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Building Effective School-Family-Community Partnerships Through Community Dialogues; and Super Friends, Super Readers! Engaging community to support young children's social emotional development

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Promoting Educational Equity through Two Evidence-based Programs with Children and Families

Partnering Organizations

Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester
- Walter Denney Youth Center, Santi Dewa Ayu, Queenette Santos & Melissa McNickles

✓ *Implementation site partner*

UMass Boston's College of Education and Human Development,
Amy Cook & Angel Fettig (faculty),
Kaitlin Gould & Lauren Brodsky (graduate assistants)

✓ *Facilitation & assessment partner*

YWCA Boston, Paula Lima & Alveena Shah

✓ *Facilitation & programming partner*

Dever Elementary School, Natalia Martinez

✓ *Family outreach partner*

[Read About Our Next Steps](#)



Super Friends, Super Readers!

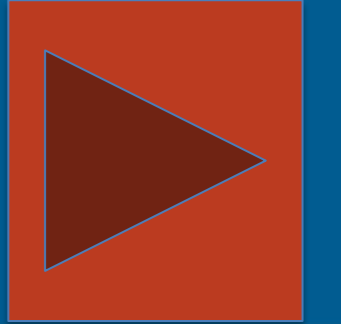
This project guides children through interactive shared reading sessions by using dialogic reading techniques that aim to support the development of social emotional skills.

[Learn More](#)

Engaging Parents through Community Dialogues

In collaboration with YWCA Boston, this series of community dialogues engages parents in open conversations on race and ethnicity, particularly as it relates to school climate and the educational experiences of their children.

[Learn More](#)



Purpose

This study examines the effects of utilizing dialogic reading techniques with focus on social emotional strategies in reducing children's challenging behaviors during small group peer-directed activities. The reading sessions provide multiple opportunities for children to discuss social and emotional skills presented in the storybook.

Background

Numerous studies support using dialogic techniques to build expressive language among 2-6 year olds. Dialogic techniques have been identified by the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse as an evidence-based practice in developing literacy skills. However, there is limited engaged scholarship on its effectiveness for promoting social-emotional learning among at-risk, low-income communities.

Our Research Methodology

- Single-subject research design used to examine the transfer of children's social emotional skills learned during storybook reading
- Multiple baseline design measures target behaviors of compromising, resolving conflicts turn-taking, sharing/engagement
- Data is graphed to conduct a visual analysis



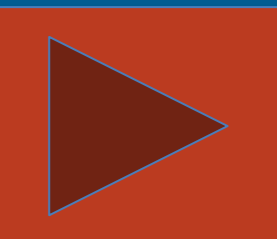
Why Social-Emotional Learning?

Social-emotional learning includes competencies like:

- Self-awareness and self-management skills;
- Social awareness and relationship skills;
- Responsible decision making

Long-term academic success consists of building literacy skills and social-emotional development during early childhood. By age 11, those who have acquired these skills are twice as likely to complete high school without engaging in risky behaviors.





The Dialogic Reading Model

Our Process

Two groups of children (kindergarten and 3rd-4th grade) engage in Super Friends, Super Readers!:

- 20-minute reading sessions twice a week
- Followed by group play (board game or other activity)

Research staff observe peer-directed activities and record positive interactions, and frequency and duration of challenging behaviors



5 Prompts for Participation: "CROWD"

- Completion
- Recall
- Open-ended
- Wh- Questions
- Distancing

Interactive Reading Using the PEER Instructional Sequence:

Dialogic reading shifts the role of the child **from passive listener to the storyteller** through adult guidance. Through employing strategic questioning and engaging in multiple readings/conversations, children enhance their reading comprehension, expressive vocabulary, and social-emotional development.

PEER Stage	Caregiver Role	Example
Prompt	Ask the child a question about the book or page.	How do you think this girl is feeling? (open ended prompt)
Evaluate	Evaluate response. Was it correct? Consider how it could be expanded.	Adult considers how to expand prompt.
Expand	Expand response by adding information and rephrasing.	How do you think Leena felt when Jack was no longer her friend?
Repeat	Repeat prompt and ask child to repeat correct/expanded response.	How do you think she is feeling. (Repeat only needed if child doesn't respond to expansion.

