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# BOOMTOWN KIDS

**HARNESSING ENERGY AND ALIGNING  
RESOURCES FOR DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS  
IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

OCTOBER 2015

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## About the Author



**Conor P. Williams, PhD** is founder of the Dual Language Learners National Work Group and a senior researcher in the Early Education Initiative at New America. His work addresses educational equity, bilingual education, and school choice. Before joining New America, he taught first grade in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. His work has appeared in *The Washington Post*, *The New Republic*, *The Daily Beast*, *The Atlantic*, *Talking Points Memo*, and elsewhere.

## About New America

New America is dedicated to the renewal of American politics, prosperity, and purpose in the Digital Age. We carry out our mission as a nonprofit civic enterprise: an intellectual venture capital fund, think tank, technology laboratory, public forum, and media platform. Our hallmarks are big ideas, impartial analysis, pragmatic policy solutions, technological innovation, next generation politics, and creative engagement with broad audiences.

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## Acknowledgments

This research took place over nine months, and benefited from the advice, input, and wisdom of many, many individuals. New America colleagues Lisa Guernsey, Laura Bornfreund, Amaya Garcia, Ruby Takanishi, Isabella Sanchez, Janie Tankard Carnock, and Clare McCann provided considerable expert and editorial insight. Laurie Posner, Veronica Alvarez, and María Fernandez went out of their way to help me make connections in the San Antonio community. Many others helped with the project: Matthew Weyer, Sabrina Detlef, Rey Saldaña, Jorge Solis, Kathy Bruck, Linda Espinoza, Alicia Alvarez-Calderón, Maribel Duran, Linda Hamilton, Ana Acevedo, Linda Espinosa, Carol Hammer, Billy Navin, Harriett Romo, and a number of friendly experts at the Eastside Promise Neighborhood and the Intercultural Development Research Association. Finally, and most importantly, as part of my research, I visited dozens of San Antonio classrooms across nine different campuses in three area school districts—and learned an enormous amount by watching teachers work.

We would like to thank the [Foundation for Childhood Development](#) for their generous support of this work. The views expressed in this report are those of its authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Foundation for Childhood Development, its officers, or employees.

The New America Education Policy Program's work is made possible through generous grants from the [Alliance for Early Success](#); the [Foundation for Child Development](#); the [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#); the [Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund](#); the [Heising-Simons Foundation](#); the [William and Flora Hewlett Foundation](#); the [Joyce Foundation](#); the [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#); the [Kresge Foundation](#); [Lumina Foundation](#); the [McKnight Foundation](#); the [Charles Stewart Mott Foundation](#); the [David and Lucile Packard Foundation](#); the [J.B. & M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation](#); the [Smith Richardson Foundation](#); the [W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation](#); and the [Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation](#).

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## Series Introduction for the District Profiles

The demographics of American schools have been changing rapidly for some years now. One of the most telling changes in the last decade has been the increase in ethnic and linguistic diversity in communities that have not historically had large numbers of recent immigrants. None of the five counties with the fastest growth in Hispanic residents (from 2000 to 2011) are in areas with traditionally high numbers of immigrants: Luzerne County (PA), Sevier County (TN), Frederick County (VA), Paulding County (GA), and Henry County (GA).<sup>1</sup> While the number of dual language learners enrolled in U.S. schools grew by 18 percent from the 2000–2001 school year to the 2010–2011 school year, it grew by 610 percent in South Carolina, 306 percent in Kentucky, 255 percent in Nevada, and 230 percent in Delaware. The English language learner populations in Arkansas, Kansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Virginia, and North Carolina more than doubled over the same period.<sup>2</sup>

Educators and policymakers in these states—and many others—are grappling with this shift in a variety of ways. Few of them have experience supporting the linguistic and academic growth of linguistically diverse students. Some are exploring ways to use their investments in high-quality pre-K to support students who speak a language other than English at home. Others are wondering how they can prepare and support teachers working with these students. Still others are considering ways to assist language learners' families through wraparound services and community investments. Most are trying to find ways to serve these students without segregating them from the rigor of mainstream academic instruction.

Fortunately, communities wrestling with new linguistic diversity in their schools do not have to invent their own best practices from scratch. There are districts across the country—frontiers of integration—with a long history of supporting language learners in their schools. Some of these districts have already established education programs and services that help language learners and their families. The challenge, then, is to share institutional expertise and wisdom from places with experience serving these students well. This is the first in a series of district profiles from New America's Dual Language Learners National Work Group seeking to capture this knowledge and make it accessible to educators and policymakers across the country.

### **How New America Defines “Dual Language Learners” (DLLs)**

A dual language learner (DLL) is a child between the ages of zero and eight years old who is in the process of learning English in addition to his or her home language[s]. This student may or may not be enrolled in a school where instruction is conducted in both languages.

The profiles in this series use DLL to refer to these students for two reasons: 1) our research is focused on children in the PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> grades, where this term is generally the most accurate; and 2) to avoid confusion caused by labeling children based on various words associated with specific interventions or strategies (such as “dual-immersion”) rather than on their language status.

# Reforming Early Education, Birth Through Third Grade

## State and Local Reports

From 2015 through 2016, the Early Education Initiative will be producing a series of reports from states and localities across the United States to provide an inside look at efforts to support children's learning from infancy and extending into the early grades. Access to the reports is available through Atlas ([atlas.newamerica.org](http://atlas.newamerica.org)), the data and analysis tool designed for New America's Education Policy Program. Reports are forthcoming, or have already been published, in the following geographic areas.

A report that provides analysis and ranks all 50 states and Washington, DC on progress in advancing early education policies will be published in November 2015.

### The David Douglas School District in Portland, OR

Focused on supporting dual language learners' linguistic and academic development.



### The San Francisco Unified School District

Focused on aligning teaching and learning across grade levels.



### California

Focused on improving the workforce.

## Massachusetts

Focused on helping children achieve success in literacy.



## Minnesota

Focused on helping children achieve success in literacy.



## Washington, DC

Focused on supporting dual language learners' linguistic and academic development.

## San Antonio, TX

Focused on supporting dual language learners' linguistic and academic development.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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School districts across the United States are finding their student enrollments more linguistically diverse than ever before. Even Texas' language demographics appear to be changing. According to San Antonio's Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, from the 2001–02 to the 2011–12 school years, “the number of students identified as [dual language learners] enrolled in Texas public schools grew by 37.2 percent.”<sup>3</sup>

But community multilingualism has long been the norm in San Antonio, Texas. Roughly 570,000 San Antonians speak a language other than English at home, and nearly 525,000 speak Spanish.<sup>4</sup> In other words, about 42 percent of the city's nearly 1.3 million residents—and around 30 percent of school-aged children—speak Spanish at home. To put this in perspective: three times as many children speak Spanish at home in San Antonio (~79,000) as in the entire state of Kentucky (~25,000).<sup>5</sup>

San Antonio educators and policymakers treat dual language learners (DLLs) as valuable resources and the city is doing more than almost any other large city to promote these students' academic and linguistic development. This shows up in three primary ways:

1. the city is investing heavily in access to high-quality pre-K through its new PreK4SA program;
2. area school districts are focusing on DLLs' home languages by updating their instructional models; and
3. a variety of organizations are coordinating with area schools to develop dual-generation and family engagement programs that support DLLs and their families.

First, San Antonio's new pre-K program—PreK4SA—has attracted national attention. The initiative opened four early education centers in the city; each serves students from a variety of school districts, offers professional development to help align those districts' PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> grade efforts, and provides family supports and training sessions. This is good news for students who do not speak English at home, given growing research suggesting that pre-K can be particularly beneficial for them.<sup>6</sup>

Second, while Texas has required elementary schools to provide bilingual education for its language learners since the 1980s, San Antonio districts are exploring ways to improve and expand their instructional models in the PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> grades and beyond.<sup>7</sup> For instance, Harlandale Independent School District is converting its transitional bilingual classrooms into dual immersion classrooms. And many area districts are building new teacher preparation pipelines to help develop a more linguistically diverse education workforce. Recent studies corroborate a longstanding body of research suggesting that these intentional efforts to integrate DLLs' home languages—and the students themselves—into rigorous, mainstream academic settings are the best possible way to support their linguistic and academic growth.<sup>8</sup>

Third, San Antonio's various family engagement, parent outreach, and “dual-generation” anti-poverty programs are powerful strategies for supporting DLLs' success and can maximize the effectiveness of early education programs for these students.<sup>9</sup> Dual language learners, children of immigrants, and Hispanic children (overlapping, but not identical groups) often have higher child poverty rates and enroll in center-based early education programs at lower rates than other groups.<sup>10</sup> San Antonio's Eastside Promise Neighborhood, PreK4SA parenting classes, and other programs all connect with families as part of the effort to help DLLs' linguistic and academic development.

All three of these elements—quality early education investments, strong home language instruction in schools, and comprehensive family supports—are popular areas for policy exploration in communities all over the U.S. San Antonio has relatively well-established programs in each area, and there are ongoing efforts to integrate them to increase their effects. This paper explores some of San Antonio's programs for supporting DLLs—and identifies key lessons from those programs.

With so much happening across so many sectors and levels of government, what lessons does the city's experience offer to other communities in search ways to better serve their DLLs?



**Lesson #1: Invest thoughtfully in early education access and quality across the PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> grades.**

San Antonio designed and implemented its new PreK4SA program carefully. DLLs in PreK4SA have ample opportunities to speak and develop the oral language skills they need to develop linguistically, academically, and socially. Research suggests that oral language development—in home languages and English—is a key foundation for reaching academic English proficiency.

But strong program design and good pedagogical choices are only as good as the people working with them on a daily basis, which is why PreK4SA's program relies on highly-trained teachers who receive a great deal of support and flexibility in their classrooms.

*Upshot: Districts who want to support DLLs by expanding their investments in early education must build these new programs at a manageable pace, with an emphasis on hiring appropriately-trained early educators to use developmentally-appropriate curricula.*

**Lesson #2: Families are a critically important educational resource for DLLs.**

San Antonio's many family engagement programs cover considerable ground, from trainings that help parents support their children's development to programs that help families advance professionally to social services that address home-based issues that interfere with academic progress. Effective implementation of these programs requires that administrators and educators truly engage with the communities they serve to determine what DLLs' families need.

*Upshot: Districts who want to support DLLs at school need to support their families. And there is no better way to determine what families need than by asking them—and involving them in drafting policies that can meet those needs.*

**Lesson #3: Coordination across sectors and funding streams is as powerful as it is difficult.**

The community of San Antonio and its leaders developed PreK4SA through the SA2020 planning process, which included considerable community input, the drafting of a comprehensive vision for improving the city, and a framework for measuring progress.

*Upshot: Not all problems are best solved within existing silos, and DLLs have unique academic and developmental needs. Districts seeking to better support them should look for partners and funds within educational institutions and beyond.*

**Lesson #4: Data are key to setting goals and faithfully implementing reforms.**

In San Antonio, the EPN, PreK4SA, school districts, administrators, and teachers across the city are all intentionally, carefully using data to validate their work—and refine it when necessary. This is rare. It is easy to diagnose a problem and prescribe “research-based solutions,” so long as both remain suitably abstract. But that is not usually enough to make a difference for students—specificity matters. Any reform's success depends upon several factors:

1. clearly-defined targets with public input and buy-in
2. comprehensive gathering—and appropriate publication of—data on new initiatives
3. consideration of what parts of new programs are working and what needs adjustment

*Upshot: Districts seeking to improve how they serve DLLs need to articulate their goals in clear, measurable terms—and then hold themselves accountable for their progress towards them.*

**Lesson #5: Home language instruction helps DLLs' long-term success, so bilingual educators are key.**

Local districts are working to convert and improve their bilingual education models into dual immersion programs. These models provide deeper and longer support for DLLs' home languages. But this additional commitment to bilingualism is only as good as the teachers these districts can hire.

*Upshot: Districts seeking to shift to a dual immersion model need to begin with a human capital strategy.*

# INTRODUCTION

Given the city's proximity to the United States-Mexico border, it may seem obvious that San Antonio, Texas has a long multilingual past. And yet, this is hardly the whole story. In *A Journey Through Texas*, American Frederick Law Olmsted recorded his surprise to find a vibrant German-language newspaper in the area, the *San Antonio Zeitung*. Olmsted found the city fascinating in 1854:

We have no city, except, perhaps, New Orleans, that can vie, in point of the picturesque interest that attaches to odd and antiquated foreignness, with San Antonio. Its jumble of races, costumes, languages and buildings; its religious ruins, holding to an antiquity, for us, indistinct enough to breed an unaccustomed solemnity; its remote, isolated, outposted situation, and the vague conviction that it is the first of a new class of conquered cities into whose decaying streets our rattling life is to be infused, combine with the heroic touches in its history to enliven and satisfy your traveler's curiosity.<sup>11</sup>



San Antonio Riverwalk. Photo: Conor P. Williams.

For instance, Olmsted reported that the city “accumulates a greater population than its position in other respects would justify” as a result of government spending in the Mexican-American War.<sup>13</sup> In the 1930s, Humorist Will Rogers saw it too, when he visited “all those wonderful flying fields, one of ‘em the finest in the world, the West Point of the air.”<sup>14</sup> Today, San Antonio calls itself “Military City, USA” because of the many nearby military installations, including: Fort Sam Houston, Lackland Air Force Base, and Randolph Air Force Base.

As in Olmsted's day, the bases bring people and economic activity to San Antonio, and they also contribute linguistic and cultural pluralism. Kathy Bruck, Chief Executive Officer for the city's new pre-K program, says that one of their pre-K centers with a high number of military families “looks like the U.N. when parents are coming and going.” When asked about their students' home languages, teachers at that center list over a dozen different tongues.

