

**MEMORANDUM**

October 26, 2017

TO: Michelle Burke  
Director, Family and Community Empowerment

FROM: Carla Stevens  
Assistant Superintendent, Research and Accountability

SUBJECT: **ACADEMIC PARENT-TEACHER TEAMS, 2016–2017**

The Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT) program targeted students in nine Houston Independent School District (HISD) schools during the 2016–2017 school year. A component of the APTT model included group meetings where teachers provided parents strategies to create home-learning environments to support their child. This report examines the relationship between parents' attendance at group meetings and student academic achievement. This report also describes parents' experiences during their participation in the APTT group meetings.

Key findings include:

- The study sample consisted of 5,281 students who attended the nine APTT schools.
- Overall, the majority of students (n = 3,143; 59.5 percent) had a parent who attended at least one APTT group meeting during the school year. However, campus-level results indicated that higher percentages of students' parents did not attend any APTT group meetings during 2016–2017 at seven of nine schools.
- Significant differences in mean scale scores on the Iowa Assessments and Logramos 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Norm Reference Tests (NRT) were observed among kindergarten students who took the tests with respect to parent attendance at APTT group meetings.
- Significant differences in mean scale scores on the 2017 spring STAAR English reading assessment were observed among third-grade students who took the tests with respect to parent attendance at APTT group meetings.

Further distribution of this report is at your discretion. Should you have any further questions, please contact me at 713-556-6700.

 CJS

Attachment

cc: Grenita Lathan  
Mark Smith



# EVALUATION REPORT

BUREAU OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

October 2017

## *The Impact of Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT) on Parental Involvement and HISD Students' Achievement in Language Arts and Reading*

By: Sara Spikes, PhD

During the 2016–2017 school year, the Houston Independent School District (HISD) Family and Community Empowerment (FACE) Department implemented a parent engagement program for 5,281 students enrolled at nine participating campuses. This evaluation examined the relationships between parents' attendance at APTT program group meetings and students' academic achievement during the 2016–2017 school year, and described HISD parents' experiences with the Academic Parent-Teacher Teams [APTT] program. Students' academic achievement in language arts and reading were measured on the Iowa Assessments, Logramos 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Norm Reference Test, and the 2017 spring STAAR reading assessments. Findings indicated that a positive relationship may exist between parent attendance and the academic achievement of young children. Further, parents identified learning about their child's progress and strategies on how to help them at home as the greatest benefits of the program. Areas of need indicated by parents included having the school provide materials and books to support learning at home, offering more APTT meetings at varying times during the year, as well as parents taking more responsibility to support learning at home.

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### Background

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Developed in the Creighton School District in Phoenix, Arizona, the Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT) model is an evidence-based initiative created to transform the ways schools engage families in student learning and achievement. This program equips teachers with the necessary tools and skills to communicate with parents and build meaningful, parent-teacher teams.

During team meetings, parents acquire strategies to create home learning environments that will reinforce and supplement fundamental skills that students' learn in the classroom. Familiarity with students' progress and goal setting allow parents to become effective partners in their child's educational experiences.

### *APTT Program*

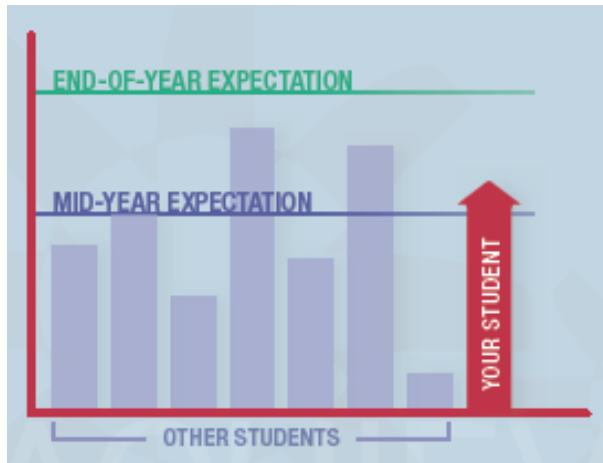
The APTT program includes three components (WestEd, 2017a). One component focuses on the professional development for teachers supported by WestEd APTT facilitators, the Houston Independent School District (HISD) Family and Community Empowerment Department (FACE) and school-level staff. APTT trainings are designed to prepare teachers to

engage in successful partnerships with their students' families.

A second component of the APTT model includes one individual family-teacher conference to be held preferably during the fall semester of a school year. Individual sessions offer opportunities for families and teachers to discuss the unique needs of students—who are also present at the conference—and work collaboratively to create a plan of action to support students' growth and success (WestEd, 2017a).

The third component includes three 75-minute group meetings for parents and caregivers held by the teacher of each class at an APTT campus. "The team meetings give families opportunities to learn and contribute [to skill acquisition] in a collaborative environment" (WestEd, 2017a). It also serves to facilitate a sense of community among families of fellow classmates. Each of the three meetings uses a format that consists of four parts. The first part is the *welcome and icebreaker*, where teachers acknowledge and celebrate students' progress, as well as have parents share strategies that they have used with their child(ren) at home. Next, *foundational skills and data* are shared with parents. Teachers share important content, knowledge, and skills elementary students need to learn at their grade level, how the entire class is doing on these skills, as well as individual student

progress. **Figure 1** is an example of how student progress is presented to parents during the group APTT meetings. Each student is assigned a unique identifier to protect confidentiality of data presented by teachers to attending parents and caregivers.



