## 

## Organizing Examples Relative to Framework Indicators

As described in the “1. Introduction – Evaluation Framework and Implementation Manual June 2019,” The ZOOM Foundation has embedded examples in the rubric to help the user picture what each indicator means in practice.

These examples are drawn from a case study and related artifacts:

1. The case study is about the Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA) in Chicago, and can be found in chapter 6 “Acts of Leadership” in the book “A Match on Dry Grass” by Mark R. Warren and Karen L. Mapp.

This case study primarily describes the Parent Mentor Program developed by LSNA. Through the program parents are encouraged to work in classrooms at their children’s schools, about 2 hours a day. They develop strong relationships with the teachers. Many of the parents involved in the mentor program have gone on to other leadership roles in education and the community. (The case study is included in this document’s appendix.)

1. Additional examples are drawn from related materials, including LSNA’s website, media mentions, parent and teacher testimonials, among others. These sources exist in the form of artifacts created to replicate a portfolio that an organization would submit for evaluation. (The artifacts can be found following the Case Study on page 2.)

With the expectation that tool could be even more robust, ZOOM invites suggestions of additional examples or case studies that might be used.

**Contents**

[Case Study](#CaseStudy)

[Artifacts](#Artifacts)

* [Holistic Plan 2018](#HolisticPlan)
* [LSNA Key Funders](#Funders)
* [LSNA Local Partners](#LocalPartners)
* [LSNA Staff as of June 2017](#Staff)
* [Media Mention: The Chicago Reporter](#ChicagoReporter)
* [Media Mention: NBC Case Study](#NBC)
* [Media Mention: The Seattle Times](#_Media_Mention:_The)
* [Testimonials](#_Testimonials_1)
* [Testimony on Family Math and Literacy](#FamilyMath)
* [Webinar](#Webinar)

[Rubric with embedded examples](#_Organizing_Evaluation_Framework)

[Practice Examples that relate to developmental levels in rubric](#_Rubric_Examples)

**Case Study**

## [“Acts of Leadership”](#_bookmark0)

##### [Building Powerful Forms of Parent Participation in Chicago](#_bookmark0)

[P R I M A R Y A U T H O R : S O O H O N G](#_bookmark0)

On a cold February day in Chicago, crowds of parents, young people, community members, and local residents gather together, generating movement and momentum on a relatively quiet day.[1](#_bookmark309) Children and adults wave bright signs that read, “LSNA supports bilingual students!” The crowd is abuzz with conversation, and there is excitement in the air. Parent leaders welcome families who are just joining as the crowd grows larger. Students start waving signs higher, mimicking the words and actions of their parents. Slowly, murmurs escalate to more assertive voices, and parents begin to take center stage in front of news cameras that have arrived for the event. The families are gathered for a press conference arranged by fellow parent leaders and community organizers to challenge the use of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) with bilingual students. Previously, parents explain, bilingual students who were not fully proficient in English were given the IMAGE test, for its ease of use with English-language learners. Early in 2008, as the federal government pressured Chicago Public Schools to use the ISAT test, parents organized an effort to challenge that decision, insisting that the new test would set their children up to fail. During the press conference, a group of parents who had studied the issue spoke to the crowd about what they knew to be an injustice for bilingual students. Erica Soto, a parent leader at McAuliffe Elementary School whose child is in the bilingual program, argued:

The English in the ISAT test is too hard for third-grade bilingual students, and the children will just feel stupid if they are forced to take it . . . We want to make sure that students and parents don’t feel it’s their fault when the children do badly. It’s not their fault or the teacher’s fault.[2](#_bookmark309)

As gathered parents and students listened intently, they cheered Erica and the other parents who spoke against the recent proposition. They argued that teachers and students were not prepared for the change, scheduled just weeks away, and the results would only discourage teachers, students, and their families. As parents like Erica spoke out, they expressed a clear knowledge and understanding of the educational environments of schools and classrooms. One parent leader, Patricia Lopez, studying to become a bilingual education teacher herself after years of involvement in her children’s schools, held up an ISAT testing booklet to show the crowd how challenging the test would prove for students still gaining proficiency in English. She argued, “It takes five to seven years for a bilingual student to be academically proficient in her second language.”[3](#_bookmark309)

These parents have built a base of knowledge about schools and developed the confidence to lead public rallies like this one through their involvement with the Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA). Involved in LSNA’s parent organizing projects, they have worked alongside teachers to support students in classrooms, become intimately aware of the educational issues schools face, and emerged as forceful leaders and role models in schools. This campaign was driven by the passion and expertise of parents like Erica and Patricia who have taken the matters of school reform into their own hands. Upon reflecting on this parent-inspired campaign, Ofelia Sanchez and Leticia Barrera, two parent leaders and LSNA organizers discuss their own motivations in getting involved:

We are not afraid to speak up if it will benefit our children. We are the ones who have their best interests in mind.

Before, I didn’t have the information to really push back on initiatives or policies or anything like that, but this is different now. I have knowledge and that gives me power.

Rather than accepting the directives and initiatives passed along to schools from the city or state, parents like Ofelia, Leticia, Patricia, and Erica have learned to be critical and challenge policies when necessary. They have also worked closely with educators to initiate new programs to benefit their children and mobilize support among parents and families in the community. With their knowledge and experience, they have generated collective power to promote necessary change.

This chapter examines LSNA’s education organizing efforts and describes the experiences of parents as they become active participants and leaders within school settings. The chapter begins with a discussion of LSNA’s origins and the group’s entry into education organizing in Chicago. It then discusses the group’s efforts to develop campaigns and programs to build parent leadership— first bringing parents into the often unfamiliar environment of schools, then integrating them into the life and culture of schools, and finally developing them as leaders within the school and broader community. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of LSNA’s education organizing in building a model of school reform centered on meaningful forms of parent leadership and forged connections between school and community.

**Charting a Path for Education Organizing**

LSNA was founded in the Logan Square neighborhood on the Northwest Side of Chicago in the early 1960s in response to the increasing deindustrialization and ensuing suburbanization of the greater Chicago metropolitan area. During those years, the working-class European immigrant families who made up the neighborhood fought to curb the community deterioration that resulted from the exodus of long-term residents and businesses. In the seventies and eighties, though, the neighborhood experienced a dramatic demo- graphic shift toward the predominantly Latino community it is today. The incoming Latino families—primarily of Cuban and Puerto Rican descent— viewed their move to Logan Square, despite its challenges, as a step up. With Latinos approaching two-thirds of the population, Logan Square also experienced a subsequent influx of Latino businesses that developed the neighbor- hood’s main streets into a commercial destination for many Latino families.[4](#_bookmark309) By the early nineties, 90 percent of the children in the schools in Logan Square were Latino (including many of Mexican descent), while 95 percent qualified for free or reduced-price lunch.

