Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) Results
2017–2018 Greater Rochester, NY

Prepared by the Metro Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools at NYU

The National Parent Leadership Institute (NPLI) exists to coordinate and increase the civic skills and impact of diverse parents to improve child and community outcomes as they build caring communities. NPLI believes that families, communities, and our democracy are strengthened when all parents have the leadership skills to maximize child outcomes at home, in the neighborhood, and in public policy. PLTI started in Connecticut in 1992. When the outcomes revealed strong civic skill development, significant increases in parent leadership within communities, and diversity in participants across education levels, culture and race, national interest in replication took hold. Starting in 2008, the Connecticut PLTI grew a National Parent Leadership Institute to provide the tested model in other cities and states. In 2012, The Kellogg Foundation offered a three-year grant to test a national structure and network. PLTI is now in 15 states with shared outcome data and supportive training.

The Metro Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools at NYU was hired by NPLI as an independent, outside evaluator to assess outcomes of the PLTI program, including conducting a parent survey. In partnership with Algorhythm, the Metro Center conducted and assessed survey results in 10 PLTI sites across the country and created individual site reports for each of those sites. The parent survey measures the impact of the initiative on parents’ civic skills, engagement, and knowledge, as well as their experiences with the initiative. Pre-surveys were completed between October 2017 and March 2018, depending on the site’s start date. Post-surveys were completed at the end of the 20-session initiative. For this site, 23 parents completed the pre and post surveys — 28 parents completed a pre survey and 22 completed a post survey.

This evaluation reflects a high degree of statistical rigor, for the following reasons:

- The survey consisted of constructs. A construct is a collection of survey questions that all measure the same underlying belief or behavior (in this case, “policy experience” or “community activism,” for example). Self-reported beliefs and behaviors are difficult to measure accurately with only one question. Therefore, the most statistically rigorous surveys ask multiple questions, phrased in different ways, to more reliably capture beliefs and behaviors.

- In calculating construct scores, each question was statistically weighted, with questions that more closely measured a given construct weighted more heavily than other questions. This helps to ensure that the outcome scores capture the construct as accurately as possible.

This brief report describes the measures used and reports on the site’s demographics and outcomes.

Measures

The PLTI survey measured 6 constructs at both pre and post and an additional 3 constructs at post only. These additional 3 constructs measured participants’ experiences with the program. The survey also measured whether participants thought about or took steps toward making personal and civic changes as a direct result of PLTI and their likelihood to recommend PLTI to a friend.
The following table shows how many questions made up each construct, and a few sample questions. For a full list of questions, please see the appendix.

Table 1: Summary of Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th># of questions</th>
<th>Response scale</th>
<th>Sample questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy experience</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1=Not at all confident; 5=Very confident</td>
<td>How confident on a scale of 1-5 do you feel doing the following? Advocating for an issue or public policy; Public speaking; Helping a group reach consensus; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community activism</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1=Never; 4=Always</td>
<td>Please tell us how frequently you feel or do the following: I feel I can have a part in improving my community; I voice my opinions about what my community needs; I understand how public policy affects my community; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic engagement</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Yes or No</td>
<td>In the last 12 months, have you done any of the following? Attended any public meeting where there was a discussion of policy or community issues; Signed a petition; Served on a committee or as an officer of an organization; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government knowledge</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes or No</td>
<td>Please tell us what you know about each: How state government budgets are made?; How state laws are made?; Who your elected representative for the State House of Representatives is?; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working across difference</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1=Agree strongly; 5=Disagree strongly</td>
<td>How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I know a wide variety of people from different backgrounds - social, cultural, economic; I feel confident speaking with others who are not like me; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards voting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1=None of the time; 4=All of the time</td>
<td>Please tell us how frequently you feel or do the following: It is important to vote in presidential elections; I vote or encourage others to vote; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of community within PLTI (post-test only)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1=Agree strongly; 5=Disagree strongly</td>
<td>How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? It is very important to me to be part of this PLTI community; I expect to be part of this community for a long time; I feel hopeful about the future of this community, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer connection within PLTI (post-test only)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1=Agree strongly; 5=Disagree strongly</td>
<td>How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? It is completely safe to take a risk in PLTI; Even in difficult situations, people in PLTI can depend on each other; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership within PLTI (post-test only)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1=Agree strongly; 5=Disagree strongly</td>
<td>How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? People in PLTI are provided opportunities to assume leadership roles within the class; I believe I have an impact on decisions made at PLTI; etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic Data (n=23)

Gender

- Female: 74%
- Male: 26%
- Would rather not identify: 0%
- No Response: 0%
Education Level

No Response: 13%
High school/GED: 9%
Associate’s Degree: 9%
Bachelor’s Degree: 35%
Master’s, PhD, or Professional: 35%
Income

- <20k: 13%
- 20k-39,999: 9%
- 40k-59,999: 13%
- 60k-84,999: 43%
- 85,000+: 17%
- No Response: 4%
Place of Birth

- Born in the US: 70%
- Born outside the US: 30%
- No Response: 0%

Frequency (%)
Marital Status

- Married: 65%
- Domestic Partnership: 0%
- Single (never married): 22%
- Separated or Divorced: 13%
- No Response: 0%
Ages of the PLTI Parents’ Children

- 0-5: 30%
- 6-11: 61%
- 12-17: 35%
- 18-21: 22%
- 22+: 22%
Results: Outcomes (n=23)

The graph below shows the pre and post score for each construct. Original scores have been weighted and converted to 0-100 for easier interpretation and comparison between constructs.

PLTI parents showed growth in five of the six outcome areas.
There was an increase in the percentage of parents who engaged in 5 of the 9 civic behaviors over the past 12 months.
Personal and Civic Action

The overwhelming majority of parents reported that PLTI inspired them to think about or take steps to change their personal and civic lives.

