

CASE STUDY

Kaiser Elementary Improves Family Engagement



Five weeks of programming; 156 students; 550 minutes of reading time!

DISTRICT PROFILE

School

Kaiser Elementary School

District

Klein Independent School District

Location

Houston, TX

Partnership Type

Summer Literacy

Program Funder

The Brown Foundation

Demographics

51,000 students

- Hispanic/Latino: 46.2%
- White: 25.0%
- Black/African American: 17.0%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 7.6%
- Two or More Races: 3.9
- American Indian: 0.3%

54.9% low income

22.2% multilingual learners

15.7% student with disabilities

"It was lovely to see our families here week after week. They were truly committed to helping their child learn more about reading."

— A KAISER ELEMENTARY TEACHER

CHALLENGE

For Kaiser Elementary, improving family engagement was just as important as improving student reading habits. Kaiser Elementary was looking to create a stronger sense of community between its school leaders, teachers, and families. They wanted to create a collaborative culture within the school based on mutual trust, communication, and participation. With a large Spanish-speaking population, Kaiser also needed an organization that could provide summer programming materials in both English and Spanish. These needs formed the basis of their partnership with Springboard's Summer Literacy program.



SOLUTION

Kaiser chose Springboard because of our emphasis on family engagement. All of Springboard's programs are built around the Family-Educator Learning Accelerator (FELA) methodology, in which teachers and family members team up to help students reach learning goals. Upon consultation with the Springboard team, Kaiser selected our Summer Literacy offering with added kits. Under this offering, Kaiser students received alternating lesson blocks of Reading Readiness and phonics, writing, small group instruction, read-alouds, and shared reading.

Teachers were coached in using the assessment tool they preferred to measure student growth, DIBELS.

The program kicked off with teachers leading a virtual or in-person team-building huddle with each individual family to build buy-in and lay the foundation for a strong relationship. Throughout the program, teachers also lead weekly family workshops, where students and families learn alongside one another, providing the skills and resources necessary for families to support reading at home. Participating students see their learning accelerated because they are both receiving direct literacy instruction from their teacher while also receiving reading coaching support from their families.

PARTICIPANT PRAISE

**"Springboard had a positive effect on my students and families.
I noticed an increase in my student's fluency with their DIBELS."**

– KAISER ELEMENTARY TEACHER

Our family engagement model is based on two tenets. One is that teachers are the experts on instruction. They know what their students need to make progress, yet the typical classroom setting can make it difficult to individually support every child. The other is that families are the experts on their children. Whereas teachers change annually, parents accumulate a wealth of knowledge about their children as learners. Moreover, families are uniquely positioned to read with their children in a one-on-one setting.

These competencies form the basis for a sustainable partnership in which teachers share instructional strategies with parents in exchange for the commitment that families will practice these strategies at home. This creates enormous leverage: For every hour that a teacher leads a family workshop, parents deliver ~25 hours of tutoring at home.

Research also shows that family involvement in their children's literacy practices is a more powerful predictor of early reading success than other family background variables, including social class and level of parental education ([Flouri & Buchanan, 2004](#)).



PLANNING

Planning for summer began by first establishing mutual goals around our summer program, which included 80% student instruction attendance. It was also important for Kaiser to make sure that families, teachers, and students could become and stay connected with each other in a more intentional and intimate way than had

FAMILY PERSPECTIVE

"Me gusto mucho Springboard porque mi hija aprendió mucho a describir, analizar, y saber cómo comprender lo que lee. Es divertido para las dos porque tenemos una conexión más grande."

("I really liked Springboard because my daughter learned a lot to describe, analyze, and know how to understand what she reads. It's fun for both of us because we have a bigger connection.")

– KAISER ELEMENTARY PARENT

PARTICIPANT PRAISE

"I think the program is great. My daughter has a better understanding about the books that she reads. She is able to reflect back on the details so much better. I also enjoyed the engagement I had with her and the school this summer."

— KAISER ELEMENTARY PARENT



previously been done. Although Kaiser had already created a Parent Liaison position prior to partnering with Springboard, our Program Leader was able to coach the Parent Liaison in coordinating and relaying important information about program logistics such as dates and times for programming, orientation, and family workshops. Teacher recruitment efforts were also launched and student enrollment campaigns were planned.

Springboard's collaborative implementation model focuses on building teacher and family capacity. As such, Springboard relies heavily on district and school staff to make strong decisions about scheduling and programming that meet the needs of their community and lead to strong outcomes for children and families.

IMPLEMENTATION

During implementation, Kaiser students received instructional time from **8:15 am–1:00 pm, four days a week**, with alternating lesson blocks of Reading Readiness and phonics, writing, small group instruction, read-alouds, and shared reading. Family workshops, which allow families to learn and practice reading tips in real-time with their child, took place on Thursday's in-person at 8:30 am, with virtual make-up sessions on the same day at 3:00 pm. At each of the five workshops held, Kaiser also provided Spanish-speaking families with additional translation support during workshop time.

Through these workshops, families learned how to read with their child purposefully and ask questions to support their child before, during, and after reading. They served as a time for educators and families to easily check in about reading goals and student progress. Over the course of the program, family workshops became a crucial touchpoint for Kaiser to form that partnership and connection they were seeking with families prior to working with Springboard.

Teachers were also given the opportunity to participate in Springboard's professional development, with an emphasis on assessment training for the assessment tool, DIBELS. This would help them accurately measure their students' progress over the course of the program. Moreover, Springboard helped encourage teachers to hold multiple orientations in both English and Spanish for families that would give an overview of the summer program and what to expect.

"I loved having my parents at the family workshops because they got to see how I was working and what I was doing in school."

— KAISER ELEMENTARY SCHOLAR

RESULTS

Of Kaiser Elementary's **156 students enrolled** in Springboard's program, **92% met attendance goals**, and had an average of **over 550 minutes read over 5 weeks of programming**. Kaiser's Program Leader, Noemi Kassmya, said that Springboard's summer's program "created a whole new culture at Kaiser" with increases in family engagement, particularly with their Spanish-speaking families, thanks to family workshops and persistent outreach by teachers and their Family Liaison.



"There was so much to do during summer learning.
It was so fun!"

"I learned more about reading and writing. I feel like
I'm better at it now."

— KAISER ELEMENTARY SCHOLARS

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