Working with Latino families in the group’s early organizing campaigns for affordable housing, neighborhood safety, and immigration reform, LSNA organizers soon found that education was a central issue and concern for these newcomers. However, many found schools to be distant places where they felt unwelcome. Yet LSNA organizers saw strong schools as fundamentally interconnected with community well-being. According to education organizer Leticia Barrera:

To address the housing and the rental problem, you have to see it is connected to the school, because if families are moving because they are not paying the rent, then schools will be facing too many changes in students and that is a problem for the school.

In response, LSNA charted a path of education organizing that sought to change the nature of school involvement and community involvement by connecting the two. With a growing awareness that improving schools would be central to improving communities, LSNA began to set their sights on organizing within schools, with the assistance of a sweeping change in Chicago school politics.[5](#_bookmark309)

#### Building a Collective Voice within the Context of Chicago School Reform

School reform in Chicago took a distinct turn in 1988 when lawmakers created local school councils (LSCs) that would serve as administrative bodies to individual schools. Passed one year after then U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett referred to the Chicago school system as the worst in the nation, this law opened up school governance to elected parents and community members and created institutional mechanisms for community organizations to become involved in the city’s schools.[6](#_bookmark309) According to some experts, this policy change was a direct result of the growing civic capacity of a well-organized and tightly knit Chicago business com- munity and a strong network of community-based organizations—both with a vested interest in local schools. Chicago Public Schools had been notorious for resisting change. The long-term efforts of community groups calling for openness, transparency, and community involvement finally culminated in a mounting public outcry over the school system’s persistent failure. The LSCs created by the new law were to have a majority of parents and community members, as well as the school principal and teachers, and they were given real power—the authority to hire principals and approve the school’s improvement plans and discretionary budget.[7](#_bookmark309)

For LSNA’s Executive Director, Nancy Aardema, this was an exciting time for community organizing groups that were interested in education. “Across the city, you have these very actively engaged and powerful organizing groups, and suddenly, we are given an opportunity to encourage our community members— these parents and families—to become critical voices in schools.” As was the case for many community groups, the goal for LSNA’s early work in schools, according to Nancy, “was to get strong LSCs that would function smoothly and encourage broad participation in the community.” However, many schools were profoundly disconnected from families and the community experiences of their students. According to lead education organizer Joanna Brown who helped to pioneer LSNA’s early work in schools:

There was this significant separation between families and schools, and then all of a sudden, you have this school reform law that says parents and community need to be part of school decision-making, but how? We knew we needed to lay the groundwork for this collaboration in a way that would be relational and that would help to build trust and eliminate some of the barriers.

LSC involvement became an entry point for LSNA into schools, and as organizers began building relationships with parents and schools, they discovered that schools could become significant sites for community building and organizing. As LSNA organizers began working in schools and connecting them to families, they also began to identify common issues and concerns that could potentially serve as a catalyst for collaboration. Through these conversations, school overcrowding emerged as a shared concern among school staff and parents. Principals were worried about swelling enrollments that placed added stress on schools already strapped for classroom space; parents were displeased with the prospect that their children would be bused to schools outside of the neighborhood as a result of over-enrollment.

Under the direction of LSNA’s Education Committee, LSCs, school principals, and community members joined together in a campaign to address school overcrowding. Through this campaign, Nancy recalls, LSNA “began to create trust with the parents, with the administrators, with some of the teachers and some of the students.” By combining forces, the campaign was able to win an outcome that principals had failed to attain on their own. According to Joanna, “The principals had been struggling with the overcrowding issue for years and had been trying to get something done and couldn’t get it done.” With LSNA leading in the public confrontation with the Board of Education, principals were protected from having to take an openly antagonistic role. Amanda Rivera, a cur- rent Chicago assistant principal who worked with LSNA as a teacher and principal during this time, recalls that until schools began working collaboratively with LSNA, they did not realize that each was often struggling with the same issues of bureaucratic unresponsiveness as the other. School leaders realized that in smaller, isolated efforts, they failed to generate the power and momentum that was necessary to win significant change. Through the collective effort initiated by LSNA, however, local educators began to be heard. Amanda explains:

We became a collective voice, a more unified and powerful voice . . . we were getting answers; we were getting meetings; we got a response . . . And it was, we were told, because we were the squeaky wheel, which was good for us, but unfortunate for other schools who didn’t have the backing of an organizing group.

By working alongside rather than in opposition to school leaders, Nancy believes LSNA was able to build relationships and trust with schools that would later prove to be instrumental:

The smart thing we did was that we brought the administrators to the table. We weren’t confronting the principal. We were bringing the principal in to be part of the process, to say, “I need more space.” It was far better for all of us to be at the table. Right then and there, we began building those relationships.

Through these campaigns and the development of new relationships, LSNA strived toward collaborative interactions with schools—a significant departure from previous arrangements that were tense and divisive. These collaborative efforts produced the development of five new annexes and two new middle schools over several years along with acknowledgement from school leaders that community groups had valuable resources to offer in school reform efforts.

Consequently, education became a key issue in LSNA’s first Holistic Plan, a mission statement adopted in 1995 that charted a vision for the group’s work. In the plan, LSNA resolved to:[8](#_bookmark309)

1. Develop schools as community centers because “the health of any community is dependent on the availability of common space for interaction, education, service provision, recreation, culture and arts.”
2. Train parents to work in the classrooms of LSNA schools because “children learn better when their parents are actively involved in their education.”
3. Support community controlled education because the “health of any com- munity is dependent on the quality of education provided to its residents.”

With this plan, Nancy explains, LSNA made a strong statement that “schools shape communities and communities shape schools.” Upon adoption of the Holistic Plan, LSNA began to chart a course that would bring parents into schools and classrooms in meaningful ways. It was a plan shaped by conversations with parents and also with school principals who saw a need to engage families without a clear understanding of how this could be done. From these conversations emerged the Parent Mentor program and a continuous effort to bring the previously isolated worlds of school and community together in new, dynamic, and interactive ways.

#### Building Relationships between Schools and Communities: The Evolution of Parent Mentors

One cold winter evening, as Karla Mack discussed with her children what they would have for dinner that night, they heard an abrupt and loud knock on their apartment door. As she opened the door to an anxious and upset neighbor, Karla quickly learned that the building was on fire. Rushing out of the house with her children, she recalls, “Before our eyes, these four families that were there, everything burned . . . one minute, we’re sitting there about to figure out what we want to eat, and we lost everything.” While her neighbors instantly turned to family members for assistance, Karla recalls feeling alone that night on the street as she watched flames engulf her apartment building. She did not have immediate family members to help her.

As this tragic event unfolded, Karla lost everything and suddenly faced a frightening future for her children. Without renter’s insurance to replace their belongings and without a long-term place to stay, she recalls, “I had no home, and I had nothing for my children. Nothing.” But the following day, Karla was received by an outpouring of support from fellow parent mentors and LSNA organizers. As news of her loss moved through the school community, Silvia Gonzalez, the Parent Mentor program coordinator at McAuliffe Elementary School, reached out to Karla on behalf of an organized effort by the LSNA com- munity to temporarily house and provide for her family. Karla describes the out-pouring of support:

And within two weeks—it was a rough two weeks, But I guarantee you, every day, we ate. Every day, we slept somewhere clean and safe. I had friends that helped, but that was, like, a place here or there . . . Everyday, LSNA would have something for us to eat, a gift card . . . I don’t even know these people . . . but everyone came and gave us so much love and support.

