<1
Asian	2	<1	3.1	2.5
African American	2	<1	28.9	1.5
Hispanic	836	99.4	59.6	95.3
White	1	<1	8.3	<1
Home Language				
Spanish	794	94.3	43.7	94.7
English	45	5.3	53.2	1.0
Other	3	<1	3.1	4.4
Program				
LEP	588	69.8	28.9	-
Immigrant	90	10.7	3.9	12.1
Migrant	6	<1	<1	<1
At Risk	714	84.8	65.8	99.9
Title 1	827	98.2	91.1	97.5
Special Education	41	4.9	9.4	8.6
Gifted/Talented	89	10.6	11.6	5.1
Econ Disadvantaged	801	95.1	80.7	94.8
Total	**842**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Stanford 10

For each of the five FLI cohorts, the following procedure was used to analyze Stanford performance. First, children of FLI parents were identified and assigned ID numbers based on information in the district's SASI and Chancery databases. In most cases, children's names were provided along with rosters of parents attending or graduating from the FLI. For one cohort, these names were not provided, but had to be looked up. In all cases, IDs were assigned only after the student and their parent's identities could be confirmed by cross-referencing information in district databases. This cross-referencing relied on information (e.g., address, phone numbers) included in the parent rosters. Once it could be confirmed that a student listed in any of the district databases was indeed a child of an FLI attendee, then that student's district identification number as well as PEIMS ID number were extracted, along with demographic and other data.

Next, using the collected ID numbers, student rosters were then matched with Stanford performance results from the same year the FLI was held. Stanford data were also matched to students' performance in the prior year, and any years subsequent to their parent's participation in the FLI. This resulted in a database containing Stanford results for FLI students that reflected pre-FLI, concurrent, and post-FLI performance. Individual Stanford performance was collected (when available) in each of the five areas of reading, mathematics, language, science, and social science.

This same protocol was followed for each separate cohort of students and parents. To increase statistical power, results from the five cohorts were aggregated. An additional set of analyses was based on that subset of FLI students who were classified as LEP. In each case, a student's LEP designation was based on their status as of the year in which their parents attended the FLI.

Statistical analyses were conducted on these data as follows. First, analysis was limited to only those students (either in the FLI group or the matched comparison sample) who had valid Stanford 10 scores in all five subject areas for both the year prior to their parents' participation in the FLI, and for the most recent post-FLI year (i.e., the 2008–2009 school year). For these samples (n = 177 for FLI, and 135 for the control group), a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was then conducted. The dependent variables were the post-FLI Stanford NCEs for the reading, mathematics, language, science, and social science subtests, and covariates were the five corresponding pre-FLI Stanford NCE scores for these same subtests. The independent variable was group (FLI vs. non-FLI control).

Results of this analysis showed that there was no significant difference between the two student groups overall, $F(5, 299) = 2.14$, $p = .061$, Wilkes Lambda = .97. When results of the five Stanford subtests were considered separately, two reached statistical significance: mathematics, $F(1, 303) = 9.43$, $p = .002$, and language, $F(1, 303) = 4.07$, $p = .045$. Reading was marginally significant, $F(1, 303) = 3.74$, $p = .054$. Adjusted mean NCE scores (see **Figure 3** below) showed that the FLI group had higher post-FLI performance than did the comparison group for all subjects, including reading (46.1 vs. 43.3), math (54.4 vs. 50.3), language (46.4 vs. 43.7), science (51.7 vs. 49.6, and social science (46.8 vs. 45.6)