Results: PLTI Experiences (n=23)

Sense of Community, Opportunities for Leadership, and Peer Connections

This graph shows how PLTI participants felt about the sense of community, opportunities for leadership, and peer connection within the program. Original scores have been converted to 0-100 for easier interpretation and comparison between constructs. Overall, scores of 87+ show that PLTI parents experienced a strong sense of community; developed strong connection and trust with peers; and had opportunities to become a leader.
Net promoter score

Many companies use a “net promoter score” to understand how loyal their customers are. Respondents answer on a scale from 0 to 10 how likely they are to recommend the company to a friend. The Net Promoter Score is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors (those who scored between 0 and 6) from the percentage of promoters or ambassadors (those who scored a 9 or 10).

This score may be applied to PLTI sites to understand the likelihood of PLTI participants talking up the program in the community or staying engaged through an alumni network, although this remains to be tested. PLTI participants were asked how likely they would be to recommend PLTI to a friend or family member, with 0 being “not at all likely” and 10 being “very likely.”

Net Promoter Score: 61

Possible range = 0-100 Positive score = Good Score over 50 = Excellent
Conclusion

This pre-post survey shows that PLTI served a diverse group of parents. Parents made gains 5 out of the 6 of the outcomes that were measured, including policy experience, community activism, government knowledge, attitudes toward voting, and civic engagement. By the end of the program, parents reported engaging more often in numerous civic behaviors. In addition to changes in civic attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors, the majority of parents reported that as a direct result of PLTI, they had thought about or taken steps to make changes in their personal lives, such as furthering their education, changing/advancing their careers, and making changes in their emotional, social, or physical health. Furthermore, parents reported that they had positive experiences in the program, as evidenced by high ratings when asked about perceived sense of community, opportunities for leadership, peer connection, and likelihood to recommend PLTI to a friend.
Appendix

Survey Constructs - List of questions

Policy Experience

On a scale from 1-5, how confident do you feel in your ability to do the following? 1=Not at all confident, 5=Very confident

a. Advocating for an issue or public policy.
b. Public speaking.
c. Community organizing.
d. Problem solving.
e. Helping a group reach consensus.
f. Reviewing, analyzing, and/or discussing budgets.
g. Engaging in policy development or policy improvement.
h. Assessing strengths in your community.
i. Developing projects or programs to address needs in your community.
j. Using outcome data to determine if a program or project achieved what it started out to do.

Community Activism

Please tell us how frequently you feel or do the following. 1=None of the time, 4=All of the time.

a. When problems arise within my community, I do something about them.
b. I feel I can have a part in improving my community.
c. I feel confident in my ability to help my community grow.
d. I voice my opinions about what my community needs.
e. I know what to do when problems arise in my community.
f. I get in touch with my elected officials when important legislation or ordinances affecting my community are pending.
g. I understand how public policy affects my community.
h. I am able to get information to help me better understand my community.

Voting

Please tell us how frequently you feel or do the following. 1=None of the time, 4=All of the time.

a. It is important to vote in presidential elections.
b. It is important to vote in local elections, for example, for mayor or school board.
c. I vote or encourage others to vote.

Civic Behavior

In the last 12 months, have you done any of the following activities? Yes or No

a. Attended any public meeting where there was a discussion of policy or community issues?
b. Used the internet to express your opinions about policy or community issues?
c. Served on a committee or as an officer of any group or organization?
d. Worked with others to get people in your immediate neighborhood to work together to fix or improve something?
e. Done any volunteer activities through or for an organization?
f. Spoke or presented at a community meeting (for example, school board, city or town council)?
g. Contacted an elected official at the local, state, or federal government?
h. Signed a petition?
Received any request directed to you personally to take some active role in a local, public or political issue in your community – perhaps to serve on a board, or to work with others on such an issue or to go to a meeting on some community issue?

Working Across Difference

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

a. I know a wide variety of people from different backgrounds -- social, cultural, economic.

b. I feel comfortable talking to people of all sorts of backgrounds.

c. I feel confident speaking with others who are not like me.

d. It is usually easy for me to like people who have different values from me.

e. I feel comfortable discussing issues with others with whom I disagree.

Government Knowledge

Please tell us what you know about each. Yes or No

a. Do you know how state government budgets are made?

b. Do you know how state laws are made?

c. Do you know who your elected representative for the state House of Representative is?

d. Do you know who your local representative for city government is?

e. Do you know who your representative for the state Senate is?

PLTI Sense of Community

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 1=Agree strongly, 5=Disagree strongly

a. It is very important to me to be part of this PLTI community.

b. I enjoy being with PLTI members.

c. I expect to be a part of this community for a long time.

d. Members of this community have shared important events together, such as holidays, celebrations, and crises.

e. I feel hopeful about the future of this community.

PLTI Sense of Leadership

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 1=Agree strongly, 5=Disagree strongly

a. People in PLTI are provided opportunities to assume leadership roles within the class.

b. People in PLTI are provided the resources and support they need to assume leadership roles within the class.

c. I feel confident that facilitators try to understand my views and experiences before suggesting new ways to do things.

d. I believe I have an impact on decisions made at PLTI.

PLTI Peer Connection

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 1=Agree strongly, 5=Disagree strongly

a. In PLTI, it is easy to discuss difficult issues and problems.

b. It is completely safe to take a risk in PLTI.

c. It is easy to ask other participants in PLTI for help.

d. Participants in PLTI value and respect each other’s contributions.

e. Even in difficult situations, people in PLTI can depend on each other.

f. People in PLTI trust each other.

g. I understand how parents’ community projects will address specific problems in their communities.

h. People in PLTI have a shared understanding of PLTI’s civic values and goals.