But San Antonio's proximity to the border is still the determinative linguistic factor in the city. Nearly 525,000 of the roughly 570,000 San Antonians who speak a language other than English at home speak Spanish.<sup>15</sup> About 42 percent of the city's nearly 1.3 million residents—and around 30 percent of school-aged children—speak Spanish at home. To put this in perspective: three times as many children speak Spanish at home in San Antonio (~79,000) as in the entire state of Kentucky (~25,000).<sup>16</sup>



Map of San Antonio, Texas. Photo: Shutterstock.

The San Antonio area included multiple language groups beyond German: indigenous languages like Coahuilteco mingled with English and Spanish on the city's streets.<sup>12</sup> In the century and a half since Olmsted's visit, that infusion of “rattling life” sparked a series of economic and demographic booms that made San Antonio one of America's largest cities. While much has changed, a few things persist.

According to San Antonio's Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, "Latino children in Texas represent a majority of children in every age group [and by] 2050, the Latino population in Texas is projected to nearly double, from 3.3 million to 6.1 million."<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, from the 2001–02 to the 2011–12 school years, "the number of students identified as [dual language learners] enrolled in Texas public schools grew by 37.2 percent."<sup>18</sup>

Fortunately, city educators and policymakers treat dual language learners (DLLs) as valuable resources and San Antonio is doing more than perhaps any other large city to promote their academic and linguistic development. This shows up in three primary ways:

1. the city is investing heavily in access to high-quality pre-K;
2. area school districts include DLLs' home languages in their instructional models; and
3. a variety of organizations are coordinating with area schools to develop dual-generation and family engagement programs that support DLL students and their families.

*Three times as many children speak Spanish at home in San Antonio (~79,000) as in the entire state of Kentucky (~25,000).*

First, San Antonio's new pre-K program—PreK4SA—has attracted national attention. The initiative opened four early education centers in the city; each serves students from a variety of school districts, offers professional development to help align those districts' PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> grade efforts, and provides family supports and training sessions. This is good news for students who do not speak English at home, given growing research suggesting that pre-K can be particularly beneficial for them.<sup>19</sup> (For more on how pre-K benefits DLLs, see sidebar: "Why Pre-K Matters for DLLs," page 12.)



Mission Concepción. Photo: Conor P. Williams.

Second, while Texas has required elementary schools to provide bilingual education for DLLs since the 1980s, San Antonio districts are exploring ways to improve and expand their instructional models in the PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> grades and beyond.<sup>20</sup> For instance, Harlandale Independent School District (HISD) is converting its transitional bilingual classrooms into dual immersion classrooms. (For clarification on these—and other—terms for instructional models for supporting DLLs' linguistic and academic growth, see sidebar: "Different Models of Language Instruction," page 24.) And many area districts are building new teacher preparation pipelines to help develop a more linguistically diverse education workforce. Recent studies corroborate a longstanding body of research suggesting that these intentional efforts to integrate home languages—and the students themselves—into rigorous, mainstream academic settings are the best possible way to support DLLs' linguistic and academic growth.<sup>21</sup>

Third, San Antonio's various family engagement, parent outreach, and "dual-generation" anti-poverty programs are powerful strategies for supporting DLLs' success and can maximize the effectiveness of early education programs for these students.<sup>22</sup> Dual language learners, children of immigrants, and Hispanic children (overlapping, but not identical groups) often have higher



## Is San Antonio Actually a Single Case? Best Practices and Alignment in a Decentralized “System”

Cities are each possessed by their own rhythm, their own way of passing through time. San Antonio is a sprawling town, where ranch houses with yards can be found just blocks from downtown. If New York City flashes along to the pulsing of its clattering subway, San Antonio is a collection of oases separated by 10-minute automotive interludes at 70 miles per hour. It is a town that slowly devoured its suburbs, a city both knit together and divided by the interstate highways that crisscross the 461 square mile metropolis.<sup>24</sup>

In that sense, it is impossible to treat San Antonio as a unitary case. There are 15 independent school districts either partly or entirely within the city. What is more, the districts’ socio-economic demographics vary considerably. For instance, just 4.8 percent of Alamo Heights ISD students were designated as language learners in the 2013–14 school year, while 18.9 percent of Edgewood ISD students were so designated.<sup>25</sup> Alamo Heights has fewer than 5,000 enrolled students and boasts a per-pupil tax base of more than \$1 million, while Northside ISD enrolls over 100,000 students with a per-pupil tax base of approximately \$350,000.<sup>26</sup> Three of the area’s districts are located on military bases. And around 14,000 area students attend the area’s dozens of public charter schools.<sup>27</sup> As a result, competition between districts (and sometimes between schools) in San Antonio has been the norm. Alignment between their policies and instructional practices happened more by accident than anything else.

What could such a diffuse, decentralized system possibly have to teach educators and policymakers in other, dissimilar districts?

First of all, San Antonio’s decentralized approach to education governance only differs from other large cities by a matter of degrees. All large urban school systems face governance, coordination, and implementation challenges because of their size—whether or not they are unified into single, city-wide school districts. Chicago Public Schools currently uses a series of “networks” to support and oversee clusters of schools across the city, and their specific roles have changed considerably in recent years.<sup>28</sup> New York City has dozens of superintendents leading “districts” within the city’s public school system, and its system has also evolved multiple times in the last decade.<sup>29</sup> If San Antonio’s education system is marginally more decentralized than some American cities, it is hardly so disjointed as to preclude comparison.

Second, alignment of educational governance institutions is a thoroughgoing American problem. From federal efforts to get states to cooperate, state efforts to set common expectations for districts, or districts trying to get schools to coordinate their feeder patterns and instructional efforts, education reforms in the U.S. are often about trying to build disparate institutions into something like a system.<sup>30</sup>

Third, the variety of districts within San Antonio allows for some variance in policies related to how schools serve language learners. The area’s districts have different student populations with different strengths, and have launched various educational programs in response to those needs. While this paper cannot possibly explore the full range of this experimentation, it captures some of the interesting work currently occurring in San Antonio.

In other words, as far as education policy in the United States is concerned, San Antonio’s alignment challenges may be more emblematic than exceptional.



child poverty rates and enroll in center-based early education programs at lower rates than other groups.<sup>23</sup> In San Antonio, the Eastside Promise Neighborhood's (EPN) many initiatives, PreK4SA parenting classes, and other programs connect with families as part of efforts to help DLLs' linguistic and academic development.

All three of these elements—quality early education investments, strong home language instruction in

schools, and comprehensive family supports—are popular areas for policy exploration in communities all over the U.S. San Antonio has relatively well-established programs in each area, and there are ongoing efforts to integrate them to increase their effects. This paper explores some of San Antonio's programs for supporting DLLs—and identifies key lessons from those programs.

## PRE-K FOR SAN ANTONIO (PREK4SA)

### SA2020

Folks in San Antonio still refer to Julián Castro as “The Mayor,” even though he left in mid-2014 to serve as President Obama's Secretary for Housing and Urban Development. His educational work looms especially large in the city. And expanding access to high-quality public pre-K was his signature achievement.

Castro's pre-K program—dubbed “PreK4SA”—launched with a 2012 referendum that raised the city sales tax enough to fund an expansion that would serve over 20,000 four-year-olds by 2021.<sup>31</sup> But the program's roots grew out of a process that began several years earlier.

In 2010, Mayor Castro proposed a new approach to build on the city's population growth and economic progress. He founded an initiative called SA2020, which would serve as a city-wide forum for input on key community priorities. Over a half a year, city residents filled out surveys, gave feedback online, and attended a series of community forums to discuss their present frustrations and future hopes.

SA2020 Community Impact Director María Fernández says, “Mayor Castro put a call to action out to the community: ten years from now, what would we want the city to look like? There was a lot of community input on ‘How would you define success?’”<sup>39</sup>

The theory of action was straightforward: by involving residents, the mayor aimed to increase community buy-in to any proposed reforms and, Fernández says, to “make

sure his work lasted beyond his tenure in office.” For a mayor who wanted to impact the city's schools—but had no control over any of his city's disparate districts—community endorsement of any city-wide education investments was critical.

The Mayor's office pored through the community input, and then, in March 2011, released a report synthesizing what it had heard. The report sets city priorities for the next decade in a number of key areas: Arts and Culture, Economic Competitiveness, Education, Natural Resources

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success?’”*

and Environmental Sustainability, and many others. Importantly, the report both defines what successful progress towards those priorities would look like and suggests partners who should be involved in working on those priorities.<sup>40</sup>

For instance, the report set out “Improve 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading” as a key education priority for San Antonio. The city defined success in 2020 as 85 percent of students reading at “Level II Satisfactory” in English on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading assessment.<sup>41</sup> The report lists a series of “potential partners” for working on the goal, suggests ways that city residents can get involved, lists voluntary “personal commitments” for individuals (often taken

from suggestions in the community forums), and links the SA2020 education vision to other community priorities. In other words, SA2020 built implementation considerations and accountability into the process of setting goals.<sup>42</sup>

Several months after SA2020’s report was published, Mayor Castro went to work on the document’s education vision. He launched an “SA2020 Brainpower Initiative Task Force” full of local business leaders, education experts, and retired military officers. The members of this new committee described their charge as an investigation “to determine if a targeted, significant financial investment could fundamentally improve San Antonio’s educational trajectory...[such as] very early childhood education, dropout prevention, and college attainment.”<sup>43</sup>

## Why Pre-K Matters for DLLs

There is a growing body of research suggesting that quality pre-K programs are uniquely valuable for DLLs. The specific reasons for this are still a matter for research, but there are a number of possible explanations. For instance, some research has demonstrated that multilingual children reap long-term cognitive benefits from the experience; these benefits are collectively referred to as “The Bilingual Advantage.”<sup>32</sup> A recent book by that title explored a series of studies showing “the advantages of bilingualism, specifically in the areas of metalinguistic awareness, cognitive development, academic achievement, and cross-cultural awareness and understanding.”<sup>33</sup>

These benefits appear to be particularly strong for students who develop their bilingualism from an early age. The reasoning is that those who are exposed to two languages early in their lives develop unique neurological pathways that give them correspondingly unique cognitive abilities. As they learn to consciously switch from one language to another for various communication purposes, for example, they learn to manage their attention more intentionally than monolingual children and adults.

Others argue that pre-K programs offer exposure to higher-level English language usage, which can support rapid growth in DLLs’ oral language development. In a recent analysis of the Head Start Impact Study, researchers Howard Bloom and Christina Weiland found that Head Start supported especially large growth in DLLs’ receptive vocabularies—the bank of English words that they are able to recognize quickly when they hear them. They also found that DLLs in Head Start showed strong growth in early numeracy skills—basic counting skills, judging and comparing amounts, and so forth.<sup>34</sup> In both cases, the growth was greater for Head Start DLLs than for monolingual Head Start students.<sup>35</sup>

Bloom and Weiland ran a battery of tests to isolate what might be causing these strong gains for Head Start’s DLLs. Their data indicated that Head Start’s strongly positive effects were a result of “compensation for limited prior English.”<sup>36</sup> That is, in this case, the increased amount and level of English spoken in Head Start centers appeared to be driving DLLs’ impressive gains. Morgan State University professor Anita Pandey agrees: “oral language development (i.e., fluency) is the first step toward successful primary (L1) and secondary (L2) acquisition—and literacy.”<sup>37</sup> Stronger speaking and listening skills help DLLs have more meaningful conversations with peers and teachers. This helps them develop a deeper understanding of the nuances of how to use a language. This foundation, in turn, supports stronger literacy—reading and writing—skills.<sup>38</sup>

The theory of action here was clear as well: while the SA2020 “visioning” process aimed at setting goals and generating community support for reforms, the Task Force helped muster consensus among—and commitment from—area leaders who could offer important support for any specific policy proposals.

For instance, one of the Task Force’s co-chairs was Charles Butt, the Chair and CEO of San Antonio-based H-E-B Grocery Stores. While his business leadership alone would have qualified Butt for the Task Force, he was also included because he founded Raise Your Hand Texas, a powerful advocacy organization with an early education focus.<sup>50</sup> Many San Antonians believe that Butt’s strong belief in the power of high-quality early education was

a key factor driving the Task Force’s conclusion in June 2012, which read:

After more than a year of studying best practices and evidence-based outcomes in other U.S. cities, the data was [sic] incontrovertible. When children enter kindergarten prepared to learn, they are more confident and apt to succeed throughout their academic career[s], while teachers and administrators are freed from the burden of teaching and crafting curriculum to students with varying levels of preparedness...San Antonio could yield the most profound results across the education spectrum by starting early.<sup>51</sup>

## Education in Texas: Bilingual Education and Pre-K

### Bilingual Education

One out of every six American DLLs is enrolled in Texas schools—the state’s schools enroll nearly 750,000 DLLs.<sup>44</sup> And while other states with large DLL populations, like California, frequently only offer these students English-only language instruction models like “Sheltered English Immersion,” Texas has had a statewide bilingual education mandate in place since the early 1980s.<sup>45</sup>

Texas requires districts with at least 20 students of a particular home language to offer a bilingual education program “in which both the students’ native language and English shall be used for instruction.”<sup>46</sup> Most Texas districts subject to this mandate implement a transitional bilingual education program, usually with an emphasis on reclassifying DLLs into mainstream English-only education by the end of elementary school. (For more on transitional bilingual education and other instructional models for serving DLLs, see sidebar: Different Models of Language Instruction, page 24.)