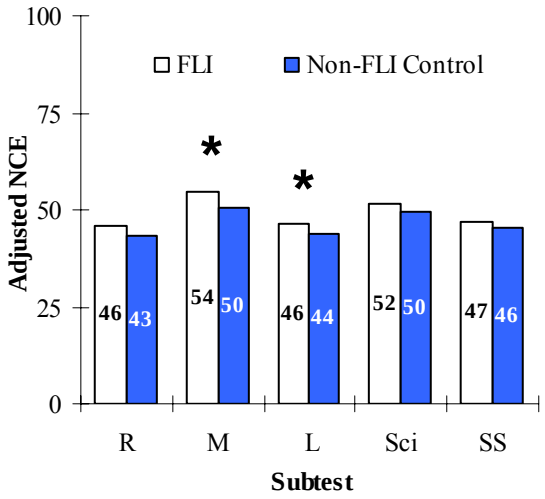

Figure 3. Adjusted mean NCEs by subject area for FLI and matched control groups. Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between groups. Based on 2009 Stanford 10 results.

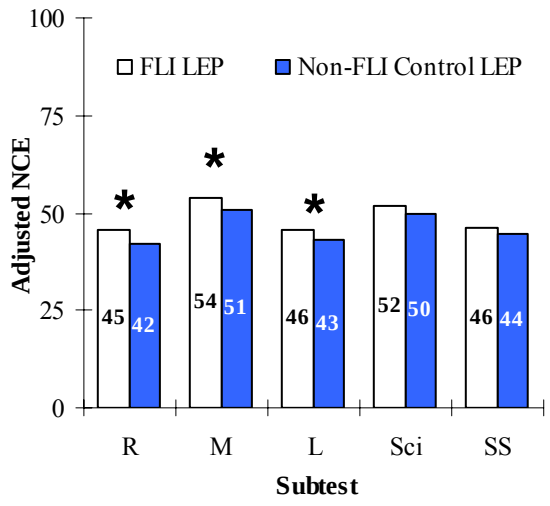

Figure 4. Adjusted mean NCEs by subject area for FLI-LEP and matched control groups. Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.

As was mentioned earlier, approximately 70% of the FLI students are also classified as LEP. Since LEP students as a group generally perform at a lower level than their peers on English language assessments (at least until they have exited LEP status), one could infer that this is also likely to be true of the LEP subgroup of FLI students. Thus, FLI LEP students might stand to gain more from the parent's participation in the FLI, and could show a greater amount of academic improvement. The next analysis limits the focus to current and exited LEP students. It includes all students who were coded as LEP during the year in which their parents participated in the FLI. It also includes all students coded as monitored or former LEPs during the 2008–2009 school year (n = 156 for FLI LEP and 106 for non-FLI LEP control, respectively).

A MANCOVA showed that the FLI LEP and non-FLI LEP control groups were not significantly different overall $F(5, 249) = 1.41$, $p = .223$, Wilkes Lambda = .97. Results of the five Stanford subtests showed that reading scores differed for the FLI-LEP and control groups, $F(1, 253) = 4.87$, $p = .028$). There were also significant differences for mathematics, $F(1, 253) = 3.96$, $p = .048$, and language, $F(1, 253) = 4.13$, $p = .043$. Adjusted mean NCE scores (see **Figure 4** above) showed that the FLI group had higher post-FLI performance on language than did the comparison group in each instance.

In conclusion, both the findings from FLI students overall as well as those from the LEP-only subgroup suggest that FLI participation has a measurable impact on the academic performance of students. Students whose parents participated in the FLI show gains in performance on the Stanford 10 that are statistically larger than those seen in comparable populations over the same time period, for reading (for the LEP subgroup), as well as for mathematics and language (overall and for the LEP subgroup).

TAKS

A set of analyses similar to those conducted on Stanford data was also carried out for the English TAKS. The first analysis, including data from all children of FLI participants, was a MANCOVA with two dependent variables (the 2008–2009 Lexile and Quantile scores), and two predictor variables (scale scores for reading and math for the year prior to parental participation in the FLI). Group (FLI versus matched comparison) was the only between-subjects variable (n = 146 for FLI and n = 120 for controls, respectively).