Outcomes of Dialogic Reading

Student Responses to a Post-program Evaluation

Response possibilities:

(1) don't like at all (2) don't like (3) like (4) like a lot!

or

(1) disagree a lot (2) disagree (3) agree (4) agree a lot!

I like attending Super Readers, Super Friends.

Average: 4

I like listening to books at Super Readers, Super Friends.

Average: 4

I like reading more now because of Super Readers, Super Friends.

Average: 3.75

I learned new ways to get along with others because of Super Readers, Super Friends.

Average: 4

I want to come to this program more because of my Super Readers, Super Friends group leaders.

Average: 4



Example of Visual analysis based on Preliminary Data:

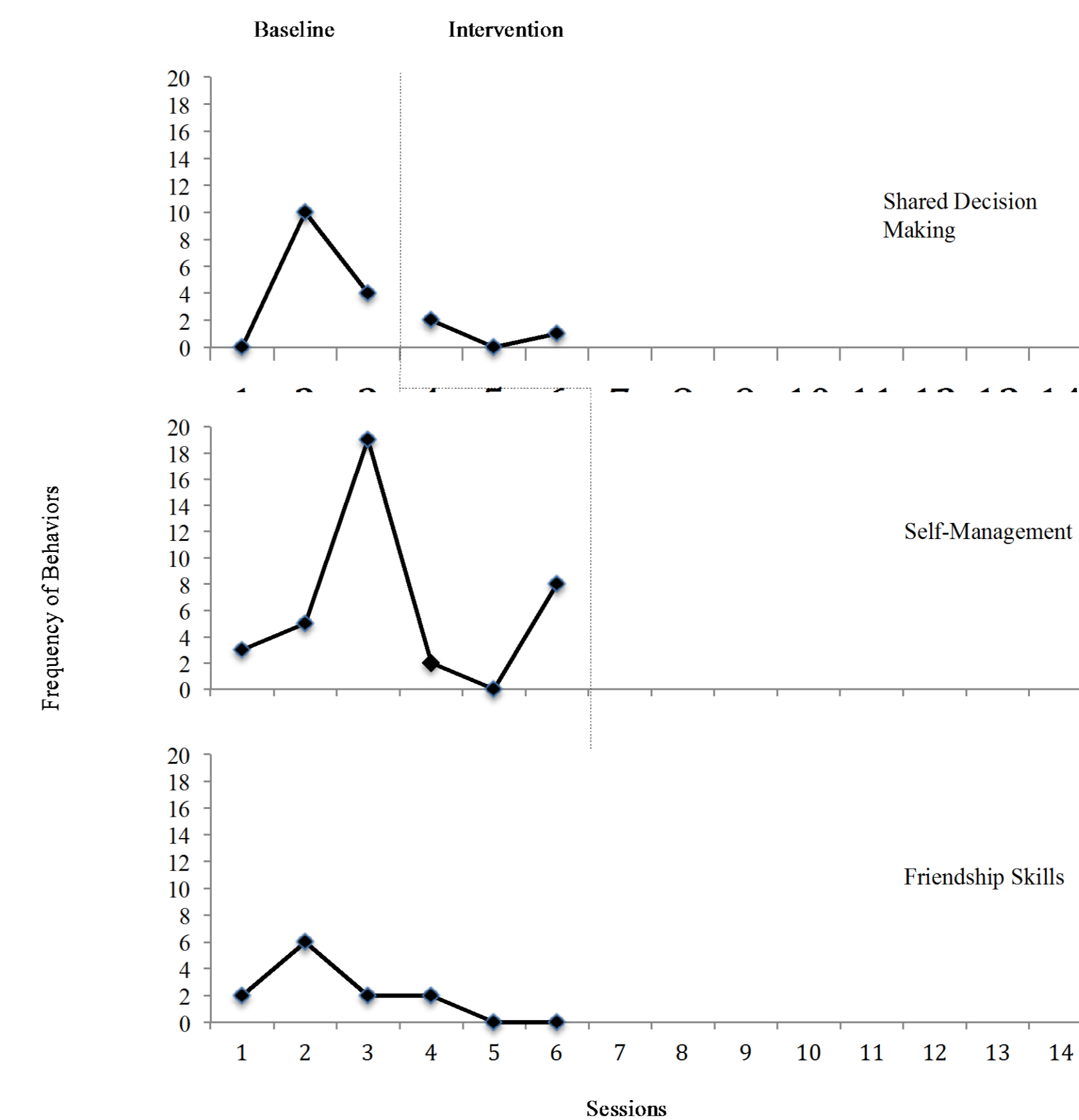


Figure 1. Kindergarten Super Friends, Super Readers Preliminary Data

Building Effective School-Family-Community Partnerships Through Community Dialogues

Background

Research has identified the following:

- A need for close school, family, and community ties to promote greater educational
- A need for opportunities for parents to share their stories and engage in a two-way conversation with educators
- Communication can be promoted through sustaining school-family-community partnerships that are guided by a shared vision and value shared decision-making