### Pre-K

The state’s bilingual mandate also applies to districts’ pre-K programs—and Texas has quite a few.<sup>47</sup> Since 1985, the state has provided funding for a half-day pre-K program for students who are DLLs, homeless, from military families, or from families living below 185 percent of the federal poverty line. Districts with at least 15 eligible students must establish a pre-K program. In the 2013–14 school year, state-funded programs enrolled 226,226 students. Between 1999 and 2011, the state also offered the Texas Early Start Grant program, which supported full-day pre-K in some districts, but the funding has been erratic since then.<sup>48</sup>

In May 2015, recently-elected Governor Greg Abbott signed a new pre-K funding stream into law. The \$130-million initiative creates no new pre-K seats, but will provide Texas districts with up to \$1,500 per student if they improve their programs to meet the state’s definition of high-quality pre-K. For instance, the new funding stream requires that teachers secure early education certifications (such as a Child Development Associate credential) and prohibits districts from using curricula aligned to the Common Core State Standards.<sup>49</sup>

## Districts In or Near San Antonio [PreK4SA Participating Districts in Bold]

- Alamo Heights ISD
- East Central ISD
- **Edgewood ISD**
- Fort Sam Houston ISD
- **Harlandale ISD**
- Judson ISD
- Lackland ISD
- **North East ISD**
- **Northside ISD**
- Randolph Field ISD
- **San Antonio ISD**
- Somerset ISD
- South San Antonio ISD
- **Southside ISD**
- **Southwest ISD**

This was a particularly significant decision for a Texas city to make in 2012, since the state legislature defunded the \$212 million Texas Early Start Grant program during the 2011 Legislative Session. While the Lone Star state funds half-day pre-K through its core school funding mechanism (the Foundation School Program), the Early Start Grant program supported full-day pre-K for a number of districts across the state. Its sudden end instantly strained district budgets. Here is a concrete example: for Harlandale Independent School District, a district with an annual instructional budget under \$60 million (for *all* PreK–12 grades), this meant an annual

loss of more than \$1 million in state funds.<sup>52</sup> Many other districts were similarly affected by the cut. (For more information on Texas' pre-K investments, see sidebar: Education in Texas: Bilingual Education and Pre-K, page 13.)

San Antonio's Task Force did not just call for a pre-K expansion to take over the state's former responsibilities—or to maintain the quality of existing pre-K settings in San Antonio. It followed the model in the original SA2020 report by defining benchmarks and milestones that would constitute a successful program. It also provided a possible timeline, strategy, revenue source, five-year budget, list of regional partners, and series of governance recommendations.<sup>53</sup>

With this draft in hand, Mayor Castro and other city leaders took their case to the public and the City Council. By the end of the summer, the measure was on the November 2012 ballot. When the votes were counted, a solid majority of the city's voters supported the measure—and raised their own sales taxes by a fraction of a cent—to create PreK4SA. By 2014, the program was raising \$29 million in annual revenues, along with \$1.5 million in matching funds from the State of Texas, and \$200,000 in meal subsidies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.<sup>54</sup>

## Making It Happen

All effective early education reforms start with strong, clearly-delineated priorities. They also require stable funding streams. But these are still just the first steps towards actually *implementing* high-quality pre-K at scale. Political victories and policy successes are neither overlapping nor identical.

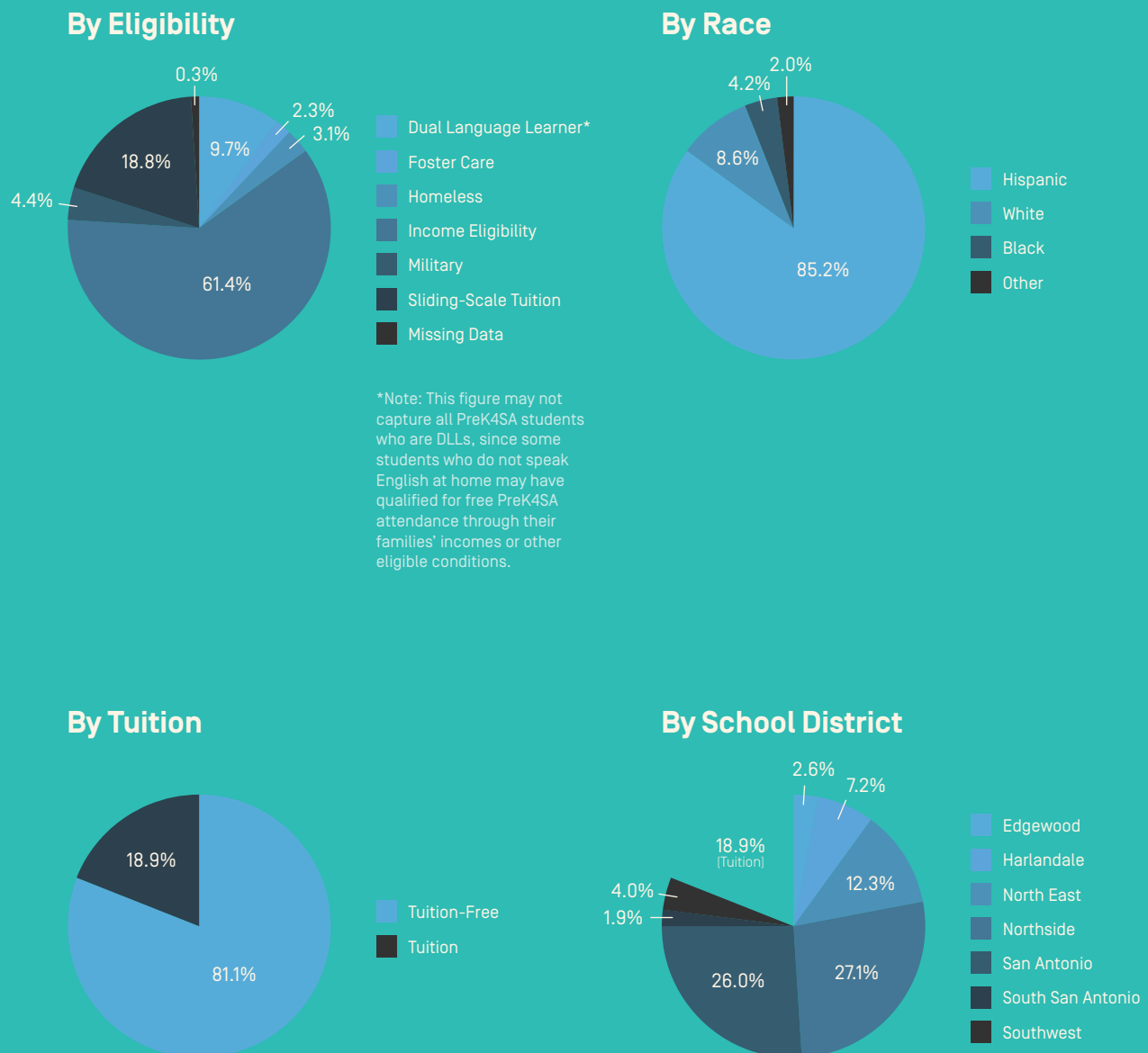
As noted above, PreK4SA was the fruit of a prolonged public discussion that engaged both city leaders and the broader community. Partly because of this strong *political* foundation, the program has largely been able to remain on track with the goals outlined in its *policy* implementation plan. In its second year, as designed, PreK4SA served approximately 1,500 students from a variety of city school districts across the city's four new pre-K centers.

For the 2015–2016 school year, seven of San Antonio's districts are taking part in PreK4SA. (See sidebar: Districts in or near San Antonio, page 14.) A student residing in one of the participating districts may attend one of the PreK4SA centers free of charge, so long as his or her family qualifies for the federal free or reduced lunch



Figure 1

## Who is Enrolled in PreK4SA? [2013-14 School Year]



Source: Edvance Research, "Pre-K 4 SA Evaluation Report: Year 1" (San Antonio, September 8, 2014), [http://sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/PreK4SA/Pre-K%204%20SA\\_Year%201%20Evaluation%20Report\\_Edvance%20Research%20Inc\\_Web.pdf](http://sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/PreK4SA/Pre-K%204%20SA_Year%201%20Evaluation%20Report_Edvance%20Research%20Inc_Web.pdf).



PreK4SA's South Center. Photo: Conor P. Williams.

program, or he or she: 1) is a dual language learner, 2) is homeless, 3) has a parent serving in the military (or has a parent who was killed on active duty), or 4) is a ward of the state. Students in participating districts who do not qualify on one of these grounds—or who reside in non-participating districts—may also attend by paying tuition on a sliding scale.<sup>55</sup>

San Antonio's decentralized education governance system clearly poses a number of challenges for the PreK4SA effort. Some are basic: which school district's academic calendar should PreK4SA follow? Some are more complicated: can the city align the new pre-K centers' curricula and pedagogy with what all of the participating school districts are doing in their many different kindergarten classrooms?

And those questions actually understate the complexity of the puzzle: some of the districts run their own pre-K programs, which are aligned to varying degrees with the rest of their PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> grades. Some districts, like Harlandale, offer pre-K programs of their own by combining other funding streams to build more comprehensive early education offerings. For instance, Harlandale works with San Antonio's branch of the education non-profit AVANCE to blend Head Start funding and provide full-day pre-K in many schools throughout the district. Northside offers its programs primarily through blending Head Start funds with the state's half-day pre-K funding stream, and North East has limited pre-K capacity.<sup>56</sup> PreK4SA students will arrive in kindergarten each year to join students who attended one of these programs.

Smooth, aligned transitions from pre-K to kindergarten and up through at least third grade are critical for building on quality early education investments.

If some children arrive in kindergarten with a substantially different set of skills, knowledge, and educational experiences than their peers, it can be difficult for teachers to build efficiently on these various experiences.<sup>57</sup> In other words, making the most of new pre-K investments requires that teachers and administrators rethink kindergarten—and the rest of their PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> model.

Conversations with PreK4SA leaders like CEO Kathy Bruck suggest that the program is thinking hard about these very questions. While Bruck's team works hard to align its centers with districts' early education practices when possible, PreK4SA also serves as a common source of expertise and best practices for educators across the city. This is part of the reason that Year 4 of the program (the 2016–2017 school year) includes the rollout of a competitive grants program to help districts expand their existing pre-K programs. If all goes as planned, the program should reach full capacity that year, serving 2,000 students in the new PreK4SA centers and supporting 1,700 additional students in districts' existing pre-K programs.<sup>58</sup> In other words, the program will be almost evenly split between developing the city's pre-K track and supporting various districts' pre-K classrooms.

## Professional Development Track

PreK4SA aims at building connective tissue across the city's districts in other ways as well. In addition to delivering pre-K instruction, the PreK4SA program funds professional development to improve the skills of PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> educators across the city. These meetings bring districts together to discuss how pre-K fits into the rest of their elementary school work. Because PreK4SA is working steadily to improve its services—with help from researchers and program evaluators at the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) and Edvance Research<sup>59</sup>—it has the potential to prompt reflection, improvement, and alignment across the PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> grades and across district lines.

That is, the pressure to align works both ways. While PreK4SA tries to accommodate districts, it also serves enough students to influence and inform how districts operate. This is why it is critical that PreK4SA is not just a pre-K delivery program. Its professional development opportunities bring together early educators working in a variety of settings and with children of various ages. These offerings are intended to help PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> educators improve their practice and maximize the city's investment in quality pre-K instruction.<sup>60</sup>

The director coordinating this work, Linda Hamilton, calls her team of fourteen instructional coaches “the bridge-builders.” And just as SA2020 aims to ensure that recent reforms lead to lasting change for the area, Hamilton argues her team’s work “is the sustainability component. A lot of [public early education] programs don’t have the professional development.”<sup>61</sup> Hamilton and her team give national and local education experts a platform in San Antonio on a regular basis and provide Saturday professional development academies for educators working across the birth-to-eight-years-old spectrum. Last year, PreK4SA sponsored a trip that took busloads of educators to visit innovative early education programs in Austin.



PreK4SA South Center Large Motor Lab.  
Photo: Conor P. Williams.

And Hamilton’s team’s work continues when the school year ends: PreK4SA also runs summer training programs for area early educators.<sup>62</sup> Recent “Summer Academies” covered topics like “Understanding the New Millennium Child,” “Promoting Cultural Diversity,” “Supporting Family Dynamics and Involvement,” and “Spanish Oral Language Development through Story and Music.”<sup>63</sup> Last summer, Hamilton’s team brought in early literacy expert Matt Glover for several two-day workshops on “Nurturing Young Writers.”<sup>64</sup> These trainings are free—and generally include classroom or professional development materials (like Glover’s book, *Already Ready: Nurturing Writers in Preschool and Kindergarten*, or José Luis Orozco’s CD, *Diez Deditos*).<sup>65</sup> Importantly, they are open to all early educators in the area, whether or not they work or live in participating districts.<sup>66</sup> In fact, Hamilton says, “child care groups are getting confident about coming to our

Saturday staff development. One of our goals is to start to blur these lines, because we’re all early childhood professionals...we’re working together to make this seamless for kids.”<sup>67</sup>

One of the challenges with any professional development session is getting it out of the seminar room and into the classroom. So Hamilton makes the PreK4SA coaches available “to come into teachers’ classrooms to help implement and execute any of the ideas they hear about.” DLLs’ needs are central to her thinking and the program’s hiring—four of her coaches this year have bilingual teacher certification. She made this a priority in her initial staffing decisions, since “our work’s going to show from our beliefs. We had to bring in people who believe in bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism.”<sup>68</sup>

## Pre-K Track

The instructional coaches’ comfort with linguistic diversity has turned out to be a considerable asset for the program. For the 2014–15 school year, PreK4SA centers enrolled 183 students who were classified as DLLs by the screening mechanisms used in their home school districts (i.e., around 12 percent of all PreK4SA students).<sup>69</sup> Administrators at PreK4SA’s North Center report that their students speak at least 17 different languages at home, including Spanish, Russian, Turkish, Hindi, Farsi, Telugu, Japanese, and Arabic.<sup>70</sup> This makes it difficult to run instructional programs to support all students’ home languages in the classroom, so that campus maintains a robust English as a Second Language (ESL) program, along with two bilingual Spanish-English classrooms this year. The South Center also runs two bilingual Spanish-English classrooms.