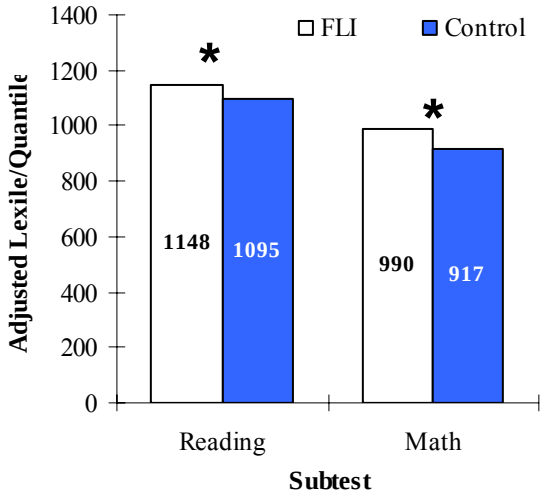

Figure 5. Adjusted mean Lexile (reading) and Quantile (math) scores for FLI-and matched control groups. Asterisk indicates statistically significant differences between groups. results based on the 2009 English TAKS.

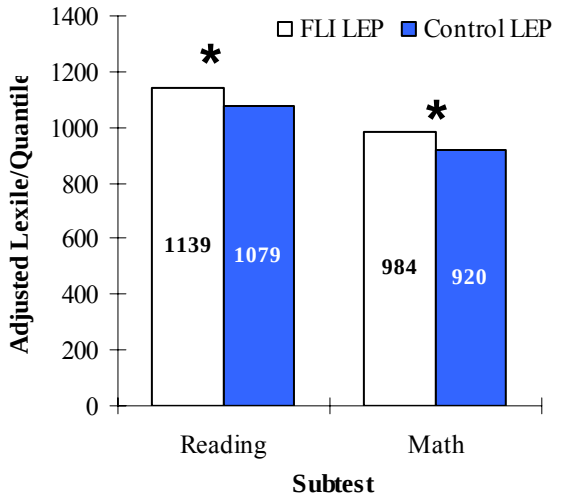

Figure 6. Adjusted mean Lexile (reading) and Quantile (math) scores for FLI LEP- and matched LEP control groups. Asterisk indicates statistically significant differences between groups.

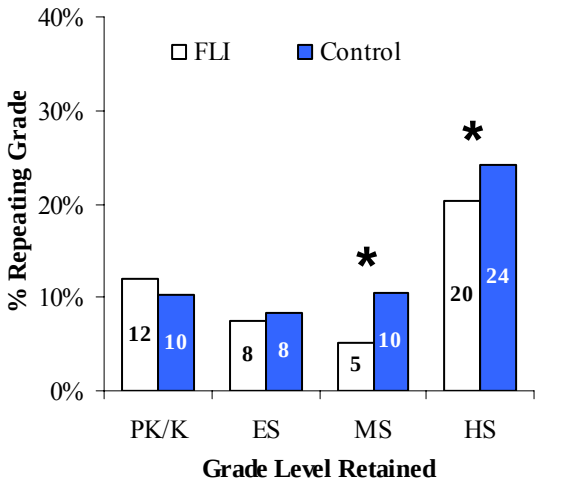

Figure 7. Percentage of FLI and matched control student repeating at least one grade. Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.

This analysis showed that there was a significant effect of group, $F(2, 261) = 7.12$, $p = .001$, Wilks' Lambda = .95. There were significant group effects for both the Lexile measure, $F(1, 262) = 5.77$, $p = .017$, and for the Quantile measure, $F(1, 262) = 13.91$, $p = .001$. In both cases, the FLI group had superior performance, as can be seen in **Figure 5**.

Finally, a similar MANCOVA was conducted including only data from students who were either LEPs when their parents first participated in the FLI, or who were either monitored or former LEPs during the 2008–2009 school year (n = 126 for FLI LEP and N = 96 for non-FLI LEP controls, respectively). The results of this analysis are shown in **Figure 6**.

