



Evaluation Report for 2014-2015 School Year Executive Summary

Introduction

School2Home is an innovative statewide program designed to close both the Achievement Gap and the Digital Divide by integrating the use of computing and broadband technologies into teaching and learning at low-performing middle schools throughout California. By focusing on these schools, School2Home reaches students who are statistically less likely to perform well in school and more likely to lack access to digital tools than their peers in high-performing schools. School2Home is sponsored and managed by the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) and is implemented in collaboration with local district and school leadership. School2Home provides a systemic approach to improve education that builds on principal leadership with teacher professional development to infuse technology into the classroom as well as increase parent engagement in low-income communities where parents often do not have the ability to be involved in the school-life of their children and do not have high-speed Internet access at home.

Problem and Significance

Research has shown that increased parent involvement is largely a function of the extent to which administrators and teachers know how to involve parents and how to provide families with easy access to student information with an improved understanding about instruction and assessment. Therefore, effective family and community engagement requires a two-pronged approach to partnering with districts and schools: (a) training and coaching of principals and teachers to involve parents effectively and consistently in supporting student learning and engagement in school; and (b) direct digital literacy training with follow-up for parents on how to collaborate with teachers, find instructionally-relevant online resources, access student assessment information, and utilize technology applications in support of their child's learning.

Approach and Goals

School2Home is the only initiative in California with a major focus on such extensive parent engagement coupled to the use of educational technology to turn around low-performing schools. An exceptional aspect of School2Home is the focus on using current and emerging technology as a tool for augmenting and enabling increased parent involvement with their child's education. Linking parent and community engagement with technology tools in the learning environment is an essential strategy for turning around low-performing schools. The primary goals are:

- To increase student achievement at low-performing middle schools in California to help close the Achievement Gap.
- To increase the adoption of computing skills and broadband service by the families of underserved middle school students to help close the Digital Divide.

Significant Results to Date

School2Home implementation expanded to 4 new sites for a total of 11 schools in 2014-2015: 4 schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD); 2 schools in Oakland Unified School District (OUSD); 3 schools in Riverside Unified School District (RUSD); 1 in West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) and 1 in Winters Joint Unified School District (WJUSD). Among the 11 schools, approximately 260 teachers and 5,500 students and families participated. The schools serve students of families with high levels of poverty and from diverse ethnic populations. All schools have been in Program Improvement status for at least 5 years.

Expanded Use of Technology by Students for Learning

Responses from 2,228 students to the 2015 annual School2Home Student Survey showed the following improvements since 2011-2012:

- 85% increased computer and Internet access at home to support learning, up from 73%.
- 84% use the technology for writing assignments, up from 60%.
- 90% access the Internet for research related to schoolwork, up from 68%.

Increased Home Access to the Internet

Responses to the annual School2Home Parent Survey (362 English and 1,896 Spanish) showed:

- School2Home is narrowing the gap for home Internet access between English and Spanish-speaking families, from 36 percentage points in 2012 down to 7 percentage points in 2015.
- Spanish-speaking parents showed a 75% increase in home broadband adoption since 2012.
- Broadband adoption grew for English-speaking families from 83% to 91% (8-point increase) and for Spanish-speaking families from 71% to 84% (7-point increase) over last year.
- 90% of the Spanish-speaking parents and 75% of English-speaking parents have increased communication about student performance and supporting their child's learning at home.
- 93% of Spanish-speaking parents (82% English-speaking parents) are now able to and frequently use technology to access their child's grades, test results and attendance.

Improved Student Performance

- Stevenson (LAUSD) has out-performed similar schools for 2 years and has made greater gains than similar schools since 2012. Stevenson School2Home students consistently out-perform non-participating students on reading Lexile scores.
- University Heights (RUSD) baseline CAASPP scores exceed the county and statewide scores for clear, purposeful writing and are comparable for effective communication skills. In 2012, it was underperforming comparable schools in the district, the county and state.
- Chemawa and Central (RUSD) baseline CAASPP scores exceed demographically-similar schools in the county and the state.

School administrators noticed differences in students. For example, *"The students were far more comfortable with SBAC. This year, they are pretty serious about how they are taking the test."* A principal whose school launched School2Home this year stated, *"We are doing this to give our kids an advantage they would not have had. That's the payoff."* A teacher observed, *"School2Home has helped our school implement technology into its curriculum in a more organized and productive manner."* And another teacher observed, *"Parents who received S2H training feel empowered to guide their children effectively about digital citizenship and safety."*

School2Home is a Cost-Effective Investment

Implementation costs for School2Home are about \$1,000 per student. This is in contrast to other middle school turn-around programs funded through federal School Improvement Grants (SIG) which average \$1,710 per student (Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences). Once School2Home is fully implemented in all grades in a school and the culture of using technology is "rooted" to engage parents and drive improvement in academic achievement, School2Home is sustainable from existing school resources. Further, this true partnership with local districts and schools to optimize parent engagement results in the computing devices being used daily in classrooms by teachers and students, valued by families, and conscientiously cared for to minimize loss (usually no more than for actual textbooks). Thus, School2Home is a very cost-effective investment to help close both the Achievement Gap and Digital Divide.

School2Home Supports Implementation of Common Core Standards

California's implementation of the Common Core Standards includes participation in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), a national initiative involving students taking academic assessments online with results available to parents. This requires that students have access to computing devices and that all schools (and all classrooms) are broadband-enabled with the kind of framework provided by School2Home. An important opportunity as a result of SBAC is teaching parents how to get to and interpret student assessment data, grades, assignments, and other information about their child online. School2Home is the platform for accomplishing that objective. Finally, the rapid increase in parent and child access to and use of mobile technologies connected to the Internet adds more opportunities for involvement of parents in schools with the support and training offered by CETF and School2Home.

School2Home evaluation is conducted by independent professional evaluators Education Support Systems. The complete Evaluation Report is available upon request and online (www.School2Home).