Through data collection and analysis of our Community Dialogues project, we hope to contribute new understandings on ways that educators can best promote effective school-family-community partnerships.

Defining Community Dialogues

A “democratic process that acknowledges and respects all parties, creates a context that reinforces the notion that change is possible, and **transforms relationships toward positive social change.**”

Purpose in Context

The community dialogues have consisted of open and structured discussions among a diverse group of Dever Elementary School parents and educators **to instill a greater sense of trust** and overcome unintentional racial divides that have impeded effective parent engagement and student achievement.

[View References](#)



Approach

Participants:

- 10 parents
- 5 community members
- Recruitment supported by the school

Sessions:

- 2 hours each for 5 weeks

Structured Facilitation:

- Provided by YW Boston
- Held at Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester – Walter Denney Youth Center

Assessment:

- Pre/post surveys
- Interviews at completion and post-6 months

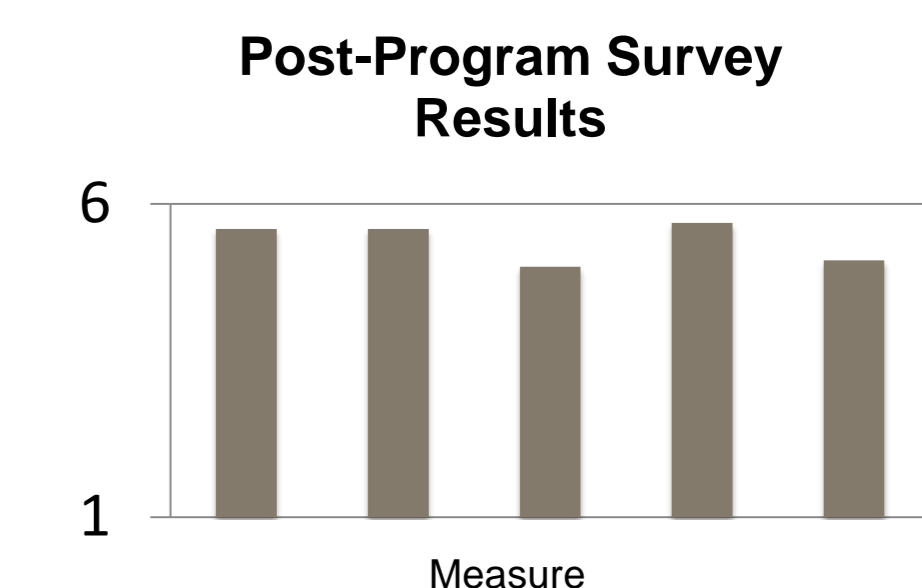
Community Dialogue participants engaged in a group exercise.