Results showed a significant overall difference between the FLI LEP and non-FLI LEP control groups, $F(2, 217) = 4.76$, $p = .009$, Willks' Lambda = .93. In addition, the groups differed on both the Lexile measure, $F(1, 218) = 5.76$, $p = .017$, and for the Quantile measure, $F(1, 218) = 8.41$, $p = .004$. As with the overall results, the FLI group performance was superior to that of matched controls.

To summarize, analysis of TAKS data revealed a pattern similar to that seen with the Stanford 10 results. Namely, significant performance advantages versus matched controls for students whose parents participated in the FLI.

Student Retention

Another set of student achievement data is illustrated in **Figure 7**. This illustrates the percentage of FLI students who have repeated at least one grade. Also included are data for the same matched control group included in earlier analyses. Results are shown according to grade level, and do not include data from school years prior to FLI participation.

Statistical analysis showed that across all grade levels, there were significantly fewer retentions for FLI students than there were for those of the matching control group ($\chi^2 = 4.92$, $df = 1$, $p = .027$). Further analyses of each different grade level showed that this effect was largest for students in middle school ($\chi^2 = 11.66$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) and high school ($\chi^2 = 2.84$, $p < .05$, one-tailed test).

Student Dropouts

Dropout data for FLI students and their matched controls were also analyzed, and summary data are shown in **Figure 8** (see p. 14). Results are cumulative for the years through 2007–2008 (the most recent year for which dropout data are available). Data are excluded for those years prior to parental participation in the FLI.

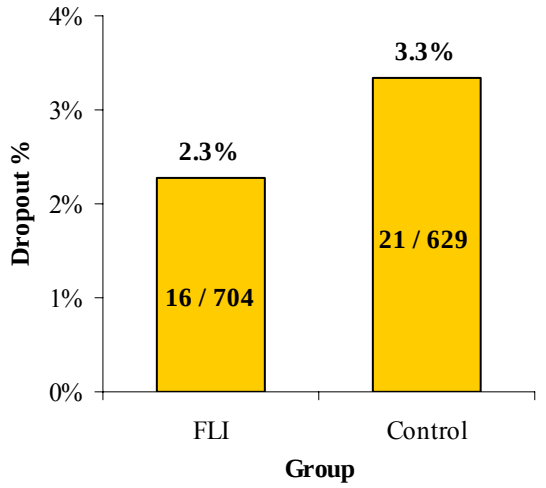

Figure 8. Percentage of FLI and matched control students dropping out (grades 7–12). Data are cumulative through 2007–2008 (actual numbers are inside bars).

There was no statistical difference between the FLI and comparison groups, but as the figure shows, there were both fewer dropouts overall (16 versus 21) and a lower dropout rate (2.3% versus 3.3%), for FLI participants.

Student Discipline

The final set of student performance data is shown in **Figure 9**. This figure shows the total number of discipline incidents reported for students in the FLI group as well as for those in the matched control group. Data from all five student cohorts is included. "Pre" data is from the year prior to FLI participation, while "post" data is from the year in which FLI participation occured. Only students who were enrolled for both the "pre" and "post" school years are included in this analysis.

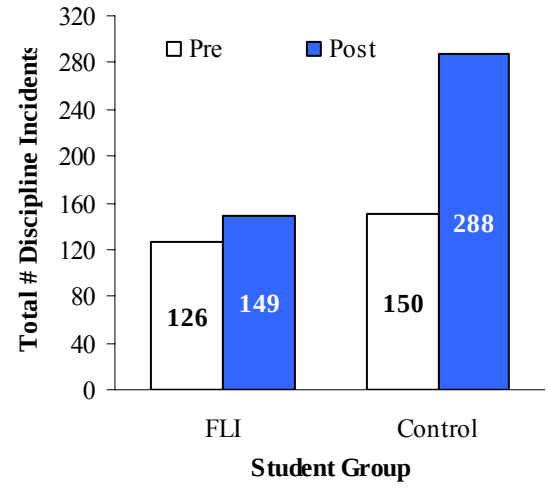

Figure 9. Total number of disciplinary incidents reported before and after FLI participation, for FLI and control groups.