**Figure 1.** Example of how student progress data were presented to families at each APTT group meeting.

Source. Adapted from *Academic Parent Teachers Teams (APTT): How did the new parent-involvement model impact student achievement in HISD?* (HISD, 2015a); [http://www.houstonisd.org/cms/lib2/TX01001591/Centricity/domain/8269/pedstri ctpgrams/2015\\_APTT\\_%20Report.pdf](http://www.houstonisd.org/cms/lib2/TX01001591/Centricity/domain/8269/pedstri ctpgrams/2015_APTT_%20Report.pdf)

Teachers, then, share *home-learning activities* that families can use with their child(ren) at home. During group meetings held throughout the year, teachers provide parents opportunities to practice these skills to make sure they may successfully implement them at home. Finally, parents complete the *goal-setting* component of the meeting by setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Time-Bound) academic goals for their child to achieve by the next group meeting.

## Review of the Literature

Parental engagement refers to “behaviors that connect with and support children or others in their environment in ways that are interactive, purposeful, and directed toward meaningful learning and affective outcomes” (Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards, & Marvin, 2011, p. 362). ‘Parent engagement’ is an extension of ‘parent involvement’ which Korfmacher, Green, Staerkel, Peterson, Cook, Roggman, Faldowski, and Schiffman (2008) define as “the process of the parent connecting with and using the services of a [school] to the best of the [parent’s] and the [school’s] ability” (p. 173). Definitions for parental engagement in public education systems and federal legislation have expanded overtime to also include ‘family engagement’; where families are viewed

as playing an integral role in assisting their child’s learning (Texas Education Agency[TEA]/Region 16 Education Service Center, n.d.).

The United States Department of Education (ED) identifies parental and family engagement as a major factor associated with students’ academic achievement and that students’ academic success cannot happen without the support of parents (including guardians and caregivers; No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). Synthesis of the research reveals there are various dimensions of parent engagement that are important for children’s growth and success (Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Hill, Castellino, Lansford, Nowlin, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 2004; Sheridan et al., 2011). For example, Hill et al. (2004) operationalized parental involvement as “volunteering at school, parent–teacher contact or communication, involvement in academic-related activities at home, and the quality of parent–teacher relationships” (p. 2). Epstein’s dimensional model identifies the following six types of involvement among school, community, and family partnership programs: (1) parenting; (2) communicating; (3) volunteering; (4) learning at home; (5) decision making; and (6) collaborating with the community. Epstein’s model, which can be seen in **Appendix A**, p. 11, currently serves as the basis for the National Parent-Teacher Association’s (PTA) National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs. Epstein’s model also is referenced by Region 16 Education Service Center (ESC) regarding parent and family engagement.

Sheridan et al. (2011) proposed three dimensions of parental involvement that may also be considered to support children’s success: (1) warmth, sensitivity, and responsiveness; (2) support for a child’s emerging autonomy and self-control; and (3) participation in a child’s learning and literacy. Parents’ and family members’ engagement in a child’s language and literacy development is particularly important as language is the most powerful system through which children access and interpret the world around them (Sheridan et al., 2011). Low-income children, children with disabilities, and at-risk children are the most impacted by parental and family engagement. Disadvantaged children who enter school with deficiencies in language skill development will less likely be able to: (a) obtain strong language and literacy skills, (b) attend school regularly, (c) have strong conceptual and social skills, (d) achieve higher grades, and (e) graduate with a high school diploma to pursue postsecondary programs (Sheridan et al., 2011; WestEd, 2017b). Furthermore, these students may continue to lag both developmentally and academically behind their advantaged, typically developing peers. Given the essential predictive nature language and literacy has on students’ cognitive, communication, and socio-emotional abilities, families and schools need to work together to nurture and develop foundational supports

that are meaningful to the holistic development and academic achievement of children.

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## Purpose

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The intent of this evaluation report was to (a) examine relationships between parents' attendance at APTT program group meetings and students' academic achievement during the 2016–2017 school year, and (b) describe HISD parents' experiences with the Academic Parent-Teacher Teams [APTT] program. The study used a mixed-methods approach to answer the following research questions:

1. How many HISD parents participated in APTT meetings?
2. How did students compare academically based on the number of APTT meetings parents attended in 2016–2017?
3. What did parents indicate as most helpful about the Academic Parent-Teacher Teams group meetings?
4. What did parents indicate as areas of improvement regarding family engagement based on the Academic Parent-Teacher Teams program?