Karla soon realized that she would also have to face the possibility of leaving the very neighborhood and school community that had reached out to her:

LSNA and McAuliffe were my family, because I really don’t have any family. It’s just me and my children, and I was like, ‘What am I going to do?’ I don’t want to leave McAuliffe. I don’t want to leave this community. My daughter goes to high school in this neighborhood. I’m starting to like what I do here and kind of see what my options are.

With the community’s support, Karla and her children found a new apartment in the neighborhood after just two weeks of temporary housing. As a result, her children remained at McAuliffe, and Karla developed a renewed sense of com- munity and hope:

This community saved me and put me on my feet again. My children cried not once. We lost everything . . . What sustained me was this com- munity, the love and support . . . so anything I can do to pass on that type of love, that type of support, that’s what I’m here to do, because someone did that for me. This is someplace I know I want to stay.

Karla describes an environment where the lines between school and community are blurred. Through her participation in the Parent Mentor program, she became connected to school staff and families in ways that were profoundly meaningful and important to her.

According to Joanna Brown, the isolation Karla used to feel within her own community is not uncommon for the many working and immigrant families who struggle to create a life for themselves and their children in Logan Square. Parents “struggle to make ends meet, they spend little time connecting to folks in the community, and the school is probably the most unfamiliar environment of all. Even for schools that want to involve parents, it’s hard, because parents are not even there in the first place.” Combating this isolation—from schools and the broader community—was precisely one of LSNA’s original goals in creating the Parent Mentor program.

Some local school principals had their own reasons for being interested in developing a program for parents. Sally Acker, principal of Funston Elementary School at the time of the program’s creation, noticed that Latino parents, many of whom were Spanish speaking, rarely came into the school building beyond the quick, daily responsibilities of dropping off and picking up their children. How could the school encourage more widespread parent involvement? Nancy recalls the principal’s dilemma:

[Sally Acker] felt like the issue was that parents only came to the school when there was a problem, or if they were the “good parents of the good kids.” . . . She felt like we had to figure out a way as a community to get just the average parents, or the parents of the kids who were struggling into the school—not in a way that they felt like they were there to be told what was wrong, not in a way that put them at a disadvantage, or put them down—but she felt they should be in the school in a very real, continuous way.

At the same time, another group, Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI), began working on a project to train parents to become more involved in Chicago schools. With the goal of making parent involvement more continuous and meaningful, LSNA and COFI worked with Amanda Rivera at Funston to create training that would become the basis for the emerging program.

The Parent Mentor program was launched at Funston Elementary School in 1995. It was designed to bring parents out of their homes and into classrooms where they would work alongside teachers as classroom assistants. For four days a week, two hours each morning, over the duration of an entire school year, parent mentors work in a classroom—reading to children in small groups, working with individual students, and supporting classroom activities. Each Friday morning, parent mentors come together for training sessions as a cohort within the school; once a month they meet as a group across all participating schools in Logan Square. Parents are paid a small stipend to facilitate and encourage consistent participation, as well as to respect and recognize the value of their work. By bringing parents into schools in this way, LSNA sought to build a sense of familiarity with schools and the broader community among immigrant parents. Meanwhile, the program also strived to encourage a more open attitude toward families among neighborhood schools.

To make parents essential to the life of a school environment would require institutional change—a paradigm shift. Teachers were not accustomed to having parents in the school, particularly in their classrooms working with students. Amanda Rivera remembers navigating the delicate relationships with both teachers and parents at Funston school:

For me it was very difficult, because I had to then meet with the teachers, and let them know that we were going to have parents, but they’re going to be placed in classrooms to assist them. And because this was so new, there was no prior practice of parents being engaged in the classroom a significant way. So, I had to figure out how do we change this paradigm where there’s this mistrust of parents in the school, in the classroom, and people feeling that I’m going to be spied upon, and critiqued, or feeling threatened by the parents in the classroom?

Interactions between parents and teachers were infrequent but were often hostile and antagonistic, centered on disagreements concerning a child. The predominance of negative interchanges between parents and teachers only escalated feelings of mistrust, fear, and resentment, and Amanda was worried that teachers would simply not volunteer to have parent mentors in their classrooms. Sensing that fear—among parents and teachers—was the overriding barrier to building these new relationships, she designed a training program that would seek to dispel the myths, break down the sense of mistrust, and develop some common ground. She recalls the goals of the first training sessions:

Little did the teachers realize that the parents felt just as fearful about going in the classroom, so we always did some team building at the beginning with the teachers and the parents, where we actually put them together, and did activities—teachers and parents—to help them talk about their commonalities as human beings first, and they realized, “Oh, I’m a mother, and you’re a mother, and these are some of my hobbies, or some of my interests, and these are some of my challenges,” so just team-building activities like that.

These team-building activities created a sense of common purpose and shared experience among parents and teachers. That foundation was essential to the successful start of the Parent Mentor program. By developing these relationships intentionally, Amanda says, “We began to build rapport and began to break down barriers before parent mentors actually were placed in the classroom.”

The primary focus of the parent mentor trainings, however, was on parents, especially on the personal goals and leadership development of parents. Treating parents as leaders and role models to children, organizers encouraged parents to identify personal goals they would commit to meeting over the course of the year. For many parents, personal goals are centered on education—such as obtaining a GED or taking English classes—or employment. Throughout the year, parents chart their progress in accomplishing their goals, supporting each other in their parent mentor cohort.

Parent Mentor training sessions are also designed to foster parent leadership. LSNA teaches parents about issues of power and inequality and builds the skills they need to work together to improve school and community life. Indeed, the program introduces parents to broader community issues beyond the school, issues like affordable housing and public health. By working with a focus on leadership development and the explicit recognition of power and inequality, LSNA encouraged parents to view themselves as active agents for personal and community transformation.

From its beginning in 1995, the program grew quickly to include eight elementary and middle schools across Logan Square. Each year the program trains over 150 parents; since its inception more than 1,200 parents have graduated as parent mentors. Meanwhile, the Parent Mentor program has become a spring- board for new programs and initiatives that have provided added opportunities for parent and community engagement in schools. As parents become immersed in a training program that connects them to the school community and fosters a sense of leadership, they begin to alter the environment and encourage schools to view families in a different light. Despite the program’s evolution and the host of initiatives that have since developed from its existence, the Parent Mentor program remains as a foundation to LSNA’s work in schools and the community. As one education organizer explains:

And then it’s [the Parent Mentor program] a steppingstone for every- thing else. These parents go on to find full-time jobs outside, or they start working in the schools as tutors or paraprofessionals, serve on school committees, lead one of our programs, or become elected on the local school council. It’s a little seed that gets planted that grows into a whole bunch of other things. As parent mentors, they build new skills of leadership and activism and this becomes the base for their work as leaders in many of our other programs or in the school and community more broadly.