As can be seen, the FLI student group showed only a modest change, with a non-significant increase of 19.4% increase in the total number of discipline incidents. The number of discipline incidents reported for the matched control group increased by 29.7% over the same time period. However, this interaction was not significant (Chi-squared = 0.28, $p > .59$).

Did participating in the FLI change the attitudes, beliefs, or skills of parents and caregivers?

Parent surveys were administered to FLI participants in four of the five years in which the program was offered, to a total of 310 parents. Their responses are summarized here. Demographic statistics for survey participants were provided earlier. Survey items are divided into four different categories; empowerment, benefits, family life, and leadership. The survey questions are provided in **Appendix A**, along with details of responses collected.

Empowerment

Eighty-seven percent of parents reported that they were involved in parent-related activities at their child's school. Most (54.2%) indicated that they had been involved for more than a year, with 27.1% involved between 6 months and a year and 18.7% being involved for less than 6 months.

The most common parent activities reported were acting as a volunteer (72.8%), participating in a parent leadership group (65.3%), or involvement in their Parent Teacher Organization (30.9%). Most parents also reported that they had enrolled in classes (72.8%) to improve their English skills, the most common option being ESL classes (82.5% of those responding).

Benefits

Ninety-eight percent of FLI participants said that they used strategies they had learned from the FLI program in their homes. The most commonly reported strategy used was "communicating with their children daily about their needs and their future" (86.4%). Also mentioned were becoming active participants in their child's homework (70.0%), and organizing an area in their home that their child could use as a work area (61.1%). Only 34.9% mentioned journal writing, another strategy taught during the FLI.

Ninety-four percent said that they had received career guidance through the FLI. Among the most commonly cited examples of career guidance activities were: college field trips, how to transfer college or school credits, and how to apply for and get assistance to enter college. Most also reported receiving some type of personal or family assistance through the program, such as family counseling (87.1%), parenting advice (79.5%), financial information regarding college (70.6%), and career or guidance counseling (70.3%).

Most parents (94.6%) also reported that it was very helpful for them to have the FLI offered in both Spanish and English.

Family Life

Ninety-five percent of parents reported that the FLI had affected how much time they or their spouse spent with their children. Activities commonly listed towards this end were: spending more time together, communicating, listening to their children more, doing some kind of fun activity together, and discussing schoolwork.

In addition, 97.1% of parents reported that the FLI had affected their child's performance at school. Things affected by the FLI included improved grades (79.5%), improved relationships between child and teachers (61.2%), improved relationships with peers (51.6%), and improved school attendance (46.5%).

Leadership

Ninety-two percent of parents reported that their perceptions of school leaders had changed since they started the FLI. Reasons for the change included: having more respect for school leaders, valuing the work of school leaders and teachers, knowing that the school staff are interested in educating their children, and knowing that they were concerned about their kids.

Ninety-three percent of parents also reported that their interactions with school leaders had changed as a result of the FLI. Examples included improved communication, lower feelings of insecurity in meetings with teachers, increased self-confidence, improvements in expressing themselves, and increased mutual respect.

Finally, parents were asked to provide suggestions on how the FLI might be improved. Common suggestions included: involve more schools or expand the program, having night sessions, and having more fathers attend the workshops.

Did the FLI have an impact on the beliefs of children of FLI participants?

Since the children of FLI participants do not attend the FLI sessions, and are distributed across a number of campuses and home addresses across the district, obtaining feedback from them is impractical. Fortunately, there is an option for collecting data on student attitudes and beliefs by utilizing student participants in the SLiCK program.