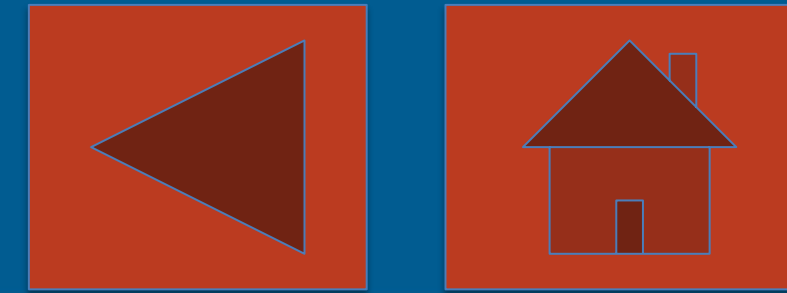


Preliminary Outcomes

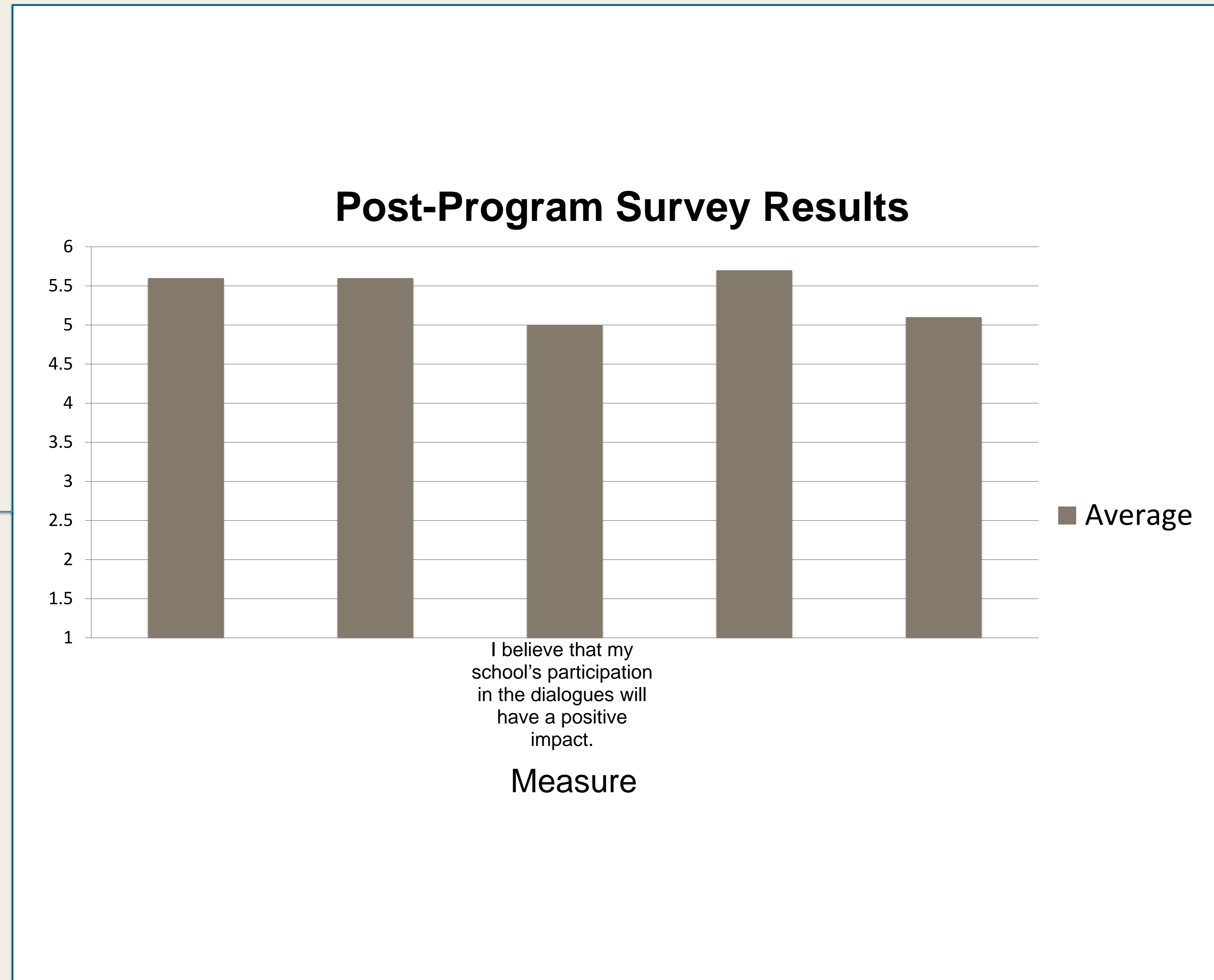
Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is being employed to conduct qualitative interviews and subsequent analyses of transcribed responses with a focus on measuring outcomes of **parent engagement, trust, and educator understandings.**