#### From Parent Involvement to Parent Engagement

For many parents and teachers who come to know the Parent Mentor program, it is not, as one parent leader explains, “your typical parent involvement pro- gram.” In contrast to other programs “where schools decide who comes and goes and who gets to be involved in what way and how, this program is really about meeting parents where they are and trying to figure out what they need from schools.” While parents might typically support teachers in classrooms, the pro- gram encourages parent mentors and teachers to view themselves as partners. From an organizing perspective, LSNA believes these relationships and the power that is created through them are critical to changing the nature of school- family interactions.

To LSNA organizers, the Parent Mentor program’s strength lies in its attempt to break traditional notions of parent involvement. LSNA moves schools beyond a practice of transferring or depositing knowledge to parents through brochures, flyers, formal events, and meetings to a system of engagement where parents are invited and incorporated into the life of schools and learn about schools through their own interactions within the environment. By inviting parents to participate in the real work of schools and classrooms, the Parent Mentor program builds parents’ understanding of school culture—the people, the interactions, the expectations, and the practice.

In addition to deepening parent participation in schools to become more powerful and meaningful, the Parent Mentor program also seeks to broaden parent participation by bringing previously uninvolved parents into schools and classrooms. The program develops an approach that addresses the barriers that may typically impede parent participation. For example, parents with limited English fluency are still encouraged to participate, and organizers place these parent mentors in bilingual classrooms or with younger children. One parent mentor describes her experience in the classroom as a newly involved parent with limited English fluency:

I did not think the school would be a place for me. I knew some English, but I was always too nervous to speak it. I was in the classroom with these children, learning new things and understanding the way of the teacher, and it was wonderful. It did not matter if my English was not perfect, and in that time, my English became much better.

For parents like her, LSNA’s Parent Mentor program becomes “a new chance, a new beginning, it is a new opportunity for me to be a different kind of parent for my children.

#### Branching Out: Changing the Nature of Relationships between Schools and Families

Six children are gathered on the floor around a teacher who reads from the book *Love You Forever*. Those who are not right in front of the teacher sit on their knees to get a good look at the pictures. The teacher, Susana Rojas, is animated in her reading of the story, inviting participation by encouraging students to repeat the story’s refrain with her. Her reading is peppered with questions to elicit discussion—about baby brothers, mothers and children, and about growing up. With each question, children raise their hands and sit up to respond. Susana then reads the book a second time, this time in Spanish, and the children chant the refrain with her at the end:

Para siempre te amare, Para siempre te querre, Mientras en mi haya vida, Siempre seras mi bebe.

Susana is a classroom teacher at Mozart Elementary School, but on this occasion, she reads this book in the living room of the home of one of the students. She is there one late afternoon after school, with the hosting family and three other families who were invited to attend with their children. This is part of LSNA’s Literacy Ambassadors program, created to encourage mutual learning and stronger partnerships between parents and teachers in the education of children.

A couple years into the Parent Mentor program, organizers and parents began to realize that parents alone could not shoulder the burden of transforming parent-teacher relationships. As Nancy Aardema recalls:

From the beginning, we always had this concept of parent-teacher mentoring—the teacher was mentoring the parent but the parent was also helping the teacher understand more about the culture of the community. That’s the unusual part, because teachers teach, but teachers aren’t looking to learn the culture of the community necessarily.

While the Parent Mentor program was successful in helping parents understand the classroom environment, “having teachers learn from parents” was a more challenging endeavor. Through focus group conversations with parent mentors, LSNA found that in order for teachers to truly understand the experiences of families, they had to experience children in their homes.

LSNA designed the Literacy Ambassadors program based on the vision of parent mentors who wanted, according to Joanna Brown, “to build a bridge between the school and home.” Teachers visit a student’s home to talk with parents and children, who are invited by the hosting family, about reading together at home. A classroom parent mentor accompanies the teacher on the home visit and serves as a bridge between the teacher and the family. Together, the teacher and parent mentor plan activities for parents and children that support the goal of literacy and give parents ideas on how to support their child’s reading at home. In this way, the Literacy Ambassadors program builds stronger parent-teacher relationships while also reaching out to families that had little previous connection to schools and little exposure to classroom expectations.

Families embrace the opportunity to meet teachers in a familiar home environment. In doing so, they not only learn about the ways they can support their child’s literacy development, they also establish connections with fellow parents. According to Lisa Contreras, a former Literacy Ambassadors program coordinator at Funston Elementary School, “Students are so excited to see teachers at their home, and families often feel less intimidated by teachers and the school environment because of this experience.” The informal environment allows families to feel more comfortable when connecting with teachers. Lisa adds, “These parents don’t have to feel intimidated, because now they know the teacher . . . they have been actually having a conversation.”

Lisa believes, however, that the benefits for teachers are just as compelling. While she has often heard from teachers who are “nervous to be out of their comfort zone and into a family’s home” for the first time, “that nervousness just goes away, and they leave excited to do this again,” after an evening of shared experiences. Melva Patock, a Funston teacher who has often participated in the Literacy Ambassadors program agrees:

It’s hard to build that connection with parents when you don’t know them. And when you only meet them in school, you don’t really have to think about it. But when you come a student’s house and you sit down together for dinner with his parents and you can see where they live, then you can really focus on the family and the community that they are a part of. You start to see everything in a different light, but especially from that student’s perspective.

Because schools typically reflect the values and perspectives of white middle- class families, programs such as this work to challenge those traditional power dynamics. By bringing teachers into the community and directly into a student’s home, LSNA encourages parents and teachers to examine their own assumptions and move toward practices that bring families and school staff together on more equal footing and into more meaningful relationships.

Changing schools requires, according to Nancy, “a constant reassessment of the situation, a continuous evaluation of what we’re doing, and plenty of opportunities for parents themselves to be part of this assessment and evaluation process.” Indeed, the creation of the Literacy Ambassadors program is a good example of LSNA’s ability to listen closely to parents and engage them in new and innovative initiatives. According to City Clerk Miguel Del Valle, who has worked with LSNA in the past as a community organizer and Illinois state senator, LSNA’s ability “to move with the times and to intimately involve themselves in what’s going on in the community and intelligently know what the next step needs to be,” is critical in pushing for change in schools.

Meanwhile, during the first year of the Parent Mentor program, parents and organizers quickly began to understand that while the program worked to build a core of visible and engaged parents within the school, there were still many parents who could not be involved. For working parents, who often did not have time during the school day to commit to working in classrooms, their only interactions with schools occurred in those brief moments while picking up or dropping off their children. Ada Ayala was among that first group of parent mentors who strove to find a way to open the school to the broader community. She recalls:

And when we first started the community center, we wanted the school to be a place more for the families—and for more than just the families that can be here during the day. This is their school too, and we want the school to be a place where they feel safe and comfortable and welcome. I see the families in the evening, and it makes me feel good, because they know that this is their place too.