SLiCK is an acronym for "Student Leadership, Identity, Knowledge, and Culture". SLiCK is a parallel series of leadership workshops for youth (middle and high school students) whose parents participate in the FLI. The SLiCK program consists of a series of five workshops occurring in the fall or spring.

Beginning in spring of 2007, a sixteen-item survey has been administered to student participants in SLiCK towards the end of the program. Students were polled on their attitudes toward school, motivational level, and more generally how they perceived their current school environment. The full set of items used in the survey are presented in **Table 2** (see p. 16). Also included in Table 2 are corresponding data collected in spring 2007 from over 1,700 high school stu-

dents classified as LEP. The latter survey was conducted independently of the FLI and has been utilized for other purposes. It does, however, allow us to compare attitudes of SLiCK participants to those of typical LEP high school students in the district.

A total of 131 student surveys have been collected from SLiCK participants since spring of 2007. Data in Table 2 summarize the results from these 131 students, in terms of the percentage of students agreeing with or disagreeing with each particular survey item (NS indicates "not sure"). Also shown are data for the LEP high school sample from spring 2007 (this survey has only been administered once so far). Comparisons of the proportions agreeing or disagreeing across the two groups were conducted using Chi-square tests. The rightmost column in the table summarizes the probability levels associated with each comparison. Note that all probability levels shown are directional, i.e. they assess the extent to which responses from the SLiCK sample are *more positive* than those from the LEP-HS sample, not simply whether they are *different*.

The student survey has 16 items, and on nine of them there was a significant difference between the percentages of positive and negative

Table 2. FLI SLiCK Student Survey Responses, in Comparison to All District LEPs in High School.

	FLI SLICK *(n = 131)*			**HS LEPs *(n = 1,765)***			
Survey Item	**% Agree**	**% NS**	**% Disagree**	**% Agree**	**% NS**	**% Disagree**	**Sig.**
1. My school explains what students need to do to graduate	82	13	5	79	14	8	ns
2. My math teacher makes the coursework easy enough for me to understand	73	15	11	65	19	16	ns
3. My science teacher makes the coursework easy enough for me to understand	76	15	9	64	22	14	p<.04
4. My social studies teacher makes the coursework easy enough for me to understand	78	18	4	68	21	11	p<.005
5. The teachers are highly motivated to teach their students	80	16	4	61	28	11	p<.003
6. The teachers show interest in their students	78	19	4	64	26	11	p<.006
7. Students having problems with schoolwork can get the help they need	84	11	5	73	19	8	ns
8. Students can get counseling when they need it	73	24	3	63	25	12	p<.002
9. I am motivated to do well in school	89	7	4	81	14	5	ns
10. My friends are motivated to do well in school	60	33	7	53	37	10	ns
11. The school and teachers have high expectations for their students	80	16	4	62	28	10	p<.007
12. My parents are involved with and support my education	84	9	6	77	13	10	ns
13. Things I learned in earlier grades prepared me for work I now have to do in high school	87	11	2	76	15	9	p<.004
14. Responsibilities outside of school affect my ability to do well in school (e.g., working, parenting or family duties)	40	23	37	45	24	32	ns
15. Interesting after-school extracurricular activities are available to me (clubs, sports, etc.)	76	15	9	61	21	17	p<.005
16. There are interesting classes or programs I can participate in	82	15	2	63	24	13	p<.001

responses of SLiCK participants and the district's LEP high school population. In each of these cases, the SLiCK participants demonstrated more positive responses. Two of the items showing more positive responses were items 3 and 4 ("science/social studies teacher makes the coursework easy enough to understand"). A difference was also seen for item 8 ("students can get counseling when they need it").