In general, PreK4SA’s basic components follow best practices for pre-K programs. There are two adults for every twenty students (one teacher and one aide). In the 2014–2015 school year, there were 177 instructional days between August 25 and June 4. Each of those days begins with breakfast at 7:15 a.m., and play-based academics run seven hours each day, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.<sup>71</sup> PreK4SA calls its instructors “Master Teachers,” and sets a high bar for their professionalism. All Master Teachers are certified, with at least three years of experience teaching in early education settings. All have a bachelor’s degree—and a majority have master’s degrees.<sup>72</sup>

PreK4SA salaries are appropriately high: for the 2015–16 school year, Master Teachers will earn from just over \$60,000 to over \$90,000 per year.<sup>73</sup> This is relatively high



PreK4SA North Center Outdoor Classroom.  
Photo: Conor P. Williams.

for the region: in Edgewood Independent School District (a PreK4SA-participating district), an elementary school teacher with a bachelor's degree and three years of classroom experience will be paid \$51,316 in the 2015–16 school year. Indeed, an Edgewood teacher with a master's degree and *25 years of experience* will be paid \$61,022 for the year.<sup>74</sup>

Officially, PreK4SA uses the Frog Street Press and Teaching Strategies early education curricula,<sup>75</sup> but staff innovations are inspired by a variety of different early education models. Administrators speak enthusiastically about teacher creativity—they introduce one classroom as “infused” with the progressive Reggio-Emilia teaching philosophy and another as a particularly “welcoming community” guided by that teacher’s experience working with immigrant children in New York City.<sup>76</sup> PreK4SA North Center Assistant Director Lesley Balido McClellan says that the Frog Street curriculum is useful, but it is “not forced on teachers,” because “classrooms should be a reflection of your culture, of you and your students.” That is, within the structure of Texas’ Pre-K Guidelines, teachers are encouraged to develop and modify their units, lesson plans, and classrooms to suit their students’ needs and engage their students’ specific interests.<sup>77</sup>

Administrators at the program’s North and South Centers both independently reference the famous “plan-do-review” approach pioneered in the Perry Preschool Project’s HighScope curriculum.<sup>78</sup> That is, PreK4SA students generally make and discuss plans for playtime with one another before it begins, experiment with their plans during a block of time, and then discuss them at the end. The North Center builds two 50-minute plan-do-review blocks into their schedule each day—and has trained extended day staff to use that approach in small

group instruction with students who stay until 6 p.m.<sup>79</sup> The program’s commitment to the strategy is sufficiently strong that PreK4SA leadership has made it one of the guiding program standards.<sup>80</sup>

PreK4SA teachers have considerable space to create the classrooms their students need. And this is made easier by the resources PreK4SA makes available. In addition to the outdoor spaces, centers have “Large Motor Labs” and “Small Motor Labs” that classes visit as regularly as possible to encourage physical activity and development.<sup>81</sup> Classrooms all have stocked classroom libraries, smart boards, iPads, and ample art supplies. In surveys, teachers report near-unanimous approval of the condition of PreK4SA materials and furniture (97 percent) and the general “classroom environment” (93 percent).<sup>82</sup>

Teachers appreciate both the autonomy and the support. One tells a visitor, “I try to take [students’] interests and go with those. We do plan, but they’re so creative. They take it one step further...PreK4SA really allows us space to teach those skills to help them build the whole child, the wholesome person.”<sup>83</sup>

In a survey conducted as part of PreK4SA’s one-year evaluation, teachers answered “[How often do you] think your curriculum meets the needs of the children in your classroom?” strongly in the affirmative (the average response was 4.35 on a scale of 1 to 5, where “4” corresponded to “frequently” and “5” corresponded to “always”). And they answered almost identically when asked, “[How often do you] modify the curriculum to better engage children in the learning process?” (the average response was 4.33, again falling between “frequently” and “always”). They reported even higher numbers for “plan and implement activities that build on children’s interests” and “plan instruction based on what you know about individual needs of children, including those with disabilities.”<sup>84</sup>

“There’s a continuous cycle of observation and feedback here,” says Balido McClellan.<sup>85</sup> That sort of cycle requires regular data collection—and using it reflectively. The program gathers data on its effectiveness using a variety of other tools. It uses Teachstone’s Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to gather information on teachers’ practices for their independent evaluator.<sup>86</sup> The researchers also use the Emerging Academic Snapshot tool to track how students spend their time in PreK4SA classrooms.<sup>87</sup>

PreK4SA has also developed its own checklist rubric for capturing teachers’ interactions with students,



and a separate one for working with small groups. PreK4SA aligns instruction to the Teaching Strategies GOLD (TS-GOLD) assessment system to track students' developmental and academic progress towards kindergarten readiness. During a recent visit, teachers logging updated student achievement data into their laptops expressed enthusiasm for the tool and said that it helps them drive instruction to meet students' needs.<sup>88</sup>

Finally, PreK4SA uses a variety of screener assessments. As part of agreements with the various school districts participating in the program, PreK4SA administers the districts' own screeners for English language proficiency (and any other screeners the district gives to incoming kindergarten students). That way, students arrive in their home districts' kindergarten classrooms with a data file that matches those of their peers who attended pre-K in settings run by the districts.<sup>89</sup>

This focus on rigorous data collection and data-driven instruction should not be seen as a foundation for narrow instructional practices. The centers are avowedly progressive in their pedagogy. Visitors are treated to tours of on-site vegetable gardens and outdoor classroom spaces while administrators discuss Richard Louv's *Last Child In the Woods* and their efforts to forestall "Nature Deficit Disorder" in their urban students. The South Center began organizing outdoor excursions with students and their families on the weekends, and the North Center soon followed suit.<sup>90</sup>

PreK4SA materials are shot through with references to "the whole child" and how their play-based approach serves the programs' short-, medium-, and long-term objectives.<sup>91</sup> The program touts partnerships with the San Antonio Children's Museum and the San Antonio Museum of Art as part of its attempt to extend classrooms instruction into the city.<sup>92</sup> Administrators organized an exhibition of student artwork at City Hall under the title of "Gracias, San Antonio." This was an important signal to send to students, families, and the broader community, says Balido McClellan, since "we want our students to know this is a gift."<sup>93</sup>

## Family Engagement Track

PreK4SA's continuous and intentional efforts to improve the instructional quality of its classrooms—and to share its developing knowledge with other early educators—are potent practices for implementing a quality early education program. But even these strategies have limits. The most effective early education programs—like North

Carolina's famed Abecedarian Project and the Chicago Parent-Child Centers—treat families as important assets for supporting their children's development.<sup>94</sup> PreK4SA is trying to follow these programs' example with a robust approach to family engagement.



PreK4SA North Center Vegetable Garden.  
Photo: Conor P. Williams.

This outreach and engagement is particularly important for families that do not speak English at home. These families can struggle to take advantage of early education opportunities for their children for a variety of reasons: linguistic barriers, socioeconomic pressures, low parental literacy rates, and more.<sup>95</sup> Effective outreach programs can help to ensure that these families get as much as possible out of available early education programs in their area. As befits a city with a long multilingual history, San Antonio provides applications—and publicity—for PreK4SA in multiple languages.<sup>96</sup>

But accessibility policies like these are just a first step. Truly effective family engagement takes seriously the old early education adage: "Parents are their children's first teachers." Recent research shows that early parenting practices are enormously consequential for children's long-term health, development, and success. A 2013 Brookings Institute report found that "parents are huge contributors to the knowledge, skills and character of their children. [Their] actions have dramatic public consequences for education, crime, welfare, mobility and productivity."<sup>97</sup> So there is reason to believe that high-quality early education programs that work with families to strengthen parents' and caregivers' practices will always outperform those that do not. Research also suggests that schools do not often engage with linguistically diverse families in effective, culturally-sensitive ways.<sup>98</sup>

With these challenges and opportunities in mind, PreK4SA runs a number of programs to engage with families and support their children's development. These take at least three forms: 1) some aim at connecting families with what their children are doing at school, 2) others aim at improving families' work with their children at home, and 3) still others connect families with health and social services in the area.

Start first with the efforts to connect families to the schools. Since San Antonio is a large city with low population density and limited public transit options, PreK4SA operates a series of buses that pick up at 17 stops across the region.<sup>99</sup> This helps make the centers accessible to families who otherwise might not have enrolled their children. The glistening, newly built (or just-renovated) PreK4SA centers were designed with parents in mind. There are stocked parent resource rooms known as "Parent Cafés"—and cheerful staff eager to show them off to visitors.<sup>100</sup>

The planning goes far beyond architecture and atmosphere. Families meet with educators at the beginning of the year to set goals for their children and build a plan for supporting their development. They also meet regularly throughout the year to gauge progress and talk about how the plan is working. And all of this is in addition to the feedback survey that PreK4SA asks parents to fill out after a month in the program.<sup>101</sup>

There are many other structured programs in place to engage families with what is going on in PreK4SA classrooms. During the 2013–2014 school year, centers held regular breakfasts and "Donuts with the Director" events, along with special events like Grandparents Days, "Meet the teacher" events, field trips (including one to a San Antonio Spurs game), family literacy nights, awards ceremonies, and on-site farmers markets.<sup>102</sup>

These programs have helped foster a community ethos throughout the pre-K centers. After a year of targeted collaboration with families, PreK4SA South Center Assistant Director Erin Burnett says that she has seen a significant drop in the number of special education referrals.<sup>103</sup>

Second, PreK4SA also helps families develop skills to support children's development at home. They offer a series of free parenting trainings with topics including "bedtime rituals, healthy eating for hurried families, childhood obesity, [the] impact of trauma on child development, and teachable moments in your home."<sup>104</sup> For the 2014–2015 school year, the North Center offered a

weekly Parent Nutrition class and the West Center offered a weekly parenting class from San Antonio-based non-profit BCFS Health and Human Services.<sup>105</sup>

The program partners with H-E-B Grocery's "Read 3" initiative to help families support their children's early literacy development. Read 3 takes its name from its objective: encouraging adults to read to their children at least three times each week. The program donates books and provides families with supporting literacy resources.<sup>106</sup>

PreK4SA also leverages new media resources to build connections between classrooms and families. The program purchases the Ready Rosie app for all families; this program aims to support kindergarten readiness by using daily video clips of real parents modeling developmentally-appropriate learning activities for families to try with their children.<sup>107</sup>

Third, PreK4SA runs a series of programs to support families with health, career, and other social services. Most importantly, the program offers a free "extended day" option from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. "for families who are working or are in school."<sup>108</sup> This is critical for many: research suggests that expanding early education options to match adults' full-time working hours can support increased family income and parental employment rates.<sup>109</sup> In addition, over one hundred family members attended the two health screenings a local hospital held at PreK4SA campuses in 2013–2014. The centers collaborate with local non-profits to host occasional professional advising or counseling events. Some of the on-site parenting courses address financial literacy, while others bridge knowledge gaps to help families access social services for which they are eligible.<sup>110</sup>