Ada, along with fellow parent mentors, went from door to door in the community, combing neighborhood streets to talk with families about the possibility of starting a community learning center at the school. The center would offer classes for adults and children in the evenings, and they wanted to know from families what kinds of classes they wanted in the center. Ada recalls:

We wanted to know what was important for the families and what would bring them into the school. For many of them, it was the first time, and if we wanted them to come, we knew that we would have to find out what they wanted.

As parents knocked on doors, organizing support for the community learning center, they became more connected, according to Ada, “to the lives of the families—that many were struggling, that they had things they wanted to achieve but did not have the time or the money or the connections. When we talked to them about bringing these programs into the schools, we also heard that they did not spend any time in the school.” This organizing effort confirmed to parents like Ada that schools could be powerful points of connection into community life for many of these families. Leaving schools open only during the relatively short school day was, according to Joanna, a “disservice to the community and a waste of their public space.”

Ada became the coordinator for Funston Elementary School’s Community Learning Center (CLC). Over the course of her journey from parent mentor to parent leader to CLC coordinator, she has watched the school become more open and accessible to a broad range of families—from those who don’t yet speak English and take an ESL class in the center, to those who attend with their children for enrichment and cultural classes, as well as those whose busy work schedules and commitments to family life would make an evening GED class nearly impossible without the childcare provided in the center. After Funston, LSNA quickly launched five CLCs across their partner schools. The CLCs open their doors to children and their families after each school day, offering classes for children such as Mexican folkloric dance, after-school homework support, guitar lessons, and choir. For adults, the center provides GED and ESL classes to support their education, as well as a host of opportunities to meet other parents and families through book clubs, dance classes, and interest-based activities. The centers also provide childcare services for parents with young children. Not only do these programs offer educational resources to neighborhood families, they offer a place for parents to connect with other families and to build a sense of belonging and familiarity with the school. According to parent leader Lisa Contreras, CLCs provide “an opportunity to meet other families, get to know parents, and really get a sense of the school.” Lisa adds:

For these parents, they are busy during the day, so they can’t be parent mentors, but this way, the school still offers them something valuable. And when they spend all that time coming to the school and walking around the building to take these classes, they start to feel a lot more comfortable in the school like, “Hey, I know this place, this place that my kids are in all day.” Just by being in the school, they meet other parents and start getting connected to the other families, and schools are no longer this strange place to them.

CLCs were started through the organizing efforts of parents, and they continue to grow through such organizing. Parents lead regular efforts to go door-knocking, surveying families in the neighborhood about what they would like to see offered in the center. These organizing efforts are often spearheaded by parent mentors who view these experiences as leadership-development opportunities. During her work as a parent mentor, Karla Mack was involved in a door-knocking campaign to raise awareness and generate community input for a newly formed community center at McAuliffe. She argues that the experience both raised her awareness of the surrounding community and encouraged her to tap into those leadership skills LSNA nurtures:

If you would have told me a year ago that I would be knocking on the door of strangers—people I don’t know—to strike up conversation with you, I would never have believed you. This experience gets us in contact with all these families around the neighborhood. We start to feel connected as a group and as a community, and we start to understand what our neighbors care about . . . and then for me, this is just raising my own level of confidence that I can oversee this project and get out there and start doing things for my community.

#### Leadership Development

That Karla sees herself as an emerging leader is part of an intentional leader- ship development strategy that LSNA places at the center of its education organizing work. Organizers view leadership development as occurring through stages, particularly for the immigrant women who make up the base of their parent mentors. For many of these mothers, this is their first foray into community life, and they often find themselves without the language and cultural and institutional knowledge they need to feel confident and self- assured. For this reason, the Parent Mentor program is seen as a foundational first-step to encourage parents to participate in school-community life. Organizers use a training curriculum throughout the program that focuses on pro- viding parents with knowledge about schools, connects them to each other to create a supportive network, and serves as a foundation for building leaders. Through the training, parents are taught about school practices and expectations; they are given opportunities to develop confidence in a new environment and set personal goals that will shape their development as mentors and role models. By working in the public space of classrooms, parent men- tors engage in a host of activities that build their skills. Parent mentors learn to bring students together to work in a classroom, they converse with parents who inquire about their children, they work collaboratively with teachers to support students in classrooms, and they become public figures in a public institution. These are, according to Joanna, “acts of leadership,” in and of themselves.

This initial phase of leadership development, according to LSNA organizer Leticia Barrera, “is critical, because before you can become a leader, you have to understand a lot about the environment—who is there, what is going on, and how things work.” Through a training program that is focused on the development of personal goals and confidence in the public sphere of schools, parent mentors are encouraged to think about their experiences and contemplate their potential contributions, their potential “acts of leadership” within schools and classrooms. Through constant connections with past and present parent mentors—who lead training sessions, become LSNA organizers, or coordinate a Community Learning Center—new parent mentors gain a clearer sense of what those possible contributions might be. According to Parent Mentor coordinator Silvia Gonzalez:

It pushes you to be a leader and to reflect on your experience—at home, at school, in your community—and to think about what you can do to contribute, what you can do to build yourself up, and what are those personal things like the goals in your life and the dreams that you have that you can work on? . . . We believe that it takes that to get to action. And action will change the community.

Indeed, the fact that parent mentor graduates take on a variety of leadership responsibilities, with some becoming full-time, paid organizers, is part of LSNA’s intentional strategy. LSNA organizers are constantly looking to identify parent mentors who could be suited for greater leadership responsibilities. During the school year they spend with each cohort, LSNA organizers seek out potential leaders who show an interest in added responsibilities and have an outlook and disposition toward leadership.

As they worked with these emerging parent leaders, LSNA organizers found the need for a more advanced leadership-development strategy that takes parents beyond an introduction to leadership opportunities. LSNA created a week- long training session that, each year, gives forty potential leaders further grounding in the tenets and praxis of community organizing as well as an under- standing of power and accountability within the community context. Participants analyze community power dynamics, examine forms of accountability, explore the nature of publicly accountable and private relationships, and analyze their own strengths and weaknesses in the public sphere. For a culminating training project, leaders design an action plan that would push an elected official toward a vote change. The training is designed to be interactive, and the action plans are presented in a simulated learning environment. Leticia, who got her start as a parent mentor herself, arranged and facilitated the first leadership training session along with another education organizer. She explains some of the intentions behind the training:

There is some information that we as organizers and leaders have to know—about how decisions are made, who our leaders are, how we can push for changes. We have to educate our leaders about accountability and how we can use the power we have to push our elected officials to act in ways that are good for our people. And this cannot happen by just waiting and hoping that people will act.