Nine campuses in the Houston Independent School District [HISD] implemented the APTT program. Study results and implications were limited to participating APTT campuses and were therefore not generalizable to non-APTT campuses across the district. Summary of APTT program implementation across the nine campuses was also included in the **Results** section of this report (p. 5)

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## Methods

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### *Sample*

HISD has used the APTT model since 2013–2014 in select schools. Third, fourth, and fifth grades were originally the grades identified by the district as priority for implementing APTT. However, sample data provided for this report indicate that the APTT program expanded its focus to prekindergarten through fifth grades.

During the 2016–2017 school year, the APTT program was implemented at nine campuses in HISD; a retention rate of 90 percent (9 out of 10 campuses) from the previous school year. One elementary school declined to participate this year due to campus staff proactively developing their own family engagement program in conjunction with present initiatives to meet the needs of their school community. A list of campuses who

participated in the APTT program in 2016–2017 can be found in **Appendix B**, p. 12.

For confidentiality purposes, a unique identifier was assigned to each campus for data collection and results interpretation in this report. Students whose parents either attended or did not attend APTT meetings during the 2016–2017 academic year are highlighted throughout this report.

### *Data Collection*

The HISD FACE Department collected and provided the Research and Accountability Department electronic records of qualitative and quantitative data collected from schools that implemented the APTT program during the 2016–2017 school year. Qualitative data analyzed in this report were collected from open-ended responses included on the *APTT Participant Comments Family Survey, 2017*. Data from an electronic student list that included the number of APTT group meetings parent/caregivers attended were also included in this report for each campus.

Academic achievement in language arts for HISD kindergarten students from each of the nine APTT campuses was measured and collected on the Riverside Iowa Assessments and Logramos 3rd Edition Norm Reference Tests (NRT). The Iowa Assessments were designed to provide a thorough measure of a student's progress in skills and standards that are essential to successful learning (Houston Independent School District [HISD], 2015b). While the Logramos 3 parallels the scope and sequence of the Iowa as it measures the academic achievement of Spanish-speaking students, this assessment should not be interpreted as a direct translation of the Iowa.

The academic achievement in reading for third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students who attended APTT campuses was measured and collected through the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness assessment system (STAAR). During spring 2017, HISD students were administered the STAAR reading assessments. A Spanish version was also available for students. Both language versions included accommodations for students with disabilities (SWD) as determined by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committees. **Table 1** shows the minimum scale score benchmarks students needed to achieve in order to meet the 2017 Approaches Grade Level on the first administration of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade STAAR reading assessments.

Table 1. Minimum benchmarks for the 2017 Approaches Grade Level Standard on the STAAR reading assessments by grade level and language version, 2016–2017

Grade	2017 Approaches Grade Level Standards benchmarks	
	English	Spanish
Third	1345	S-1318
Fourth	1434	S-1413
Fifth	1470	S-1461

Source: Texas Education Agency at [http://tea.texas.gov/Student\\_Testing\\_and\\_Accountability/Testing/State\\_of\\_Texas\\_Assessments\\_of\\_Academic\\_Readiness\\_\(STAAR\)/STAAR\\_Raw\\_Score\\_Conversion\\_Tables\\_For\\_2016-2017/](http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Testing/State_of_Texas_Assessments_of_Academic_Readiness_(STAAR)/STAAR_Raw_Score_Conversion_Tables_For_2016-2017/)

### Data Analysis

Frequency analyses were used to determine parent attendance rates at APTT group meetings held at their child’s respective campus during the 2016–2017 school year. APTT campuses typically hosted three meetings during the school year. Descriptive statistical analyses were used to examine associations between students’ performance on the Iowa English Language Arts (ELA), Logramos 3 Language Arts (LA), and 2017 STAAR reading assessments to parent attendance at APTT group meetings, respectively. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and post-hoc analyses were conducted to compare students’ mean scale scores with respect to parent attendance categories to determine if any significant differences were present. Percentages were computed for third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students to determine the portion of students who met the 2017 Approaches Grade Level standard on the 2017 STAAR reading assessments.

Thematic analyses were conducted on the open-ended responses to the *APTT Participant Comments Family Survey, 2017*. Thematic analysis of the open-ended responses to the survey analyzed parents’ perceptions about helpful elements of the APTT program, as well as captured their opinions about areas of improvement to enhance participating schools in HISD. Emerging themes from survey responses are also presented in the Results section of this report.

### Study Limitations

- Because data collection at the campus-level was voluntary and not monitored, inconsistencies in information received from each school limited evaluation efforts of the three components of the APTT model.
- Not all of the prescribed activities indicated by WestEd for the APTT model were implemented. As such, this limited the researcher’s ability to determine *how* and *why* the intervention may or may not have worked and the extent to which student outcomes can be improved (Carroll, Patterson, Wood, Booth,

Rick, & Balain, 2007). Due to concerns regarding implementation fidelity, causal inferences were not made for this report.

## Implementation of the APTT program in HISD, 2016–2017

### Component 1: Teacher Professional Development.

Services provided by WestEd included the provision of facilitators to work side-by-side with schools, district leaders, and teachers to develop capacity for effective APTT implementation (WestEd, 2017a). Because of funding redistributions, WestEd was not contracted as the official vendor for HISD during 2016–2017. As such, participating APTT campuses implemented their own training programs to prepare teachers during the current report year. Because *Component 1* was not implemented in accordance with the WestED APTT model and insufficient data were available for all APTT schools, *Teacher Professional Development* was not evaluated for this report.