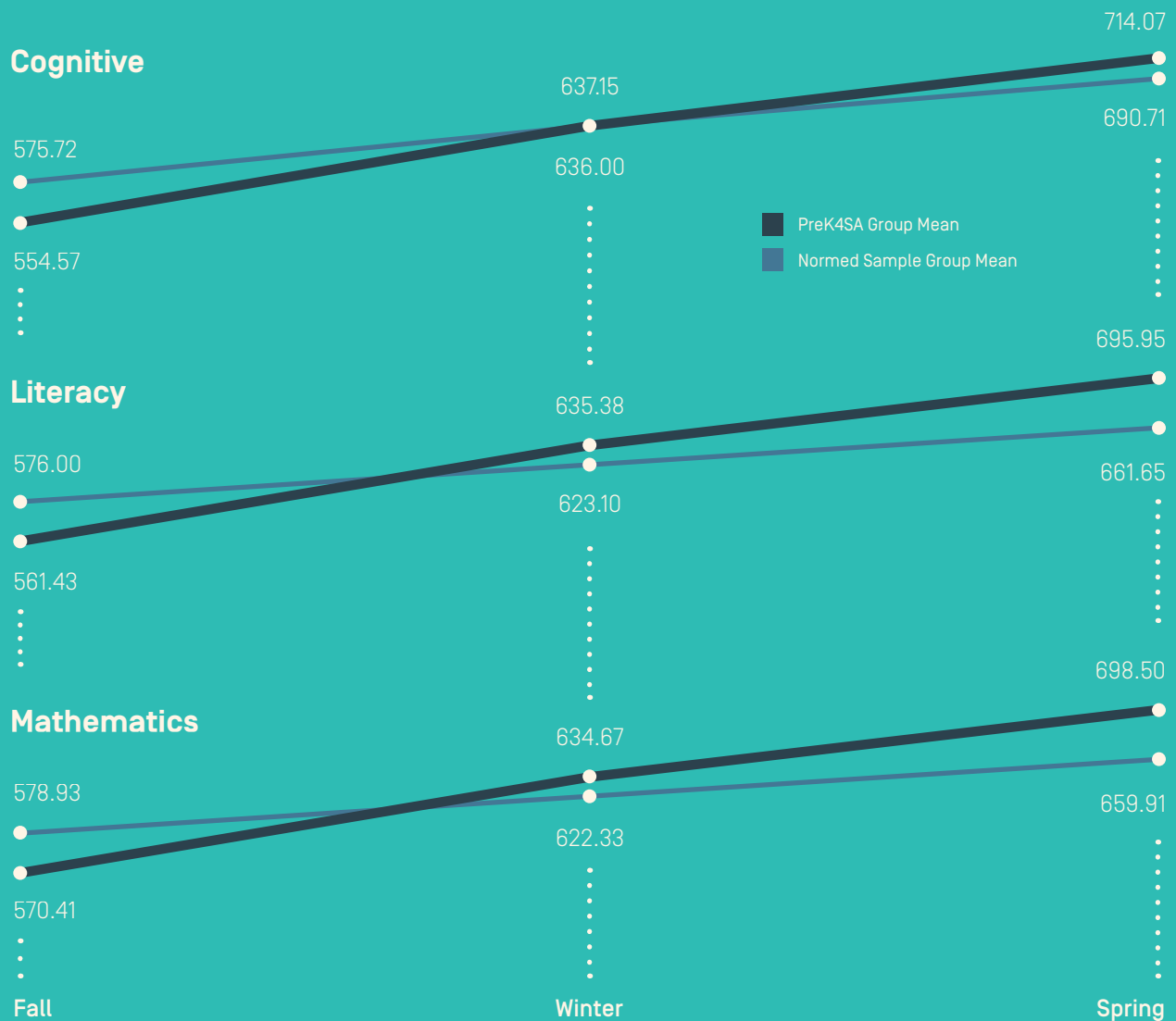
## Early Progress Indicators

After just two years of operation, it is too early to know whether PreK4SA will demonstrate the long-term return on investment that other pre-K programs have demonstrated.<sup>111</sup> But the program's first year evaluation found some encouraging signs. Using the Teaching Strategies GOLD kindergarten readiness assessment, program evaluators found that by the end of the year, PreK4SA students scored better "than the normed sample on three outcomes: cognitive, literacy, and mathematics."<sup>112</sup> The students scored the same as the nationally normed sample on measures of oral language, physical, and social-emotional development. Again, while it is too early to make big claims about

return on investment, it is important to note that the PreK4SA student group began the year *behind* the GOLD assessment’s benchmark for starting pre-K. In other words, PreK4SA students made above-average growth in all categories. If that strong start is any indication, the program’s results should be even better when the eight-year longitudinal study is completed in 2021.<sup>113</sup>

As for the broader effort to use PreK4SA to promote alignment and coordination between San Antonio’s many school districts, the jury is still out—but there is reason to be hopeful. Ana Acevedo, the city’s education policy administrator, says, “we have seen that happen, but we still have a long ways to go. Trust and confidence [from district superintendents] are growing as the first kindergarten cohorts arrive in districts’ classrooms.”<sup>114</sup>

Figure 2  
**PreK4SA and Normed Sample Comparison Results**



# DISTRICT INNOVATIONS: HARLANDALE AND NORTHSIDE

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San Antonio's many innovative early education and community development investments (and the coordination between them) are unquestionably useful for supporting DLLs. But public elementary and secondary schools are the primary vehicles for implementing most policies supporting these students' linguistic and academic development. A strong community with quality early education and supportive wraparound services will not ultimately see dramatic growth for DLLs if its schools are generally ineffective.

San Antonio schools face serious challenges. The city's child poverty rates are high—28.7 percent of San Antonio children were living below the poverty line in 2013 (the national rate that year was 19.9 percent).<sup>115</sup> And given the decentralized governance of the city's schools, these students are not equally distributed among area school districts. For instance, 87.7 percent of Harlandale Independent School District (HISD) students are eligible for federal free or reduced lunch subsidies (that is, they come from households at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty line).<sup>116</sup> Nearby, in Alamo Heights Independent School District, just 22.1 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch.<sup>117</sup>

## Teachers

Effective education in San Antonio requires attending to the linguistic and academic needs of DLLs. HISD's 15,290 students are almost all (97.5 percent) Hispanic, and 2,555 (16.7 percent) of them were formally designated as language learners last year.<sup>118</sup> Fortunately, HISD and other San Antonio school districts have several advantages in this regard. Texas has a longstanding tradition of supporting DLLs' linguistic development through a statewide bilingual education mandate and other policies. (See sidebar: Education in Texas: Bilingual Education and Pre-K, page 13.) What is more, the long tradition of bilingualism among San Antonio denizens—recall that more than four in ten city residents speak Spanish at home—helps the city's districts recruit and retain a strongly bilingual teaching workforce.

Still, trained, truly bilingual teachers are scarce, even in Texas.<sup>119</sup> Noelia Benson, Bilingual and ESL Education Director at San Antonio's Northside Independent School District (NISD), points out that it's not enough to find just any bilingual adults to staff these classrooms: "it's really hard to find the quality in bilingual teachers...Lots of 'bilingual' teachers can't speak Spanish"<sup>120</sup> In part, this is because bilingual instruction requires teachers to have strong proficiency in both languages—especially the so-called "target" language. That is, bilingual certification is not necessarily a guarantee that a teacher can use his or her languages effectively to foster rich, robust conversations with students.<sup>121</sup>

HISD partially addresses the problem through a partnership with Texas A&M University–San Antonio's School of Education. The district helps bilingual teacher candidates secure student teacher placements in dual immersion classrooms—and then it frequently hires them to stay once they have completed their course of study.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, NISD works with the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), and district leaders say that they go out of their way to get "as many student teachers as possible."<sup>123</sup> These programs do not just benefit districts and their students; UTSA professor Jorge Solis says that these candidates' "additional hours in the field" help support their long-term success when they get classrooms of their own.<sup>124</sup>

## Instructional Models

In 2008, HISD began a push to rethink its transitional bilingual model. Leadership met with teachers and parents to gauge interest in moving to a two-way dual immersion model. (See sidebar: Different Models of Language Instruction, page 24.) The idea was to continue supporting DLLs' bilingualism beyond elementary school, the usual end of the transitional bilingual model.

"It was a lot of work in advance on what we had to do," says Veronica Alvarez, HISD's then-Bilingual/ESL coordinator. "We had to create a task force so that we had a group of people who were coming together and making decisions—it had to be all stakeholders, not just teachers



who were going to be doing it...but also administrators. We had our assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction involved, we had board members...if you don't have that sort of administrative support at the top, it's going to be very difficult to implement it going down.”<sup>125</sup>

HISD's new dual immersion model begins in pre-K with 90 percent of the day in Spanish and 10 percent in English. After kindergarten, these percentages rebalance by 10 percent each year, until they reach a 50-50 balance in fourth grade. By contrast, Texas' popular “late-exit” transitional bilingual education model generally scales to 90 percent English and 10 percent Spanish instruction by fifth grade, essentially the opposite of HISD's program.<sup>126</sup>

All 13 HISD elementary schools offer the dual immersion model, and the program is now extending into middle school (and will then continue into high school). District leaders hope to have full implementation of the new program by 2016. The system-wide expansion is key, says Alvarez, since that means that HISD does not have to determine program enrollment by lottery—it is an option for all students across the district.<sup>127</sup>

HISD's program tracks research showing that well-implemented dual immersion programs outperform other forms of language instruction for DLLs, but it also follows best practices around early education. Some studies suggest that quality pre-K programs can help to advance DLLs' linguistic and academic development, so HISD has a significant district pre-K program in place (recall that HISD is also a PreK4SA partner district).<sup>128</sup>

The district works with AVANCÉ-San Antonio, a non-profit education organization focused on breaking the cycles of inter-generational poverty. AVANCÉ runs Head Start classrooms in some HISD schools—for both three- and four-year-olds—and couples them with dual-generation strategies to support their families.<sup>129</sup> In addition, AVANCÉ and HISD share knowledge across their program models to run collaborative professional development for teachers working in pre-K, kindergarten, and first grade classrooms.<sup>130</sup>

Dual immersion classrooms across the district vary in many ways, but some things are consistent. Walls—and hallways—are “literacy rich,” covered with words in both Spanish and English. These vocabulary strategies are often accompanied by pictures, definitions, and other clues to make them accessible to DLLs in both languages. Some walls are covered with common Spanish-English cognates—words that are similar in both languages, like “office” and “oficina” or “artist” and “artista.”<sup>131</sup>

These visual scaffolds help students to develop content vocabulary, which is critical to linguistic and academic development. Research suggests that DLLs can achieve social proficiency in English in two to three years, but that developing the vocabulary and writing skills for academic English proficiency can take at least twice as long.<sup>132</sup> Explicit vocabulary instruction helps students develop key terms they need to increase the depth and breadth of their English language proficiency.

Meanwhile, banks of computers flash the Reasoning Mind math program or Renaissance Learning's Accelerated Reader software. The computers are generally used as one stop in a series of learning centers that allow students to work on a variety of tasks in small groups. For example, second grade students circulate from the screens to a flashcard center to an English vocabulary Bingo game, syllable puzzles, a writing center, or a shared reading mini-lesson with their teacher.<sup>133</sup>

Effective use of these types of learning centers require crisp classroom routines. These—and behavior management generally—are extraordinarily sharp in all HISD schools. Students are enthusiastic and engaged; when teachers ask questions (in Spanish or in English), over half of their students' hands go up. As a result, instruction moves quickly.<sup>134</sup>

While the dual immersion program is still being rolled out, early data are encouraging. DLLs in these classrooms passed Texas' annual third to eighth grade math, reading, and science assessments at substantially higher rates than DLLs whose parents opted them out of the program.<sup>135</sup>

NISD's Esparza Elementary runs a similar “90-10” dual immersion model—and has done so for over 12 years.<sup>136</sup> Because dual immersion programs work best when schools use a consistent model across multiple years, the school asks parents to make a six-year commitment to keep their children enrolled. “I've never been at a school where the [native-speaking] Spanish kids consistently outperform the [native-speaking] English kids. And they do that here at Esparza,” says Principal Billy Navin. “Our dual classes outperform our transitional bilingual classes by a wide margin.”<sup>137</sup>

Esparza parents are passionate about the program, says Navin. “We have such a commitment from Day One on dual language...it's a priority, an investment.”<sup>138</sup> Benson agrees: “Parents tell us, ‘We want bilingualism. We want biliteracy. Our children have a right to their home language.’”<sup>139</sup>

NISD starts early with DLLs as well. In addition to being a PreK4SA partner, the district runs pre-K in the morning with funds from the state, and pre-K in the afternoon through Head Start funds.<sup>141</sup>

There are other dual immersion approaches in use in San Antonio's schools. NISD's Villarreal Elementary uses the 50-50 model. Instead of beginning with a high percentage of Spanish instruction and scaling down, like Harlandale, teachers instruct half of the time in English and the other half in Spanish. In kindergarten and first grade, they accomplish this by alternating days—students spend a day learning in one language and the next day learning in the other. In older grades, they split the days in half—students spend the morning learning in whichever language they were using in the afternoon the day before, and then switch at midday.

"We've had to really play with the 50-50 immersion model," says Benson. Villarreal principal April Mata-

Tausch agrees, and says that the intentional, reflective focus is making a difference throughout her school: "Fortunately, the strategies that work for our [DLL] kids also work for our [non-DLL] at-risk students."<sup>142</sup> She explains that all students need strong, targeted instruction for supporting their language development. In other words, good instruction for DLLs is generally good instruction for all students.

The school's success partly stems from the extra time educators put in before and after school to provide robust additions to their school's daily instructional model. Principal Navin uses federal dollars through No Child Left Behind's Title I (the federal government's primary investment in schools serving high percentages of low-income students) to pay for an instructional assistant who works with kindergartners before school on oral language development through games, dances, and songs. There are myriad other programs: 1) access to Imagine Learning, the school's literacy software program; 2) technology

## Different Models of Language Instruction\*

(These are rough definitions. Some of these terms are used in different ways in different parts of the country.)

- **Dual Immersion:** These programs take a number of forms, but generally consist of a mixed class of DLLs and native English-speakers receiving instruction in two languages. Some models begin with a 90 percent to 10 percent ratio of classroom instruction conducted in DLLs' home language to English, and shift towards a 50/50 balance over a period of years. Other dual-immersion programs begin at 50/50.
- **Maintenance or Developmental Bilingual:** These programs generally consist of a class of DLLs receiving instruction in both the home language and English, with an eye towards developing proficiency in both languages.
- **Transitional Bilingual:** These programs generally consist of a class of DLLs receiving instruction in both the home language and English with the goal of moving them into mainstream English instruction as quickly as possible. In Texas, this generally means the end of elementary school (in fifth or sixth grade).
- **English as a Second Language:** These programs usually provide instruction in English that is structured in such a way as to support English acquisition.
- **Push-In/Pull-out:** This model provides periodic, targeted instructional support from a specially-trained educator. Push-in services usually occur in the student's main classroom. Pull-out services usually involve tutoring outside the main classroom during the school day.

\*Note: this sidebar is quoted—with slight modifications—from the DLL National Work Group's paper on states' policies around setting standards for formally ending DLLs' language services, "Chaos for Dual Language Learners: An Examination of State Policies for Exiting Children from Language Services in the PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> Grades."<sup>140</sup>

tutoring; 3) enrichment opportunities, like cooking, storytelling, science experiments, and community service; and more.

Like those heading PreK4SA and the Eastside Promise Neighborhood (see below), Harlandale and Northside leaders seek ways to engage with students in the context of their families. HISD's early education partnership with AVANCÉ includes significant family engagement work, such as "financial literacy, nutrition, and career readiness" outreach.<sup>143</sup> Families build social capital and support instruction by visiting—and using—parent resource rooms in schools throughout the district.<sup>144</sup> In NISD, Villarreal Elementary is piloting a "Communities in Schools" program that connects with families through adult exercise classes, nutrition programs, and more.<sup>145</sup> The school also holds regular parent nights on-site and is hiring a bilingual family liaison to connect with families on issues related to education, health, and child development.