With growing knowledge of community institutions as well as the development of explicit leadership skills, LSNA organizers make sure to provide potential leaders with the opportunities to lead, in effect, testing their leadership knowledge and abilities. Whether parents are talking with funders, speaking at a rally, sharing testimony in front of the state legislature, working on a door- knocking campaign, or reading with a first grader, Joanna describes the wealth of opportunities that are available for developing leadership. Part of LSNA’s vision is to “bring people into the leadership of actions and campaigns that fundamentally matter to our work in the community.” Learning by doing is key. Joanna calls this an apprenticeship model, where individuals are given opportunities to lead and are supported by other organizers and leaders in ways that will ensure their success.

Maria Marquez, an LSNA organizer and parent leader, recalls some of her early experiences where she testified in front of legislators or spoke at community meetings. While she learned by doing, she felt well-prepared for the task because LSNA organizers briefed her on the plan for the meeting, helped her think through responses to potential questions, and listened as she practiced her speeches. In effect, organizers prepared her for success, and Maria reports the sense of self-empowerment that comes through this kind of experience. “After an event or accomplishment like that—whether it’s leading our annual congress or testifying to state legislators, you leave that event feeling like you have changed, that your voice is important, and that you have an ability to make a difference and can lead others to action.”

By providing a range of opportunities to lead, LSNA creates a ladder for leadership within schools. With each experience and the support that comes from LSNA organizers, parent mentors gain experience and confidence to move up the ladder and take on larger and more challenging leadership responsibilities. In reflecting on the early goals of the Parent Mentor program, Amanda Rivera describes how LSNA’s leadership-development strategies with parent mentors created a “pool for school leadership” that led to greater voice and decision making within the school:

Once parents completed the [Parent Mentor] program, then they were recruited to be members of the local school council, for which they needed to be elected . . . which is really great, because they were learning and making the major decisions of hiring a principal, and/or evaluating how we would develop the school-improvement plan, or the rollback of the school, learning about budgets and approving budgets that are connected to the school-improvement plan. So, they were getting more involved in the greater life of the school, and the community . . . So the Parent Mentor program became a venue to not only attract parents, but to train them and better prepare them to serve in a leadership capacity.

Opportunities to lead can have a profound effect on parents as they change their perceptions of the role they can play in schools and the influence they can have within the broader community. LSNA organizer Ofelia Sanchez describes her personal transformation as she became committed to her work in schools and her subsequent involvement in the community. Ofelia recalls becoming involved as a parent mentor to support her child’s education; as she met and encountered other parent leaders who played an active role in school committees and the LSC, she began to think about the possibilities of leadership herself. Faced with her own shyness and intimidation, she recalls being challenged and supported by Maria Alviso, her Parent Mentor coordinator, who encouraged her to open up in public meetings and practice the skills of leadership:

But Maria Alviso would take me to these meetings, she wouldn’t even ask. But once I was at the meeting, she would tell me that I would have to talk. I was put on the spot and I would have to talk. I would come for the education committee meetings—I would listen to what everyone had to say, and Maria would encourage me to talk, telling me to say something. She would say, “You were telling me on the way over here so now say it.”

Since these early days as a parent mentor, Ofelia has become an LSC member, an active parent at the Monroe school, an LSNA organizer who coordinates parent tutors across partner schools, and a community member who has testified in front of state legislators to argue in support for passage of a statewide initiative for a Grow Your Own Teachers (GYO) program. Amid these multiple commitments, Ofelia is also studying to be a bilingual teacher through Maestros Sin Fronteras, an LSNA-sponsored GYO program that, in conjunction with Chicago State University, will award Sanchez with a college degree in education as well as certification to teach in the very Logan Square schools where she began her community involvement. Looking back on this personal transformation, Ofelia reflects that leadership was something she “learned as a parent mentor—and not something that came naturally.”

#### Transforming Communities

On a weekday evening in the Logan Square YMCA, Ofelia sits in a meeting room, taking notes on algebraic methods. She is enrolled in a math class taught by a Chicago State University professor that is part of the course sequence for Maestros Sin Fronteras. The students in this class do not represent the typical teacher candidate. In fact, they are older, many are mothers, often working full time and taking care of families even as they return to school to complete their college degrees in education. Some have completed their high school education in the United States, while others have degrees from other countries. Some have just acquired a GED for the sole purpose of joining the GYO program. While they bring a rich array of experiences to the program as parents, community members, and school leaders, many are anxious about returning to school after many years away. Ofelia admits it is a radical adjustment for her and many of her colleagues. In the second year of a program that is time intensive and intellectually demanding, she has often felt overwhelmed and questioned her own ability to complete the program:

There is always something—my kids, their school, the work at home, the work here [at LSNA], being there for everyone—it is harder than you can imagine. There have been moments, I won’t lie to you, where I’m not sure if I can do it all. My family has been so patient and so supportive throughout the whole process, and that keeps me going, but also the fact that I will be teaching in this community one day. That is important to me—feeling like I am preparing myself to make a difference in my community.

Math represents a subject that is particularly challenging and sometimes overwhelming for these students. For this reason, according to her professor, Dr. Timothy Harrington, they are often fearful of his class, citing previous experiences of failure and struggles during school. Dr. Harrington considers math a language, and in order for students to be fluent in math, they must be taught the language—the processes, the symbols, and the codes. In teaching this language, he explicitly addresses the students’ anxieties and fears about math, and he makes an intentional effort to design his class in ways that make learning more comfortable and achievable.

This evening, students are working on problem sets in small groups while tutors walk around, assisting those who need some extra support. One tutor, a graduate student in education, walks around with a portable dry-erase board, working through math problems with students in the class. Maria, a teacher candidate in the first GYO cohort who took this class years ago with Dr. Harrington, now works as a tutor as well. In speaking of Maria’s presence and support, one student says, “She saves us. She is a constant reminder that we can get through this class and succeed in the program. There are already so many difficulties when you are coming back to school after such a long time, so it helps to have someone who understands your situation and can support you and encourage you to succeed.” GYO candidates enter this program because they want to provide the same kind of motivation and encouragement to schoolchildren that they receive in Dr. Harrington’s class. As a parent mentor, Ofelia found that schools needed parents like her; that is, adults who knew the experiences of families in the communities and could relate to them, but who also had a sense of familiarity with schools as institutions. Like the organizers who worked with parents to create the first GYO program, she felt that teachers could have a powerful impact if they had firsthand knowledge of the community. She describes how her experiences growing up in Logan Square and attending schools in the neighborhood shape her desire to be a teacher who cares about all aspects of the lives of her students:

I want to be a teacher in this community because I know this community. I grew up here and I know what problems that are coming up every year. I know what’s going on during the summer. But a lot of these teachers, they just pack up and go home. They don’t know what’s going on. I had a teacher for example—she used to live way out far, and she would come in and just do what she had to do, and basically she didn’t care and then once I remember telling her that I couldn’t do my homework, because there were shootings and I was scared. And she said that’s not an excuse and she just decided to give me a big old F, and she packed up and went home. And I thought, she just doesn’t care, no one cares what’s happening.