### Component 2: Individual Sessions

A second component of the APTT program includes one individual family-teacher conference to be held during the school year. However, documentation of individual family-teacher conferences was voluntary at the campus level. Not all APTT campuses provided information regarding the number of families who attended individual sessions, or collected qualitative information about their experiences and perceptions regarding the individual session. As such, information related to *Individual Sessions* was not evaluated for this report.

### Component 3: Group Meetings

Each school designated an APTT Champion who typically is a non-classroom based staff member (e.g., assistant principal, instructional specialist) to act as a liaison to assist teachers with parent recruitment and preparation for group meetings. Champions’ expected duties included, but were not limited to, communicating with HISD FACE staff and ensuring all teachers were ready for APTT group meetings (e.g., help prepare slide presentations, display student data, student folders, etc.). Sufficient data were collected from each school regarding *Group Meetings*. As such, the association between parents’ attendance at *Group Meetings* and students’ achievement served as the focus of this report.

**Results**

*Parent attendance rates*

Data presented in **Table 2** show the percentage of parents and caregivers who attended zero to three APTT meeting(s). The electronic 2016–2017 APTT Campus Roster list contains 5,281 students enrolled in the nine APTT campuses in the Houston Independent School District. The majority of students who attended APTT campuses (n = 3,143; 59.5 percent) had a parent who participated in at least one APTT meeting. School A had at least 90 percent of parents attend at least one meeting during the 2016–2017 school year (see Table 2). Exceptions to this observation include Schools B, D, and G, where parent attendance rates for at least one meeting were less than 50 percent. In contrast, the majority of parents whose children attended Schools A and E went to at least three group meetings during 2016–2017.

**Table 2. Attendance rates of parents at Academic Parent-Teacher Team meetings by campus and number of meetings, 2016–2017**

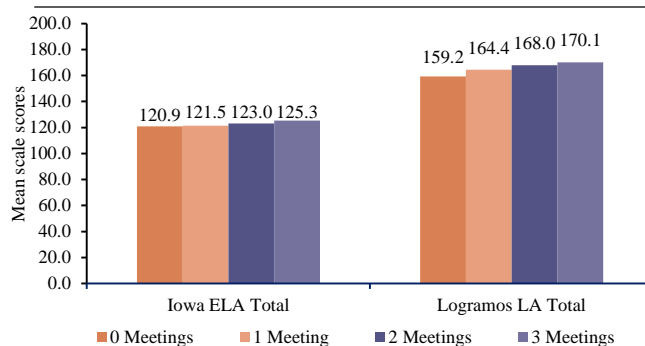
School	# of Students	0 Meetings	1 Meeting	2 Meetings	3 Meetings
All schools	5,281	40.5	21.7	18.2	19.5
School A	641	9.0	17.2	26.2	47.6
School B	345	55.1	24.9	13.3	6.7
School C	1,349	33.1	22.5	18.3	26.2
School D	672	85.3	14.7	0.0	0.0
School E	138	23.9	21.0	21.7	33.3
School F	611	32.9	21.9	23.7	21.4
School G	465	55.1	18.9	12.0	14.0
School H	473	29.2	26.2	21.6	23.0
<sup>1</sup> School I	587	41.4	29.8	28.8	– <sup>1</sup>

Source. 2016–2017 APTT Campus Roster compiled list.

Note. <sup>1</sup> School I held only two APTT group meetings for parents in the current year. As such, an attendance rate could not be computed based on three meetings.

*Mean scale scores of kindergarten students on the Iowa Assessments and Logramos 3 Norm Reference Test*

Results in **Figure 2** show that on average, students whose parents participated in APTT meetings had higher mean scale scores on the Iowa English Language arts (ELA) assessment than that of their peers whose parents did not attend the APTT meetings during 2016–2017 ( $\geq 121.5$  v. 120.9). Students whose parents participated in APTT meetings also outperformed their peers whose parents did not attend meetings on the Logramos language arts (LA) assessments ( $\geq 164.4$  v. 159.2).



**Figure 2. Comparison of kindergarten students’ mean scale scores on the Iowa English language arts and Logramos language arts assessments by parent attendance status, 2016–2017.**

**Table 3. One-way between groups Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) comparing kindergarten students’ Iowa English language arts mean scale scores by number of meetings parents attended, 2016–2017**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	715.2	3	238.4	4.0	.008*
Within Groups	14732.4	249	59.2		
Total	15447.6	252			

\*Statistical significance at the  $p < .01$  level.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) shown in **Table 3** which compared students’ mean scale scores on the Iowa ELA assessments indicated there is a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .01$  level for the four parent attendance groups:  $F(3, 249) = 4.0, p = 0.008$ .

Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test shown in **Table 4** indicated that the mean scale score of students whose parents attended three meetings ( $M = 125.3, SD = 8.2$ ) was significantly different from other peers whose parents did not attend any APTT meetings ( $M = 120.9, SD = 6.2$ ) and parents who only attended one meeting ( $M = 121.5, SD = 8.5$ ).

**Table 4. Significance of mean differences of kindergarten students’ Iowa English language arts mean scale scores by number of meetings parents attended, 2016–2017**

	A <sup>1</sup>	B	Mean Difference (A-B)	Std. Error	Sig.
Tukey HSD	0	1	-.599	1.345	.971
		2	-2.056	1.480	.508
		3	-4.399*	1.432	.013
	1	0	-.599	1.345	.971
		2	-1.457	1.345	.700
		3	-3.800*	1.291	.019
	2	0	2.056	1.480	.508
		1	1.457	1.345	.700
		3	-2.343	1.432	.360
	3	0	4.399*	1.432	.013
		1	3.800*	1.291	.019
		2	2.343	1.432	.360

Note. <sup>1</sup> Mean differences were computed by subtracting the number of meetings in column B from the number of meetings in column A.

\*Statistical significance at the  $p < .05$  level (overall).



Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) shown in **Table 5** which compared the students’ mean scale scores on the Logramos LA assessments indicated there is a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .01$  level in mean scores by number of meetings attended:  $F(3, 271) = 5.6, p = 0.001$ . Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test shown in **Table 6** indicated that the mean score of students whose parents attended no meetings ( $M = 159.2, SD = 12.0$ ) was significantly different from that of their peers whose parents who attended two ( $M = 168.0, SD = 15.5$ ) and three meetings ( $M = 170.1, SD = 17.1$ ), respectively.

**Table 5. One-way between groups Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) comparing kindergarten students’ Logramos language arts mean scale scores by number of meetings parents attended, 2016–2017**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3921.1	3	1307.0	5.6	.001*
Within Groups	63125.8	271	232.9		
Total	67046.9	274			

\*Statistical significance at the  $p < .01$  level.

**Table 6. Significance of mean differences of kindergarten students’ Logramos language arts mean scale scores by number of meetings parents attended, 2016–2017**

	A <sup>1</sup>	B	Mean Difference (A-B)	Std. Error	Sig.
Tukey HSD	0	1	-5.217	3.100	.335
		2	-8.828*	3.139	.027
		3	-10.893*	2.838	.001
	1	0	5.217	3.100	.335
		2	-3.611	2.743	.553
		3	-5.676	2.392	.085
	2	0	8.828*	3.139	.027
		1	3.611	2.743	.553
		3	-2.065	2.442	.833
	3	0	10.893*	2.838	.001
		1	5.676	2.392	.085
		2	2.065	2.442	.833

Note. <sup>1</sup> Mean differences were computed by subtracting the number of meetings in column B from the number of meetings in column A.

\* Statistical significance at the  $p < .05$  level (overall).

*Mean scale scores of third-, fourth-, and fifth- grade students on the STAAR reading assessments*

**Figure 3 to Figure 5** show comparisons of HISD students’ academic achievement on the 2017 STAAR 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading assessments. Comparisons of mean scale scores achieved on the STAAR assessments were analyzed with respect to the number of APTT group meetings parents attended during the 2016–2017 school year, as well as language version of the assessment.

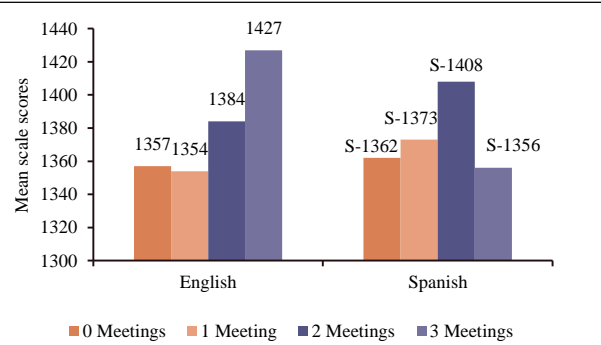


Figure 3. Comparison of third-grade students’ mean scale scores on the 2017 STAAR reading assessments by parent attendance status, 2016–2017.

Results in **Figure 3** show that based on mean scale scores, third-grade students whose parents attended at least two APTT group meetings outperformed their peers whose parents did not on the 2017 STAAR English reading assessment. Third-grade students who took the Spanish version of the assessment experienced a decrease in academic achievement based on mean scale score comparisons between students of parents who attended zero meetings ( $M = S-1362$ ) and three APTT group meetings ( $M = S-1356$ ). Third-grade students who were administered the English version of the test had higher academic achievement when parents attended three meetings. In contrast, students who took the Spanish version of the test had higher academic achievement when parents attended two meetings.