Finally, it is worth noting that research on the specific models is not yet conclusive in San Antonio (or nationwide). Backers of the "90-10" immersion model in use in Harlandale argue that the power dynamics of

language use in the U.S. require that the non-English language in a dual model be given extra weight early in students' lives. They further argue that intensive early use of home languages helps DLLs develop a deeper understanding of language in general which, in turn, helps them develop full English language proficiency more quickly. That is, skill using their home languages helps them learn to use English similarly well.<sup>146</sup>

Others counter that 50-50 immersion models provide sufficient home language support for students while beginning the process of English exposure earlier. They point to research suggesting that an early start helps DLLs develop the English they need to meet academic achievement benchmarks in a public education system that is primarily conducted in English. The 50-50 model gives DLLs more opportunities to engage with English earlier while still providing for considerable use of their home languages.<sup>147</sup>

This debate is probably a red herring. While it would be satisfying to settle it conclusively as a matter of research, districts' choices of instructional model for serving their DLLs will always be determined largely by available resources and educators' expertise.

# THE EASTSIDE PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD (EPN)

## Beginning with a Promise

SA2020 and PreK4SA are not the region's only major examples of education coordination. On the San Antonio's east side, community members, local non-profits, schools, and city and county agencies are using local, philanthropic, and federal funding streams to rebuild one of the nation's most challenged neighborhoods. This—and other—anti-poverty efforts hold considerable potential for children who speak a language other than English at home. Data from the American Community Survey show that DLLs' families are more likely to have incomes below the federal poverty line than children whose families speak English at home.<sup>148</sup>

The blocks around San Antonio's Ella Austin Community Center belie their urban address. Some houses in the area are large, almost cavernous, with aged paint flaking off of colonnaded porches. Many of the houses have sizable yards, at least by American city standards. Yet San Antonio's Eastside is plagued by the too-familiar statistics that come with concentrated urban poverty. Over 60 percent of the neighborhood's children live below the federal poverty line, and its median household income is less than half of San Antonio's median. The area was long the heart of the city's African American community, but its demographics are shifting: the 2010 U.S. Census found

that 67.5 percent of the neighborhood's residents were Hispanic and just 24.9 percent were African American.<sup>149</sup> All of the neighborhood's elementary schools have DLL enrollment percentages that are more than double—and in one case, triple—the national average. (See Figure 3: DLL Numbers for the EPN's Schools, page 27.)

The 3.5 square-mile neighborhood lies within the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD), the city's third-largest district.<sup>150</sup> The six SAISD schools in the EPN are all federally-designated "Title I Schools," with high rates of students qualifying for the federally-subsidized free or reduced lunch program.<sup>151</sup> In 2010, nearly half of Bowden Elementary School students were overweight.<sup>152</sup> In 2009, Sam Houston High School's graduation rate was just 45.9 percent.<sup>153</sup>

In 2010, local leaders wrote, "[Eastside] resident families are similarly breaking down: the Eastside is characterized by an abundance of intractable social problems, from teen pregnancy to domestic violence, [and] dropout and poverty rates higher than the rest of the city."<sup>159</sup> These problems showed up in the area schools: "of the students attending [Eastside] elementary and middle schools over the last nine years, the mobility rate is 100%, i.e., not one student enrolled in kindergarten and continued through 8<sup>th</sup> grade."<sup>160</sup>

Faced with these challenges, a group of local organizations applied in 2010 for a share of the \$10 million that had been set aside for the Obama Administration's Promise Neighborhoods program. The administration hoped to replicate the model—and the success—of Geoffrey Canada's famous Harlem Children's Zone.<sup>161</sup> The Promise Neighborhoods program was designed to help communities develop local plans to coordinate funding streams and social services to improve social mobility, break cycles of intergenerational poverty, and support children's long-term success, as Canada did in Harlem. In other words, the program aimed at knitting together broken communities struggling with precisely the challenges plaguing San Antonio's Eastside.<sup>162</sup>

Together, the City of San Antonio, the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, SAISD, and several other



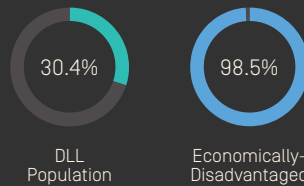
A block on San Antonio's Eastside.  
Photo: Conor P. Williams.



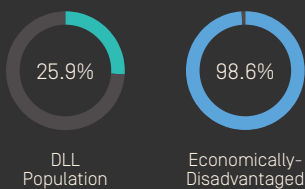
## Figure 3 DLL Numbers for the EPN's Schools

These statistics can be measured against the national average of dual language learners <sup>154</sup> **9.2%** <sup>157</sup> and economically-disadvantaged students <sup>155</sup> **51%** <sup>158</sup>.

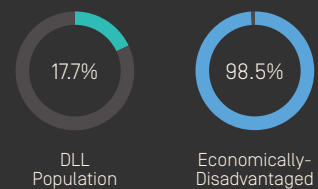
### Pershing Elementary School



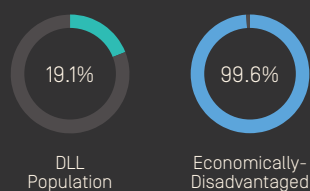
### Bowden Elementary School



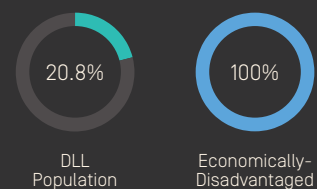
### Wheatley Middle School



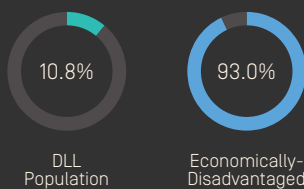
### Washington Elementary School



### Tynan Early Childhood Campus



### Sam Houston High School <sup>156</sup> (Not Pictured)



*“Of the students attending [Eastside] elementary and middle schools over the last nine years, the mobility rate is 100%, i.e., not one student enrolled in kindergarten and continued through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.”*

organizations applied for a grant that would help them “integrate disparate education and revitalization efforts and create a transformed Eastside Promise Neighborhood characterized by high-quality small schools, engaged parent leaders, and stable housing.”<sup>163</sup>

Yet these grants were far from adequate. The U.S. Department of Education split that \$10 million pot into 21 awards of no more than half a million dollars. San Antonio’s application garnered the Eastside applicants \$312,000 in planning funds to design a Promise Neighborhood to address the neighborhood’s myriad difficulties.<sup>164</sup> The local partners promised to match those funds with an additional \$235,000 in donations—largely to support San Antonio’s Trinity University in conducting an assessment of the needs of the Eastside’s 18,000 residents (with community input).<sup>165</sup> Still, this was just a startup grant. For comparison: the Harlem Children’s

Zone relies on an annual budget of \$101 million to provide education, health, dental, and other social services to more than 20,000 Harlem residents.<sup>166</sup>

Led by the local branch of the United Way, the collaborating organizations launched a series of conversations with each other—and the public—to set goals and design a plan. They conducted a community needs assessment and examined the neighborhood’s existing assets to develop a comprehensive response to the Eastside’s many challenges. Reflecting on the process, an official at the EPN offices says, “when we set our targets—and it took a long time—we brought in the whole neighborhood and had the neighborhood set the targets. We facilitated, but they set the targets.”<sup>167</sup> The process was supported by Trinity University researchers, who conducted a “comprehensive cradle-through-college-to-career needs assessment and asset inventory of the Eastside target area.”<sup>168</sup> Summing up their efforts, the group wrote that the process “reinvigorated residents and triggered a renewed sense of optimism about the neighborhood’s future.”<sup>169</sup>

In 2011, the group applied again to the Promise Neighborhoods competition—this time for a larger implementation grant. Congress provided \$30 million for the funding that year, which the Department of Education split into 15 small planning grants and five larger implementation grants. San Antonio’s proposal was built out of the community discussions and selected two of the competition’s key priorities: 1) building a “Comprehensive Early Learning Network” and 2) developing “Quality Affordable Housing.”<sup>170</sup> (For more on the team’s efforts on housing, see sidebar: “Eastside’s Choice Neighborhood Grants,” page 29.)

The EPN’s focus on early learning was easy to justify: at the time of application, in 2011, just 24 percent of young EPN residents were enrolled in center-based early education programs.<sup>171</sup> In 2009, just 21.9 percent of eligible children enrolled in Head Start.<sup>172</sup> Nearly 70 percent of children arrived without key kindergarten readiness skills, and fully “100% of kindergarten students in two Eastside elementary schools had underdeveloped phonemic skills.”<sup>173</sup> The EPN’s application, grounded in community conversations, identified a series of critical neighborhood early education challenges, including:

- the neighborhood suffered from a shortage of high-quality early education programs, especially when it came to child care providers open late at night;



Sherman Avenue, near Wheatley Courts, in San Antonio’s Eastside Promise Neighborhood. Photo: Conor P. Williams.

## Eastside's Choice Neighborhood Grants

The housing revitalization proposal built into the EPN's Promise Neighborhood grant application was linked to a parallel community effort to secure funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Choice Neighborhood Grants competition. Since the group working on the Choice Neighborhood track consisted of many of the same organizations and individuals, the Promise Neighborhood grant proposed "approaches and interventions...[that] are aligned with Choice to diminish duplication and ensure that community assets are available to children, youth and families with the greatest needs."<sup>178</sup> And while the entire EPN footprint struggled with many of the challenges outlined above, the community's "greatest needs" were concentrated in the Wheatley Courts Public Housing Project.

As these applications headed off to Washington, DC, fewer than one-third of Wheatley Courts households were "households with wages" and fully 97 percent of Wheatley households were living at what HUD considers "Extremely Low" incomes (i.e., they earn less than 30 percent of San Antonio's median income or below)—\$18,100 for a family of four or \$12,650 for a one-person household in 2012.<sup>179</sup> In 2010, the median income of the 279 families living in the Wheatley Courts housing project was \$5,306.<sup>180</sup>

In 2010, the Choice Neighborhood team, led by the San Antonio Housing Authority, secured a \$312,000 grant for two years of planning the "revitalization of the Wheatley Courts public housing complex," with the aim of integrating its work with Promise Neighborhood efforts to improve Wheatley Middle School and other social services in the area.<sup>181</sup>

As with the Promise Neighborhood engagement process, residents and stakeholders working on the Choice Neighborhood application identified needs, priorities, and strategies for remaking their neighborhood, including:

- "a continuum of services from early learning to college and career...[such as] expanding access to learning technology and Internet connectivity, and boosting family engagement in student learning;"<sup>182</sup>
- expanded access to quality early childhood programs, including "a new center to be opened at the revitalized Wheatley Courts;"<sup>183</sup>
- new English as a Second Language programs in neighborhood schools and on-site at Wheatley Courts through the local Goodwill chapter;
- better data on children's academic needs and progress through the routine use of common assessments across the neighborhood's education providers;
- crime reduction through improved lighting, safer public spaces, and renovation of abandoned properties;
- expanded open and green spaces integrated into the neighborhood;
- strategic infrastructure updates to make the area more walkable and bikeable;
- increased, targeted adult training programs, including some that terminate in professional certifications in health and technology fields; and
- creation of a common data dashboard with inputs from schools, city agencies, public-use geographic and population data, and other organizations at work in the neighborhood.<sup>184</sup>

The Choice Neighborhood planning bore almost identical fruit to the Promise Neighborhood efforts. At the end of 2012, HUD awarded the neighborhood a five-year, \$29.75 million grant to implement these goals.<sup>185</sup>

- area childcare providers—especially in informal settings—had limited training and prospects for improving their skills;
- parenting skills and knowledge around young children’s development and nutrition was limited; and
- children in the neighborhood rarely had access to books at home.<sup>174</sup>

In response, the EPN team requested the Promise Neighborhood funds to: support the hiring of additional instructional coaches to help teachers improve their instructional practices, develop an aligned focus on science and technology from early education through high school, expand investments in quality early education seats (especially child care), expand and bring together existing social services into centralized sites in the neighborhood, and much more.<sup>175</sup> By the end of 2011, EPN’s application had received more points than any other community’s proposal—and earned the team a five-year, \$24.6 million Promise Neighborhood implementation grant from the Department of Education.<sup>176</sup>



The remains of the old Wheatley Courts, February 2015.  
Photo: Conor P. Williams.

As with the planning grant, a variety of local organizations pledged additional funds to match the federal investment. The local United Way agreed to provide \$300,000 as well as a series of support services valued at over \$500,000, and the City of San Antonio offered additional funding for “wrap-around services for Tynan [Early Childhood Campus], to include health and nutrition, and parenting education.”<sup>177</sup>

## What is the EPN doing now?

Like the neighborhood surrounding it, the Ella Austin Community Center is itself a study in contrasts. The building, formerly Ralph Waldo Emerson Middle School, looks like a typical school on the outside—all yellow-brown brick and small windows. Inside, however, it has pine banisters and walls, along with a beautiful auditorium that has been largely untouched in the last half-century.<sup>186</sup> For a community center combating urban poverty, the Center’s interior gives off the unexpected aura of a hunting lodge.

But the old is giving way to the new: renovation efforts are underway upstairs. Meanwhile, inside the EPN offices, constant chatter rises above the noise. People are laughing and talking through hallways between open office doors. The daily effervescence percolates through the EPN’s broader work. Full-time officials and members of EPN’s Advisory Council both have demonstrated considerable willingness to think broadly and creatively about the challenges they are addressing. (See sidebars: “Sitting in on an Eastside Promise Neighborhood Advisory Council Meeting,” page 32, and “Eastside’s Choice Neighborhood Grants,” page 29.) During the last several years, the EPN and its partners have received a host of additional funds to support their core work.