Additional items showing advantages for SLiCK students were items 5, 6, and 11 (concerning teacher's motivational levels, expectations, and interest in students), as well as item 13 (concerning how prepared they were for the schoolwork they now faced). Finally, SLiCK participants felt that there were more interesting extracurricular activities available (item 15) as well as interesting classes or academic programs they could take part in (item 16). There are certain caveats which must be considered with respect to these results (e.g., the fact that the SLiCK sample included not only high school students but some middle school students as well). Nevertheless, the pattern of results does appear to show a more positive set of attitudes towards school among FLI students who participate in SLiCK.

Conclusions

The goal of the Family Leadership Institute (FLI) is to provide parents and caregivers with family leadership skills in order to support academic achievement and life success for their children. The program is composed of ten modules, taught in a group setting in separate sessions throughout the school year. It has been offered in the district since the 2004–2005 school year. Its two main areas of emphasis are, first, to provide participating parents and caregivers with the skills and inspiration needed to enhance their own personal success and to allow them to serve as role models for their children. Second, the program places strong emphasis on parental engagement, and attempts to increase parents' involvement in their children's education.

The FLI primarily serves Hispanic families, (approximately 99%), and has graduated a total of 544 parents from the time it began in 2004–2005 through the 2008–2009 school year. For these parents, a total of 842 students were identified as being enrolled in HISD. Over two-thirds (70%) were LEP at the time their parents participated in the FLI. Most demographics for the FLI students were similar to those of the district's overall LEP population.

Stanford 10 scores for FLI students were impacted by parental participation in the program. Statistically significant improvements from baseline (pre-FLI) to post-FLI scores were seen for the complete FLI sample on the mathematics and language subtests of the Stanford. Improvement on the reading subtest was only marginally significant. When the FLI-LEP subgroup was examined, all three of these subscales showed superior performance for FLI students. Parallel effects were observed on the English TAKS. In addition, FLI students were significantly less likely than matched controls to have repeated a grade. There were also non-significant trends indicating positive effects on dropout rates as well reported disciplinary incidents, relative to matched controls.

There were 310 parents who completed surveys assessing their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in four categories; empowerment, benefits, family life, and leadership. Across all categories, parents reported high levels of interest in the program, and a belief that it had helped improve their skills in addressing their children's educational needs. Ninety-eight percent of parents said that they had used strategies learned through the FLI program in their home, and 97% believed that it had affected their child's performance at school.

Finally, children of FLI parents who participated in the SLiCK program showed more positive attitudes towards school than did a comparison group of 4,000 district LEP high school students. Overall, the FLI program appeared to have had a positive impact on attitudes and beliefs of both parents and students, and there is evidence for gains in academic performance as well.

Recommendations

1. Since benefits in parental attitudes, as well as in student achievement and discipline, are apparent, the district should investigate all options regarding alternative funding sources for the program. Funding for the FLI program continues to be a challenge, and therefore more stable sources of program support should be sought to sustain the program

2. The FLI program should be expanded and made available to other populations besides the Hispanic parents and students who have been the focus. In particular, offering a version of this program for parents of other ethnic groups should be considered a priority.

3. The district should make some attempt to resolve difficulties with scheduling of the FLI sessions. Currently, the program is held during the daytime only, which is problematic for many parents. Scheduling the program for evenings would raise other issues (e.g., child care, family meals), but these obstacles should be weighed against the possibility that more parents might have the chance to participate in the program if alternative scheduling were available.

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Endnotes

1. The FLI sessions have usually been offered exclusively in Spanish due to the population of parents who have participated. There was one exception when a single African American parent was enrolled; during that year's FLI, sessions were in Spanish and English.

2. Assuming that other conditions were met, in particular that they have a child who is LEP and is enrolled in the district.

3. To participate in the FLI, parents must have at least one child who is enrolled in the district and is considered LEP. However, not all of their children need be LEP. Thus, the full roster of children whose parents have taken part in the FLI includes both LEP and non-LEP students.

4. The SASI database was used in the district through the 2005–2006 school year. With the start of the school year in 2006–2007, it was replaced with the Chancery database system.