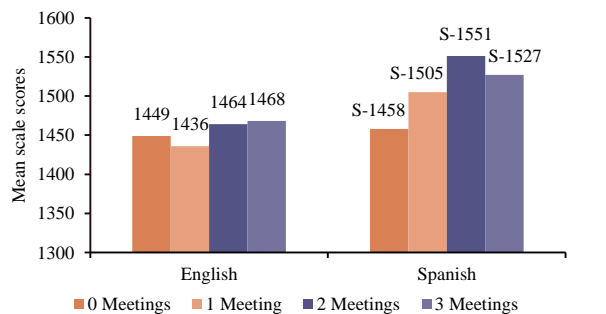


Figure 4. Comparison of fourth-grade students’ mean scale scores on the 2017 STAAR reading assessments by parent attendance status, 2016–2017.

Results in **Figure 4** show that based on mean scale scores, fourth-grade students whose parents attended at least two APTT group meetings outperformed their peers whose parents did not attend the APTT meetings on the 2017 STAAR English and Spanish reading assessments. Fourth-grade students who were administered the English version of the test had higher academic achievement when parents attended three APTT group meetings, while students who took the Spanish version of the test had higher academic achievement when parents attended two meetings.

Results in Figure 5 show that on average, students whose parents participated in three APTT meetings had higher mean scale scores on the fifth-grade 2017 STAAR reading assessments than that of their peers whose parents/caregivers did not attend any APTT meeting (1497 v. 1531). The fifth-grade students of parents who did not attend any APTT group meetings during 2016–2017 school year either obtained similar performance or higher performance on the STAAR reading assessments than students whose parents attended two and one meeting(s), respectively.

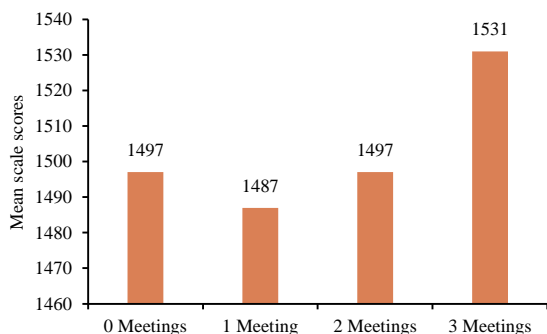


Figure 5. Comparison of fifth-grade students mean scale scores on the 2017 STAAR reading assessments by parent attendance status, 2016–2017.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to determine if there were significant differences in their mean scale scores based on parent attendance at APTT group meetings. Language version of assessments was also taken into account for these analyses. Analyses indicated that among students who were administered the 2017 STAAR reading assessments, a significant difference was observed among third-grade students who took the STAAR English reading assessment at the  $p < .01$ :  $F(3, 444) = 4.4, p = 0.005$  (see **Table 7**). Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test shown in **Table 8** indicated that the mean score for parents who attended three meetings ( $M = 1427, SD = 159.2$ ) was significantly different from parents who did not attend any APTT meetings ( $M = 1357, SD = 158.5$ ) and parents who only attended one meeting ( $M = 1354, SD = 132.6$ ). No further significant difference in achievement was observed among fourth and fifth graders.

Table 7. One-way between groups Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) comparing third-grade students' 2017 STAAR English reading mean scale scores by number of meetings parents attended, 2016–2017

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	306028.7	3	102009.6	4.371	.005*
Within Groups	10291141.2	441	23335.9		
Total	10597169.9	444			

Table 8. Significance of mean differences of third-grade students' STAAR English reading mean scale scores by number of meetings parents attended, 2016–2017

	A <sup>1</sup>	B	Mean Difference (A-B)	Std. Error	Sig.
Tukey HSD	0	1	3.085	18.048	.998
		2	-27.390	20.995	.560
		3	-70.041*	21.408	.006
	1	0	3.085	18.048	.998
		2	-30.475	22.522	.530
		3	-73.126*	22.908	.008
	2	0	27.390	20.995	.560
		1	30.475	22.522	.530
		3	-42.651	25.295	.332
	3	0	70.041*	21.408	.006
		1	73.126*	22.908	.008
		2	42.651	25.295	.332

Note. <sup>1</sup> Mean differences were computed by subtracting the number of meetings in column B from the number of meetings in column A.  
\* Statistical significance at the  $p < .01$  level (overall).

*Percent of third-, fourth- and fifth-grade students who met 2017 Approaches Grade Level standards on the STAAR reading assessments*

**Figure 6** through **Figure 8** show comparisons of the passing rates of students who met the 2017 Approaches Grade Level standard on the third- through fifth-grade 2017 STAAR reading assessments. Passing rates were measured in percentages. Percentages combine the outcomes from the English and Spanish language versions of the STAAR reading assessment. **Table 9** (p. 8) presents the gap analyses that were conducted to determine percentage-point differences between students whose parents attended either three or zero APTT meetings during 2016–2017 for each campus. Data for School I was not available.

Results in Figure 6 (p. 8) show that third-grade students whose parents attended three meetings (72%) met the 2017 Approaches Grade Level standard on the STAAR reading assessment at a higher rate than their peers whose parents attended two or less meetings. The passing rates for third-grade students whose parents attended three APTT meetings exceeded students whose parents did not attend any meetings by seventeen percentage points (see Table 9, p. 8).