Violent crime has long been a problem on San Antonio’s Eastside—the “violent crime rate for the patrol district encompassing Wheatley Courts...averages about three times the overall rate for the City,” according to the U.S. Department of Justice.<sup>187</sup> So in 2012, the San Antonio Housing Authority, Trinity University, the San Antonio Police Department, and a number of other area partners secured a three-year, \$600,000 Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. The grant covers a range of activities to “determine and understand the leading causes of crime and insecurity” in the EPN and preemptively address them.<sup>188</sup> The grant supports upgrades to existing criminal data systems, improvements to street lighting, and revitalization of abandoned housing in the area.<sup>189</sup>

Any community revitalization effort requires ongoing engagement with the members of that community. Ongoing engagement is easier when those community members frequently see each other. So the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County partnered with non-profit KaBOOM! and health insurance company Humana to build a brand new, “multigenerational” playground at the Ella Austin Community Center.<sup>190</sup> The following year, they worked with KaBOOM!, city agencies, Blue Cross and Blue





The Ella Austin Community Center, Eastside Promise Neighborhood. Photo: Conor P. Williams.

Shield of Texas, and others to build another playground in the EPN, at Woodard Park.<sup>191</sup>

Given the urgent need for more and better child care options in the neighborhood, the EPN sought philanthropic donations to establish a dual-generation program to help informal caretakers improve their skills. These grants support EPN “parents/caretakers of children age 0 to 10...interested in completing their education and/or acquiring certain workforce credentials.”<sup>192</sup> In addition to \$150,000 in initial planning funds, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has committed up to \$1 million each year to pay tuition, fees, child care or after school costs, and other expenses for EPN residents who want to pursue Child Development Associate (CDA), Associate in Arts (A.A.), and/or Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degrees—or beyond. One EPN resident is already working on an M.A. through the program.<sup>193</sup> This effort is also being supported by the J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation.<sup>194</sup> In other words, the program’s dual-generation approach is 1) improving the care that EPN children receive and 2) raising the skills and salaries of informal caretakers in the neighborhood by helping them get certified and enter the formal early childhood education workforce.<sup>195</sup>

The EPN also brings PreK4SA coaches into its neighborhood to provide professional development for child care and pre-K center directors. The coaches work to address specific needs identified during the community planning process and others that have come up as part of EPN efforts to steadily raise neighborhood centers’ quality ratings on Texas’ Quality Rating and Improvement System.<sup>196</sup>

And since early education does not end with safe, high-quality child care and pre-K instruction, the EPN

is supporting SAISD schools with a number of efforts. Officials do not view their investments as remedying deficits; one says, “the real capacity, the real assets are already here.”<sup>197</sup> The EPN funds a variety of investments in the neighborhood’s schools, like oral language development programs for DLLs in SAISD afterschool programs, and updated parent rooms on all EPN-serving campuses for programs to help families support DLLs’ linguistic development.<sup>198</sup> The EPN’s investments and reform efforts attracted attention from the San Antonio Spurs, who partnered with Samsung to renovate an elementary school library and provide new education technology for teachers and students.<sup>199</sup>

After conversations with SAISD, the EPN also purchased Charlotte Danielson’s Teachscape teacher evaluation system for the district—along with training to prepare principals and deans to use the system. To ensure that teachers get maximum benefit from the new tool, the EPN is partnering with Trinity University to provide campuses with extra instructional deans. These additional hires begin as Trinity graduate students who tutor, work with small groups, and apprentice as administrators in SAISD schools during their first year of graduate study. In the second year, they receive training on the teacher evaluation systems and how to serve as a school’s instructional leader. At the end, these deans receive their Master’s degrees and administrator licenses at a total cost of \$15,000—less than a third of the usual \$50,000 for going through Trinity’s program. Early returns on these investments are encouraging, say EPN officials: the extra administrators help ensure that “the conversations are so rich, so deep, so expansive with the Danielson model.”<sup>200</sup> The extra adults in the building make it possible for teachers to get more frequent and personalized feedback.



Eastside Promise Neighborhood Vegetable Garden—at the Ella Austin Community Center. Photo: Conor P. Williams.

## Sitting in on an Eastside Promise Neighborhood Advisory Council Meeting

“We had people saying, ‘Why invest in this neighborhood? It’s high crime. It has all these problems!’ Our response to that has been, ‘Why not?’” —Eastside Promise Neighborhood Advisory Council member

The Eastside Promise Neighborhood Advisory Council meeting harkens back to an old model of community redevelopment—with a few updates. This is a meeting that, by design, echoes the national strategy of Great Society programs like Head Start, which required “maximum feasible participation” in planning and design processes from members of communities where federal funds were to be spent.<sup>206</sup>

And yet, the meeting belongs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is being conducted in English, but there is instant interpretation into Spanish through wireless headsets. PowerPoint slides showcasing images from recent Engineering Friday projects and data tracking the EPN’s work are projected onto the wall at the far end of the conference room. The energetic conversations around the table are overlaid on a background of softly clicking laptop keys. Children pass through the back of the meeting—grabbing snacks, whispering quietly, occasionally punctuating the meeting with cries for attention—on their way to the child care room.

Like Mayor Castro’s push for community engagement with the development of SA2020’s goals, the Advisory Council serves to continue gathering community input and coordinating local assets to support the EPN. The room is full of educators, non-profit leaders, community organizers, parents, public safety officers, and city officials.

One of the meeting’s themes is building sustainability beyond the federal grant. “We have great progress and momentum at this midway point...We have partnered with [the EPN] and with their leadership, we’re making a difference here in the footprint,” says one participant. But it is clear that folks around the table are wondering how things will continue as the various grants run out. One attendee suggests the Council require that all future requests for funding and proposals for programming include an explanation for how the program will remain viable when the federal grants end. This garners widespread approval.

It was not always this way. At the beginning, one participant says, “we had two- or three-hour meetings and got nothing done. Now we have binders. Binders!” One of the EPN’s key realizations was that its initial community outreach strategies were not working. As Paul Nyhan wrote in a 2014 New America brief, *After Winning, Then What?*, EPN “leaders learned a simple but crucial lesson: to listen...they gained traction when they invited parents to play even bigger roles.”<sup>207</sup> In short, EPN recognized that its success in the community depends in large part on building trust and social capital with—and between—community members.

This new emphasis shows. The Advisory Council’s norms of engagement go unarticulated in this meeting, but they are clearly present just beneath the surface. The discourse is at turns probing, reflective, and congratulatory. It serves the purpose of exploring options, checking for consensus, making decisions, and—perhaps most importantly—convincing one another that the process is worth their commitment. It is part pep rally, part leadership seminar, and part community networking, which is another way of saying that the deliberations are about using resources well—but also about developing the trust and social capital of a true civic institution. An EPN official tells the Advisory Council, “Parents are sitting here and hearing this, and the ripple effect—well, parents are taking this back and helping to spread the word... You’re the most powerful marketing voice we have.”<sup>208</sup>

Perhaps most powerfully, however, EPN has supported the development of the SAISD STEM Education Strategic Plan, a commitment to a greater Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics focus in its schools. The new plan compresses the curricula into four days to make space for “Engineering Fridays.” These days are built around learning projects—facilitated by lab-coated teachers—that often connect across other core subjects. EPN PreK–5<sup>th</sup> grade students research, plan, test, and build throughout the day “to solve real-world problems.”<sup>201</sup>

The new STEM focus launched in January 2014, and early returns are encouraging.<sup>202</sup> One EPN official says they’re hearing that DLL “students are able to better articulate their thoughts” and members of the EPN Advisory Council report strong student enthusiasm.<sup>203</sup> The new approach should be particularly helpful for DLLs; they benefit from student-driven exercises for several reasons. First, DLLs particularly benefit from opportunities to develop oral language proficiency in both their home languages and in English.<sup>204</sup> Engineering Fridays give them opportunities to engage with their peers and talk about rigorous, engaging content—in either or both of their languages. Second, while opportunities to “produce” language with peers are valuable, DLLs often need intentionally-designed opportunities to talk and develop content knowledge and vocabulary. That is, DLLs develop social English proficiency—the language skills they need to communicate informally—en route to developing full academic English proficiency. Successful navigation of that jump depends on access to rigorous academic and linguistic expectations that allow students to build content knowledge. Since Engineering Fridays include substantial hands-on instruction, they provide DLLs (and non-DLLs) opportunities to become familiar with content and related vocabulary that support academic language proficiency.<sup>205</sup>

## Adjusting Expectations, Plotting a New Course

In his 2014 New America brief, *After Winning, Then What?*, Paul Nyhan noted that the EPN has revised some of its original goals. For instance, fewer than a third of the neighborhood’s new kindergartners were customarily ready for school on their first day. The EPN team initially hoped to have 66 percent of new kindergartners ready to meet that standard by the 2016–17 school year.<sup>209</sup> As the team worked through various difficulties—limited availability of high-quality early education programs, data collection challenges, and more—it revised the

objective, to having between 45 and 55 percent of neighborhood kindergartners school-ready in 2016–17.<sup>210</sup>

In August 2014, EPN submitted a performance report to the U.S. Department of Education. The report charts a mix of successes and ongoing challenges:

- The EPN has struggled to connect with many area families with young children, though kindergarten readiness has increased significantly at the neighborhood’s three elementary schools.<sup>211</sup>
- EPN efforts to connect with informal caregivers in the footprint initially showed limited success, though they have become more effective as the dual-generation programs have become more robust.<sup>212</sup>
- Early returns suggest that local schools are exceeding the EPN’s math and English Language Arts targets.<sup>213</sup>

Is this success? Is the EPN’s promise of community transformation on track? The mixed results and revised goals could be interpreted as a failure—perhaps of nerve, of will, or of execution. But the honest answer is that it is still early days. The Eastside’s struggles have deep roots, and intergenerational poverty is not the sort of problem that disappears in a few years. As the EPN put it in its performance report, meaningful solutions require the community

to further develop and institutionalize the infrastructure necessary for city-wide scale of this cross-sector, collective impact model...as silos break down, communications improve and sustainability becomes more achievable [and] small successes encourage shared problem-solving and the risk-taking that is required to change systems from within.<sup>214</sup>

That is why, even as the 2010 “planning grant” wound down and the 2011 “implementation grant” began, the preparatory work continued. The EPN is still developing the social capital and systemic capacity (across multiple organizations) required for adequately responding to the neighborhood’s many pressing challenges. But if the grassroots energy of its Advisory Council is any indication, that process is well underway. (See sidebar, *Sitting in on an Eastside Promise Neighborhood Advisory Council Meeting*, page 32.)

# CLOSING: CHECKING THEIR WORK

The SA2020 project did not end with the community visioning process. About a year later—just months before the Brainpower Initiative Task Force released its pre-K recommendation—SA2020 formally re-launched as a non-profit “dedicated to seeing the vision through to reality.”<sup>215</sup>

The new organization serves a number of purposes. First, it carries the vision forward outside of the auspices of the offices of the City of San Antonio. María Fernández says that while Mayor Castro’s popularity helped the initiative develop credibility and social capital in the early stages, the establishment of the SA2020 non-profit built on that foundation and gave the community a way to stay involved. According to Fernández, this was also a way to keep the momentum moving beyond the mayor’s time in office. “It’s not an initiative out of the mayor’s office—it’s collaboration between local government departments involved in this work, along with many community partners,” she says. For instance, “there are almost 80 organizations in San Antonio doing work supporting children from 0 to 8 years old, so we see our role as connecting them.”<sup>216</sup>

That connecting role is the second core purpose of the new SA2020 organization. It links various public, private, and non-profit partners in an effort to guide their efforts to maximize progress on the SA2020 community priorities. Fernández says, “we’re a small non-profit; we’re not going to move any of [the SA2020 vision’s] 11 development tracks on our own. So we get involved in collaborative efforts that no one organization is going to be able to do.” This work includes coordinating philanthropic efforts with existing social entrepreneurship and community revitalization projects. In a recent e-mail to its network, SA2020 wrote:

SA2020 represents the common goals of thousands of individuals in our community. We represent our city’s desire to stand up and try something new. No more moving without a direction, no more competing to achieve the same goal, no more talk without action.<sup>217</sup>

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, SA2020 plays the role of scorekeeper. Its website includes a comprehensive Data Dashboard (accessible at <http://www.sa2020.org/progress/>) with measurable data on the various priority areas included in the original SA2020 vision. Visitors interested in the city’s educational progress can select an indicator like “3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading” and explore data illustrating current progress towards the 2020 goal. Progress on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading goal is mixed so far, but the first PreK4SA cohort of students will not finish third grade (and contribute their hopefully-higher reading scores to the mix) until the end of the 2017–18 school year.

Fortunately, SA2020 includes a “Kindergarten Readiness” indicator. Unfortunately, it was left undefined in the original report: “To be developed, after baseline data [are] determined.” This means that progress is currently listed as “In Development.”<sup>218</sup> SA2020’s Fernández reports that the data have been arriving in fits and starts. The United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County has begun “incentivizing the use of the Early Development Instrument,” which was administered to nearly 20,000 kindergartners across six area school districts, but comparison remains difficult because more districts have since signed on. “It’s not as easy an indicator to illustrate as the other ones,” she says. Because of the data limitations, “it’s not longitudinal, so we’re trying to figure out the best way to share that.”<sup>219</sup>

As a non-profit, SA2020 does not have regulatory authority or any other particularly powerful incentive to corral local organizations to action. So these data are particularly useful for keeping the initiative’s original vision alive and in focus for the community. Ana Acevedo, Education Policy Administrator for the City of San Antonio, says that the data-driven transparency approach “definitely works. It helps ensure that SA2020 is used to inform policy and guide decisions.”<sup>220</sup>

This guidance is essential, given San Antonio’s flurry of policy activity. With so much happening across so many social sectors and levels of government, what lessons does the city’s experience offer to other communities in search of ways to better serve their DLL population?