5. Lexiles and Quantiles are widely used measures (for detailed information see Lexile.com and Quantile.com). Lexiles indicate reading comprehension and text difficulty, while Quantiles indicate mathematical skills and understanding of mathematical concepts. The TAKS reading/ELA scale has been linked with the Lexile scale, with values ranging from below 200L for emergent readers to above 1700L for advanced readers. For mathematics, the TAKS math scale score has been linked with the Quantile scale, which ranges from below 0Q to above 1400Q. Lexile and Quantile measures represents a student's level on a developmental scale of reading or mathematical ability, but there is no direct correspondence between either measure and grade equivalents. Instead, both Lexiles and Quantiles are expected to increase as a student's overall skills improve.

Appendix A

Questions and responses from parental survey administered to FLI participants.

Survey Item	
Empowerment	
1. Are you involved in parental related activities at your school?	Yes = 257 (87.4%), No = 37 (12.6%)
2. How long have you been involved in parentactivities at your children's school?	6 mo. Or less = 47 (18.7% 6 mo. – 1 yr. = 68 (27.1%) > 1 yr. = 136 (54.2%)
3. What types of parent activities have you been involved with at your children's school?	Parent leadership group = 173 (65.3%) Parent volunteer = 193 (72.8%) Tutoring = 24 (9.1%) PTO = 82 (30.9%) Other = 21 (7.9%)
4. Have you enrolled in classes to improve your English skills?	Yes = 209 (72.8%), No = 78 (27.2%)
5. What classes have youtaken to improve your English skills?	ESL = 188 (82.5%) Adult literacy = 22 (9.6%) Other = 31 (13.6%)
6. Are you currently enrolled in any other type of education program?	Computer class(es) = 63 (36.8%) GED classes = 25 (14.6 %) Vocational classes = 7 (4.1%) College = 3 (1.8%) Other = 86 (50.3%)
Benefits	
7. Have you received career guidance through the FLI?	Yes = 272 (93.8%), No = 18 (6.2%)
8. What type of career guidance have you received?	(open-ended responses)
9. To what extent has it been useful to you to receive the FLI training sessions in Spanish and English?	Not helpful = 0 Somewhat helpful = 16 (5.4%) Very helpful = 281 (94.6%)
10. What types of personal/family assistance have you received through the FLI?	Family counseling = 264 (87.1%) Parenting advice = 241 (79.5%) Financial information for college = 214 (70.6%) Health assistance = 79 (26.1%) Career/guidance counseling = 213 (70.3%)
11. Have you used strategies from the Family Literacy presentation in your home?	Yes = 283 (98.3%), No = 5 (1.7%)
12. What strategies from the Family Literacy presentation have you used in your home?	Organizing your child's work area = 184 (61.1%) Active participants with child's school work = 210 (70.0%) Journal writing = 105 (34.9%) Communicate with child daily about needs, their future = 260 (86.4%)
Family Life	
13. Has the FLI affected how much time you or your spouse spend with your children?	Yes = 273 (95.5%), No = 13 (4.5%)
14. How has it affected time spent with yur children?	(open-ended responses)
15. the FLI affected your children's performance at school?	Yes = 268 (97.1%), No = 8 (2.9%)
16. How has the FLI affected your child's performance at school?	Improved attendance = 127 (46.5%) Improved grades = 217 (79.5%) Improved relationships with peers = 141 (51.6%) Improved relationships with teachers = 167 (61.2%)
Leadership	
17. Have your perceptions of school leaders changed since you began the FLI?	Yes = 253 (92.0%), No = 22 (8.0%)
18. How have your perceptions of school leaders changed?	(open-ended responses)
19. Have your interactions with school leaders changed since you began the FLI?	Yes = 223 (92.5%), No = 18 (7.5%)
20. How have your interactions changed?	(open-ended responses)
21. Suggestions to improve FLI?	(open-ended responses)