**Figure 7** (p. 8) shows results for fourth-grade HISD students enrolled at an APTT campus. Results indicate that fourth-grade students whose parents attended at least two meetings (two meetings, 62%; three meetings, 61%) met the 2017 Approaches Grade Level standard on the STAAR reading assessment at a higher rate than their peers who attended  $\leq 1$  meeting. The passing rates for fourth-grade students whose parents attended three APTT meetings exceeded students whose parents did not attend any meetings by six percentage points (see Table 9, p. 8).



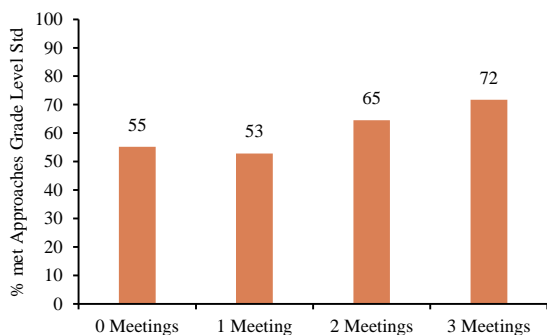


Figure 6. Percentage of third-grade students at APTT schools who met the 2017 STAAR reading Approaches Grade Level Standards by parent attendance status, 2016–2017 (English and Spanish combined).

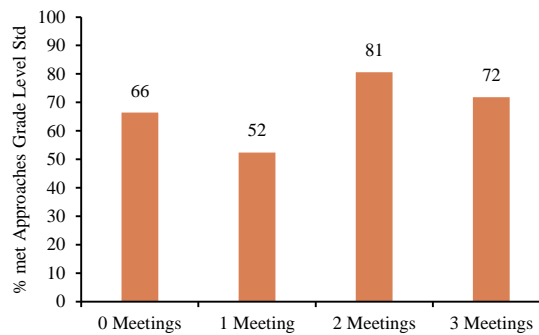


Figure 8. Percentage of fifth-grade students at APTT schools who met the 2017 STAAR reading Approaches Grade Level Standards by parent attendance status, 2016–2017 (English only).

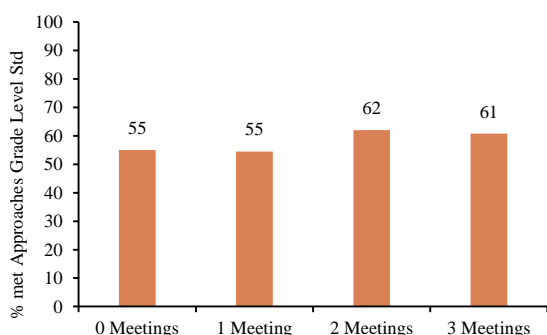


Figure 7. Percentage of fourth-grade students at APTT schools who met the 2017 STAAR reading Approaches Grade Level Standards by parent attendance status, 2016–2017 (English and Spanish combined).

Table 9. Attendance of parents at Academic Parent-Teacher Team meetings by campus, 2016–2017 (English and Spanish combined)				
Grade level	# of students tested	2017 STAAR Reading % met Approaches Grade Level Standard		
		0 Meetings	3 Meetings	Percentage Point Gap
Third grade	706	55	72	+17
Fourth grade	631	55	61	+6
Fifth grade	591	66	72	+6

*Elements of the APTT group meetings that parents and caregivers identified as most helpful*

Seven of the nine APTT schools collected parents’ and caregivers’ feedback regarding elements they identified as most helpful in the group meetings. Similar to findings presented in the *Title I, Part A Parent Involvement, 2015–2016* report, (2016, p. 9), data collected from 446 responses to the voluntary *APTT Participant Comments Family Survey, 2017* primarily indicated that parents felt the APTT meetings helped them to understand their *child’s progress* and learn about *strategies and techniques to help their child at home*. Other elements of the APTT group meetings that were less reported included parents’ *awareness of the curriculum* and *grade-level expectations* for their child. Additionally, parents and caregivers also indicated that understanding their child’s: (a) learning style(s), (b) behavior and conduct, and (c) the learning experiences they have in the classroom were also helpful to supporting them at home. Parents commented on the free childcare and snacks that were provided to their kids so that they could attend the group meetings, as well as expressed their appreciation for the teachers’ efforts at the APTT group meetings.

Results shown in Figure 8 indicate that fifth-grade students whose parents attended at least two meetings (two meetings, 81%; three meetings, 72%) met the 2017 Approaches Grade Level standard on the STAAR reading assessment at a higher proportion than their peers who attended  $\leq 1$  meeting. The passing rates for fifth-grade students whose parents attended three APTT meetings exceeded students whose parents did not attend any meetings by six percentage points (see Table 9).

Results in Table 9 show that the achievement gap for the 2017 Approaches Grade Level standard on the STAAR reading assessment was in favor of 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students whose parents attended three APTT group meetings versus students whose parents did not attend any meetings in 2016–2017. The gap was the widest for third grade students (+17 percentage points), decreasing by the time they reached 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades (6 percentage points each).