**Lesson #1: Invest thoughtfully in early education access and quality across the PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> grades.**

San Antonio designed and implemented its new PreK4SA program carefully. DLLs in PreK4SA have ample opportunities to speak and develop the oral language skills they need to develop linguistically, academically, and socially. Research suggests that oral language development—in home languages and English—is a key foundation for reaching academic English proficiency.

But strong program design and good pedagogical choices are only as good as the people working with them on a daily basis, which is why PreK4SA's program relies on highly-trained teachers who receive a great deal of support and flexibility in their classrooms.

*Upshot: Districts who want to support DLLs by expanding their investments in early education must build these new programs at a manageable pace, with an emphasis on hiring appropriately-trained early educators to use developmentally-appropriate curricula.*

**Lesson #2: Families are a critically important educational resource for DLLs.**

San Antonio's many family engagement programs cover considerable ground, from trainings that help parents support their children's development to programs that help families advance professionally to social services that address home-based issues that interfere with academic progress. Effective implementation of these programs requires that administrators and educators truly engage with the communities they serve to determine what DLLs' families need.

*Upshot: Districts who want to support DLLs at school need to support their families. And there is no better way to determine what families need than by asking them—and involving them in drafting policies that can meet those needs.*

**Lesson #3: Coordination across sectors and funding streams is as powerful as it is difficult.**

The community of San Antonio and its leaders developed PreK4SA through the SA2020 planning process, which included considerable community input, the drafting of a comprehensive vision for improving the city, and a framework for measuring progress.

*Upshot: Not all problems are best solved within existing silos, and DLLs have unique academic and developmental needs. Districts seeking to better support them should look for partners and funds within educational institutions and beyond.*

**Lesson #4: Data are key to setting goals and faithfully implementing reforms.**

In San Antonio, the EPN, PreK4SA, school districts, administrators, and teachers across the city are all intentionally, carefully using data to validate their work—and refine it when necessary. This is rare. It is easy to diagnose a problem and prescribe “research-based solutions,” so long as both remain suitably abstract. But that is not usually enough to make a difference for students—specificity matters. Any reform's success depends upon several factors:

1. clearly-defined targets with public input and buy-in
2. comprehensive gathering—and appropriate publication of—data on new initiatives
3. consideration of what parts of new programs are working and what needs adjustment

*Upshot: Districts seeking to improve how they serve DLLs need to articulate their goals in clear, measurable terms—and then hold themselves accountable for their progress towards them.*

**Lesson #5: Home language instruction helps DLLs' long-term success, so bilingual educators are key.**

Local districts are working to convert and improve their bilingual education models into dual immersion programs. These models provide deeper and longer support for DLLs' home languages. But this additional commitment to bilingualism is only as good as the teachers these districts can hire.

*Upshot: Districts seeking to shift to a dual immersion model need to begin with a human capital strategy.*

# NOTES

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Selected Social Characteristics in the United States: 2009–2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates,” <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmlk>.

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and/or children of immigrants see “Why Pre-K Matters for DLLs” below, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> MALDEF, “United States v. State of Texas,” [http://maldef.org/education/litigation/us\\_v\\_texas/](http://maldef.org/education/litigation/us_v_texas/); Albert Cortez and Roy L. Johnson, “Bilingual Education in Texas: Where It Is Now, and What Is Still Needed” (San Antonio: IDRA, 2008), [http://www.idra.org/IDRA\\_Newsletter/November-December\\_2008\\_Enlightened\\_Public\\_Policy/Bilingual\\_Education\\_in\\_Texas/](http://www.idra.org/IDRA_Newsletter/November-December_2008_Enlightened_Public_Policy/Bilingual_Education_in_Texas/).

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<sup>14</sup> *Will Rogers’ Weekly Articles, Volume 6: The Roosevelt Years, 1933–1935*, edited by Steven K. Gragert (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University Press, 1982), 61.

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<sup>176</sup> U.S. Department of Education, “Obama Administration Announces 2011 Promise Neighborhoods Grant Winners,” press release, December 19, 2011, <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/obama-administration-announces-2011-promise-neighborhoods-grant-winners>; Tim Mudd, “Federal Promise Neighborhoods Grants Awarded to 20 Communities,” January 9, 2013 (Washington, DC: National League of Cities), <http://www.nlc.org/media-center/news-search/federal-promise-neighborhoods-grants-awarded-to-20-communities>.

<sup>177</sup> United Way of San Antonio, “Preliminary Memorandum of Understanding” (San Antonio: 2011), <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/2011/>

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<sup>178</sup> United Way of San Antonio et al., “2011 Promise Neighborhood Implementation Grant,” 4–5.

<sup>179</sup> United Way of San Antonio et al., “2011 Promise Neighborhood Implementation Grant,” 5; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “FY 2012 State Income Limits,” (Washington, DC: 2012), 4, [http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il/il12/StateIncomelimits\\_Report.pdf](http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il/il12/StateIncomelimits_Report.pdf).

<sup>180</sup> City of San Antonio, “2010 Promise Neighborhood Planning Grant,” 5. Note: the median household income for the project and surrounding area was just \$19,815. San Antonio Housing Authority, “Eastside Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan” (San Antonio: 2013), 16, <http://www.saha.org/pdf/06-19-13-WCTransformationPlan-HI.pdf>.

<sup>181</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “FY 2010 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant Award Information,” <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=cn-planning-grantees.pdf>.

<sup>182</sup> San Antonio Housing Authority, “Eastside Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan,” 15.

<sup>183</sup> San Antonio Housing Authority, “Eastside Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan,” 34.

<sup>184</sup> San Antonio Housing Authority, “Eastside Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan.”

<sup>185</sup> Karisa King, “The Days Now Are Numbered For Troubled Wheatley Courts,” *San Antonio Express-News*, December 14, 2012, [http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local\\_news/article/The-days-now-are-numbered-for-troubled-Wheatley-4116392.php](http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/The-days-now-are-numbered-for-troubled-Wheatley-4116392.php)

<sup>186</sup> Juan Garcia, “The Auditorium at Ella Austin,” *View From the Hill* (blog), August 17, 2014, <http://dhsa1.blogspot.com/2014/08/a-bright-future-for-ella-austin.html>.

<sup>187</sup> Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, “Site Snapshot: San Antonio, Texas,” [http://www.lisc.org/csi/images/byrne\\_criminal\\_justice\\_innovation\\_\(bcji\)/asset\\_upload\\_file292\\_18982.pdf](http://www.lisc.org/csi/images/byrne_criminal_justice_innovation_(bcji)/asset_upload_file292_18982.pdf).

<sup>188</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, “Site Snapshot: San Antonio, Texas.”

<sup>189</sup> San Antonio Housing Authority, “SAHA Receives \$600,000 Grant for Eastside Safety,” 2012, <http://www.saha.org/NewhousingM/2012/new-grant.html>; U.S. Department of Justice, “Site Snapshot: San Antonio, Texas.”

<sup>190</sup> “San Antonio Community to Build Dream Playground for All Ages—In One Day!” press release, 2011, [http://sagesanantonio.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/San-Antonio-Build-Day-Alert-10-25-2\\_1.pdf](http://sagesanantonio.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/San-Antonio-Build-Day-Alert-10-25-2_1.pdf).

<sup>191</sup> United Way of San Antonio, “East Side Children Receive Dream Playground,” e-newsletter, June 2013, <http://www.ibcrm.com/328/June13/Jun13/newsletterparts/landing3.html>.

<sup>192</sup> “Eastpoint Baseline Document” (San Antonio: 2014), 34, [http://eastpointsa.org/resources/EastPointBaseline\\_Document.pdf](http://eastpointsa.org/resources/EastPointBaseline_Document.pdf).

<sup>193</sup> United Way of San Antonio, “Annie E. Casey Foundation to Partner on Eastside,” November 15, 2012, <http://www.unitedwaysatx.org/annie-e-casey-foundation-to-partner-on-eastside/>; Interview, Eastside Promise Neighborhood, February 3, 2015.

<sup>194</sup> Interview, Eastside Promise Neighborhood, February 3, 2015; “Eastpoint Baseline Document,” 34.

<sup>195</sup> There are other EPN programs supporting adults and families. The Living Cities’ Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund, with support from Bloomberg Philanthropies, supports on-site financial coaching at the Ella Austin Center. This dovetails with Goodwill-supported job coaches and veteran retraining services that will eventually be housed in a new workforce center as part of the Wheatley Courts redevelopment (see sidebar: “Eastside’s Choice Neighborhood Grants,” page 29). Interview, Eastside Promise Neighborhood, February 3, 2015; “Bloomberg Philanthropies Awards Financial Empowerment Center Grants,” press release, January 8, 2013, <http://www.mikebloomberg.com/news/bloomberg-philanthropies-awards-financial-empowerment-center-grants/>

<sup>196</sup> Eastside Promise Neighborhood, “Early Childhood Centers,” <http://eastsidepromise.org/early-childhood-centers/>. For more on Texas’ QRIS, see “Texas Rising Star Levels,” <https://texasrisingstar.org/wordpress/about-trs/trs-star-levels/>.

<sup>197</sup> Interview, Eastside Promise Neighborhood, February 3, 2015.

<sup>198</sup> Interview, Eastside Promise Neighborhood, February 3, 2015.

<sup>199</sup> Juan Garcia, “The Spurs’ Gift to Bowden Elementary School,” *The Rivard Report*, June 7, 2014, <http://therivardreport.com/spurs-gift-bowden-elementary-school/>.

<sup>200</sup> Interview, Eastside Promise Neighborhood, February 3, 2015. Note: the EPN also bought an evaluation tool for district administrators from William and Mary Professor James Stronge.

<sup>201</sup> San Antonio Independent School District, “Engineering Fridays Gives K–5 Students at Three SAISD Schools Avenue to Solve Real-World Problems,” [http://www.saisd.net/main/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=5269:engineering-fridays-gives-k-5-students-at-three-saisd-schools-avenue-to-solve-real-world-problems&catid=3:news&Itemid=151](http://www.saisd.net/main/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5269:engineering-fridays-gives-k-5-students-at-three-saisd-schools-avenue-to-solve-real-world-problems&catid=3:news&Itemid=151).

<sup>202</sup> JaNay Queen, Zachary Epps, DeMonta Whiting, and Marc Stone, *Eastside Promise Neighborhood: Annual Grant Performance Report* (Rockville, MD: Results Leadership Group, August 2014).

<sup>203</sup> Eastside Promise Neighborhood Advisory Council Meeting, February 2, 2015.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. Dina C. Castro, Mariela M. Páez, David K. Dickinson, and Ellen Frede, “Promoting Language and Literacy in Young Dual Language Learners: Research, Practice, and Policy,” *Child Development Perspectives* 5, no. 1 (2011), 15–21.

<sup>205</sup> Interview, Eastside Promise Neighborhood, February 3, 2015.

<sup>206</sup> *Economic Opportunity Act of 1964*, Public Law 88-452, Title II, Sec. 202(a)(3).

<sup>207</sup> Paul Nyhan, “After Winning, Then What? An Inside Look at Four Winners of Federal Early Education Grant Competitions” (Washington, DC: New America, December 2014), [http://www.edcentral.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2014.12.17\\_NA\\_AfterWinning\\_Report\\_v3.pdf](http://www.edcentral.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2014.12.17_NA_AfterWinning_Report_v3.pdf), 20.

<sup>208</sup> Eastside Promise Neighborhood Advisory Council Meeting, February 2, 2015.

<sup>209</sup> Nyhan, “After Winning, Then What?” 20.

<sup>210</sup> Nyhan, “After Winning, Then What?” 20.

<sup>211</sup> JaNay Queen, Zachary Epps, DeMonta Whiting, and Marc Stone, *Eastside Promise Neighborhood: Annual Grant Performance Report* (Rockville, MD: Results Leadership Group, August 2014).

<sup>212</sup> JaNay Queen, Zachary Epps, DeMonta Whiting, and Marc Stone, *Eastside Promise Neighborhood: Annual Grant Performance Report* (Rockville, MD: Results Leadership Group, August 2014); Interview, Eastside Promise Neighborhood, February 3, 2015.

<sup>213</sup> JaNay Queen, Zachary Epps, DeMonta Whiting, and Marc Stone, *Eastside Promise Neighborhood: Annual Grant Performance Report* (Rockville, MD: Results Leadership Group, August 2014).

<sup>214</sup> JaNay Queen, Zachary Epps, DeMonta Whiting, and Marc Stone, *Eastside Promise Neighborhood: Annual Grant Performance Report* (Rockville, MD: Results Leadership Group, August 2014).

<sup>215</sup> SA2020, “SA2020 Public Process and History,” <http://www.sa2020.org/sa2020-history/>.

<sup>216</sup> Maria Fernández, interview with author, November 11, 2014.

<sup>217</sup> SA2020, “Take a stand for collaboration,” e-mail sent May 5, 2015.

<sup>218</sup> City of San Antonio, *SA2020 Report Book*, 42; SA2020, “Data Dashboard: Education,” [http://www.sa2020.org/dashboard/progress\\_type/education/71/](http://www.sa2020.org/dashboard/progress_type/education/71/).

<sup>219</sup> Maria Fernández, interview with author, November 11, 2014.

<sup>220</sup> Ana R. Acevedo, interview with author, February 2, 2015.



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