As a mother who sends her children to schools in the neighborhood, Ofelia understands how community life continues to shape the experience children have in schools. Armed with her knowledge of both schools and communities, she feels committed to making the necessary changes in schools that will create a better understanding between families and schools:

I grew up in this community and I know every summer, there are certain gangs that come around and everything gets started. And a lot of times at home, a lot of the Latino children have to live with other family members, and they don’t have the space or the room or the time because mom and dad are working and there’s no one there to help. That motivated me to do something, to change things. If other teachers are just coming in and leaving and they don’t care where these children are going to end up or don’t think about their lives and future, then I have to do something . . . I want to be the type of person who’s in the community and watching out for these kids and make a difference.

Ofelia found her ability to not only relate to students’ experiences, but as a bilingual parent to freely communicate with them and their families was a valuable and needed skill.

Former parent mentor Leticia Barrera, who is a LSNA education organizer overseeing the Parent Mentor programs, also found the connection between what schools need and what parents have to offer a compelling one:

In the schools, we could see there is a great need for good bilingual teachers. Maybe they come and go, or they are not that effective or they do not understand the families. And many of the schools struggle to get the bilingual teachers they need. But here we also have these parents who find out they are enjoying the time in the classroom and are successful in working with the children. They are from the community, so they can make the connection between the family and the school.

This connection—between what schools needed and what parents had to offer—became the basis for LSNA’s campaign to develop the first GYO initiative. In collaboration with Chicago State University, LSNA created a program, Nueva Generación, that would allow individuals like Ofelia and Leticia to enroll in a teacher education program and prepare to become certified bilingual education teachers committed to teaching in the local community upon graduation. Developing a cohort of teachers committed to the community was also thought to be a powerful way to address the pressing issue of teacher retention. According to Anne Hallett, director of Grow Your Own Illinois:

It creates a pipeline of teachers who are really very connected to the kids, to communities, to their cultures, who want to be there, who passed the zip code test. They already live there. Now, it isn’t like they’re parachuting in from Kenilworth; they are already home. And if 85 per- cent of teachers go home to teach—85 percent of teachers end up teaching within forty miles of where they grew up—then an underlying strategy of Grow Your Own is let’s invest in the people who are already home.

Based on LSNA’s success with Nueva Generación, community organizations and higher education institutions came together with Anne and others to launch a statewide campaign to develop GYO consortia across the state of Illinois. This organizing campaign led to the 2004 passage of the Grow Your Own Teachers Act by the Illinois state legislature. With the assistance of state funding, sixteen consortia have formed, each consortium consisting of a community organization, a higher education partner, and a school district. The consortia have graduated the first eleven teacher candidates, placing them in classrooms as fully accredited teachers and are currently training five hundred candidates—mostly women of color. By 2016, GYO Illinois hopes to place one thousand teachers in the state’s low-income, often hard-to-staff schools.[9](#_bookmark309) As part of this statewide initiative, LSNA has initiated a second GYO cohort, the Maestros Sin Fronteras program mentioned earlier, of which parent mentors like Ofelia are a part. Meanwhile, GYO programs have been building across the country, ushering in a nontraditional teaching force that is usually older, more mature, and committed to those communities that struggle to recruit and retain teachers. The program provides opportunities for both teacher candidates and schools. According to Anne Hallett:

It not only is creating academic and educational opportunities for wonderful people who’ve never been able to afford to go to college, of course, it’s tapping all their maturity and their assets and their strengths, and all—and their culture, and their language.

Through initiatives like GYO, LSNA works to transform the individual parents who participate in organizing as well as the community in which they become embedded. Like Ofelia and Leticia, parents are seen as leaders with the potential to drive change in schools and communities. Campaigns and initiatives often originate from the concerns and wishes of parents. Meanwhile, as parents like Ofelia and Leticia study to become teachers within the community, schools begin to view the possibilities and potential of parents differently. Ascension Juarez, former chief human resources officer of the Chicago Public Schools and a GYO partner, describes the potential changes among children when they begin to see their parents and community members become teachers in their schools:

The children know, particularly when these teachers come back to the school in which they started as parents or come back to the community in which they live to teach, and I think they will. The children in the community know them. The children in those schools know them as teacher assistants. It shows the children that if you go to school and you, of course, not just go but you study and learn, that there is a future for you.

#### From Schools to the Community

While parent mentors begin their organizing journeys in schools and classrooms and pursue more substantial leadership roles in schools, schools also become a launching pad for work in the broader community. In this way, LSNA connects schools to communities. Indeed, it places schools at the center of community life as institutional sites around which to build leadership for the community.

As a multi-issue organization, LSNA introduces parents to a broad array of community issues and campaigns—on immigration reform, health, safety, and housing. It does this through weekly training sessions at each school, neighbor- hood-wide parent mentor workshops across the schools, and one-on-one conversations between organizers and parents. During one such neighborhood-wide training session for parent mentors, LSNA organizers kicked off the session with a series of campaign announcements. The most pressing issue was related to a longstanding balanced development campaign. Gentrification was threatening Logan Square and LSNA was fighting hard to preserve affordable housing stock for its community. LSNA and other community groups were concerned with the most recent news that City Councilman Ray Suarez, head of the Housing Committee, along with then Chicago Mayor Richard Daley decided to call an extra meeting immediately before the new city council would be sworn in. The meeting was designed to push through the Affordable Requirements Ordinance that would call for 10 percent of new developments in the city to be sold at affordable prices, which the ordinance set at $220,000. By setting the “affordable” benchmark using incomes across six counties and not solely within Chicago, LSNA organizers argued that units with that “affordable” price tag would simply be unaffordable to 75 percent of Chicago families. When organizers asked parent mentors whether they or many families they knew could afford a condo for

$220,000, they were met with a resounding “No!”

Organizers explained that parents could take one or more of three actions: they could call the alderman and ask him to cancel the meeting, distribute campaign flyers in the 31st Ward and talk to residents about the ordinance, or attend the City Hall meeting and show their presence.