Direct Impact: The learning achieved aims to foster a school climate of democratic engagement. We anticipate improved school-family-community partnerships, which in turn can promote positive academic outcomes for at risk students at the Dever School.





One participant shared, “My experience with the dialogues was a different experience for me. I have never got together with different race and compared, shared challenges about our ethnicity.”



One participant identified the experience motivated her to “come together to work things out” in order to promote racial equity in the community.

A few participants expressed the wish that more parents and staff/teachers from the school community could have participated.



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A Look Into the Future: Aligning Project Goals

Our longer-term vision is to infuse components within Community Dialogues and Super Friends, Super Readers! into a holistic model that combines both direct service with children and family engagement and capacity building.

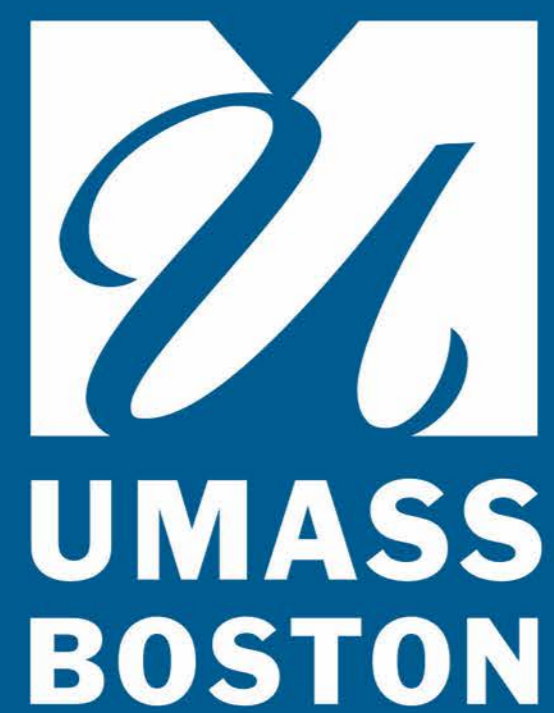
Next Steps:

- Co-develop trainings with parents and partners to build capacity for using dialogic techniques and for continuous promotion of social-emotional development
- Consider how to integrate recommendations from Community Dialogues sessions into future engagement
- Explore funding opportunities with partners

Questions? Contact Us:

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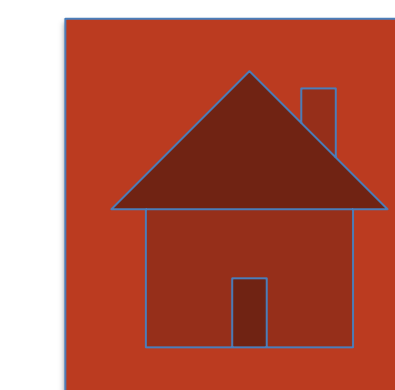
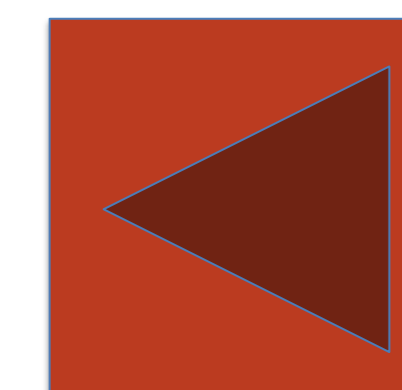




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