*Elements of the APTT group meeting that parents and caregivers identified as in need of improvement in relation to family engagement*

Thematic analysis of parent and caregiver responses (n= 303) that focused on areas of need for improvement relative to family engagement resulted in the emergence of three main categories: (1) *parent and family engagement*, (2) *APTT group meetings*, and (3) *supportive learning materials*. Improvements in *parent and family engagement* centered on responders' perspectives that parents need to take more responsibility for supporting their child's learning at home. 'Spend more time with them and being dedicated', 'Helping my [child] with homework', and 'More practice as a family, so my [child] can learn more' are a few comments that reflect the general sentiment regarding *parent and family engagement*.

Recommendations made by responders regarding *APTT group meetings* specifically indicated the need for the program to: (a) increase parental awareness about the program and attendance rates at meetings, (b) increase the number of meetings held throughout the year, (c) change the time APTT meetings are held. Increasing the number of meetings per year was also linked to receiving timely communication and updates about their child's progress at school. Regarding content and format of group meetings, responses typically indicated that parents and caregivers were pleased with the *APTT group meetings*.

*Supportive learning materials* was also a need to be met at APTT schools. Specifically, parents indicated the need for materials, activities, and books to be sent home that support learning at school. Similar comments indicated that these needs existed at the classroom level and school level at some APTT campuses.

Other recommendations for family engagement that were made included *providing online demonstrations of learning techniques and strategies to support learning at home*, *providing an interpreter at the meetings*, and *improving the relationships among teachers, parents, and students*.

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## Conclusions

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The purpose of this study was to examine relationships among parents' attendance at Academic Parent Teacher Teams group meetings and students' academic achievement during the 2016–2017 school year. Over the past three years, implementation of the APTT program has expanded to target HISD students enrolled in prekindergarten through fifth grades. Because insufficient information was available in the areas of *Teachers Professional Development* and *Individual Sessions* for all nine participating HISD schools,

examining the association between parents' attendance at *Group Meetings* and students' achievement served as the focus of this report.

The 2016–2017 implementation of APTT group meetings indicated that a significant, positive association may exist between the number of group meetings parents and caregivers attended and young children's academic achievement in language arts on the Iowa Assessments and Logramos 3 tests. These data support areas outlined in Sheridan et al. (2011) and Epstein's (2002) models that indicate *participation in child's learning and literacy*, *learning at home*, and *collaborating with the community* are key dimensions in parent involvement.

Third- and fourth-grade students whose parents attended two APTT group meetings were more likely than their peers whose parents attended zero or one meeting to meet the Approaches Grade Level standards on the 2017 STAAR reading assessments. Decreases in mean scale scores on the Spanish version of the STAAR for students of parents who attended two and three meetings, respectively, may indicate a decrease in available resources to support the facilitation of the third group meeting. Ensuring that teachers receive sufficient training to conduct the third group meeting will be a focus of the FACE department for the 2017–2018 school year. Further evidence is needed to determine if these trends will persist in the next school year.

Significant differences among mean scale scores occurred among third graders who were administered the 2017 STAAR English reading assessment. Results imply that parents who attended meetings in previous years, may have felt they had acquired enough strategies to support their child's learning by the time they entered fourth and fifth grades. Differences in analytic methods may also account for the divergence in significance between findings presented in the current and reports written in previous years. However, because of limitations posed on implementation fidelity of the APTT model, sufficient information was not available to determine the effect this model had on the academic outcomes of HISD students who attended participating schools. As such, causal models were not used for this study.

Qualitative analysis indicated congruence between parents' experiences at the APTT group meetings, and target areas of the model specific to communicating *foundational skills and data* and providing *home-learning activities* to support learners at home. Responders who identified parents taking on more responsibility for their child's learning at home was also observed as a positive outcome for the program. Increased awareness and availability of the program at respective campuses continues to be an ongoing need identified by parents. District and school staff should also focus on making sure that they provide parents and students learning materials from both APTT group

meetings and classes to ensure children have equitable access to resources to support their learning once they leave the school environment.

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## Appendix A

### THE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Epstein's Six Types of Involvement

 <p>Type 1</p>	<p><b>Parenting:</b> Assist families in understanding child and adolescent development and in setting home conditions that support children as students at each grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.</p>
 <p>Type 2</p>	<p><b>Communicating:</b> Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.</p>
 <p>Type 3</p>	<p><b>Volunteering:</b> Improve recruitment, training, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school and in other locations to support students and school programs.</p>
 <p>Type 4</p>	<p><b>Learning at Home:</b> Involve families with their children in learning at home, including homework, other curriculum-related activities, and individual course and program decisions.</p>
 <p>Type 5</p>	<p><b>Decision Making:</b> Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through the PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, action teams, and other parent organizations.</p>
 <p>Type 6</p>	<p><b>Collaborating With the Community:</b> Coordinate community resources and services for students, families, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community.</p>

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## **Appendix B**

Charles Eliot Elementary School  
Fonwood Early Childhood Center  
Mario Gallegos Elementary School  
John F. Kennedy Elementary School  
James Mitchell Elementary School  
Piney Point Elementary School  
Sidney Sherman Elementary School  
Felix Tijerina Elementary School  
Wharton K-8 Dual Language Academy