Given the urgency of the matter, parent mentors decided to use the time during the meeting to call the alderman’s office. As cell phones across the room dialed into the alderman’s office, the lines became busy and calls went straight to voice mail. Due to this temporary setback, several parents suggested that they stage a rally at the alderman’s office. With the enthusiastic support of parents and organizers in the room, thirty parent mentors decided to go immediately to the 31st Ward neighborhood while the remaining group stayed on site to complete the agenda for the meeting. For the next two hours, parent mentors led a protest at the alderman’s office after a failed attempt to meet with him; they also distributed flyers in the 31st Ward and informed neighborhood residents and business owners about the alderman’s meeting and the scheduled vote on the ordinance. Parent mentors were engaged in making decisions and leading the action through every stage. They chose representatives to request a meeting with the alderman. They decided the next course of action when his office refused to grant entry to representatives, and they planned the style and manner of the public protest. To the chants of “Sí, se puede!” (Yes, we can!), the group used their presence to express dissent against the alderman and inform residents about the community issue. Ultimately, the scheduled city council meeting went ahead as planned, and the ordinance was passed by the departing city council with the contested affordability terms. However, as one parent mentor explained during the protest at the alderman’s office, “What matters most is that we are here and we are showing that we know what’s going on and we feel some- thing about it. Even if the ordinance passes on Monday, we will feel good knowing that we tried.” For many parents like this parent mentor, who are usually not involved in public life and community activism, the opportunity “to come out of your house and be involved in something bigger” can make them feel more invested in their neighborhood, leaving them with a renewed sense of power and possibility:

I feel I have some power—power that I can make a difference. And even though myself, I am not a leader or not someone who can change a lot of things in the community myself, when I am part of a group like this, we all feel different. We feel that together, we can do this, and that is what we were saying in the circle—we can do this together.

Every year, about 150 parents—parent mentors, leaders, and community members—make up the core of LSNA’s education organizing efforts. These efforts are consistently linked to the broader social issues in the community. John McDermott, a housing organizer for LSNA, describes the power in numbers that comes from school organizing. In his view, the sheer mass of support from parent mentors accelerates and accentuates LSNA’s work in the area of housing:

If it weren’t for the parents, a lot of these campaigns—some of them would not happen and most of them would not have the kind of power and impact that they have. On the balanced development campaign, LSNA has been one of the key members of the coalition, and when there are citywide actions or some major hearings at the City Council Housing and Real Estate Committee, the education leaders, parent mentors, and, to some extent, the community center students, are really the lion’s share of the turnout of the force.

Knowing the importance of parent leaders, John comes to schools regularly to build relationships with parents and spark their interest in issues beyond schools; so does Elena Hernandez, another LSNA staff person who also works on housing. Elena attends neighborhood-wide workshops, facilitates discussions at schools during the Friday workshops, and attends education events to meet and maintain relationships with parents. She explains, “It’s really important for me to try and build relationships with the parents, because ultimately, when there are big public meetings, when we have to do an action, whatever it is we have to do, we’re going to go to them first and ask them for their support.”

This ability to mobilize parents is fundamental to LSNA’s overall success in the neighborhood, according to Alderman Rey Colon. Before his position as an elected city official, Colon worked with LSNA as a community activist in Logan Square. In his continued work with the organization as alderman, he finds that LSNA has the unique ability to develop a broad base of parent support through their work in schools and use this base to make an impact on diverse community issues. Through its regular relationships with parents, LSNA can tap into the issues that concern them the most. He explains, “LSNA can mobilize its parents—they’ve got people working in the schools who can get other people together and if they need to send people to the alderman’s office, then it’s a lot easier, because you have people in all these different schools.”

As illustrated in the action to stop the city council meeting, parents can organize themselves quickly in school teams or across the partner schools, and it is this ability to organize rapidly and effectively that is fundamental to LSNA’s strength in the community. Parents who are involved in John’s housing campaigns come in with a sense of power, compared to the other individuals and groups he may organize. He explains:

We have people who walk in off the street. And we have some relationships that we build through other member groups like churches and block clubs. But the schools are these intense hubs, these intense webs of relationships. There is such a huge level of trust and relationship between the educational organizers and the parent mentors, among the parent mentors, that the parent mentors at a given school are like this already formed team. They have a common base, they have a lot of common in terms of life issues. They are moms, they have a school in common, they tend to have a neighborhood in common because they live around the school. So they are like a team that’s already somewhat powerful.

***Conclusion***

By organizing parent mentors at each school, LSNA develops both an intimate base of parent participation that seeks to change the nature of relationships between schools and families as well as a larger, more powerful base of members across the community. This strategy reflects an awareness that schools are unique sites for community organizing. Unlike organizing within the broader community, where LSNA believes campaigns are often aggressive and tactics sometimes confrontational, school-based organizing requires a fundamentally collaborative approach. Indeed, it requires a delicate balance between working with schools in support of common goals and pushing schools to make necessary changes. According to Nancy Aardema:

In our work outside of schools, as is often the case with traditional community organizing groups, there is usually an external enemy, an institution or individual that you have identified and associated with a concrete problem. And if you are a strong, powerful organizing group, you are going to push up against that external enemy until you win. It’s you versus them. But in schools, it’s not that clear—is there a clear external enemy? In most cases, no. We have to share space with principals; in some ways, you would say we need their blessing to do the work in schools. So our strategy for working with them has to be different, more collaborative.

To create desired changes in schools, LSNA organizes parents by giving them access to classrooms, providing them with the institutional knowledge of schools, and developing them as leaders. To improve the interactions between families and school staff, LSNA designs a relational approach to parent engagement that seeks to build trust and communication between parents and teachers. This approach has worked to transform Logan Square schools from disconnected and isolated institutions into parent-friendly places. Indeed, parents are everywhere now—in classrooms, hallways, lending libraries, community learning centers, and on school site councils. Parents are not just welcome in schools; they have gained a legitimate and important role in the real work education. As a result, LSNA has begun to transform the culture of schooling across its neighborhood.

Nevertheless, LSNA faces some important challenges in continuing to deepen its work. While participation in the Parent Mentor program may encourage dialogue between parents and teachers, building the trust and relationships necessary for positive change, it does not guarantee a change in teachers’ beliefs nor does it promise sustained change in classroom practices. As one organizer explains, “Teachers will do what they want to do at the end of the day. They will be involved in the program or they will choose not to do it. And parents are essentially in there following the structure and guidelines of that teacher’s classroom.” As a result, while parents have access to classrooms, they are not always in a position of power to change the practices within those classrooms.

While this may be the case, through their sustained participation in classrooms, parent mentors nevertheless become intimately connected to the inner world of classrooms. As one newly involved parent mentor explains, “I have this insider view now. Even though I was in the school before, I didn’t really understand what was going on before. Now, I do.” As parents like Isabel develop opportunities to understand the culture of schools, they become what LSNA education organizer Bridget Murphy describes as “critical observers of school culture.” In essence, through their immersion in classrooms, they become keyed into the beliefs, practices, and expectations of schools. Through these interactions, they are armed with knowledge that allows them to be critical and actively engaged in school decision making—in Isabel’s words, “ready to act, not react.” In that sense, they provide a force for long-term change in teaching practice.

LSNA may not be well-positioned to directly address teaching and learning, nor is the group necessarily interested in directly affecting these issues. Joanna explains that the purpose that drives LSNA’s education organizing is not to “change classroom curriculum or radically alter classroom practices.” Rather, the organization strives to change the nature of relationships between schools and families, opening lines of communication and areas of mutual interest, all through a process that nurtures trust and dialogue. It is then up to teachers to act differently based on these relationships, and Joanna believes that, over time, many do.

Nevertheless, LSNA believes that parents do have a critical role in education reform, contributing their own authority in educational matters to the authority of professional educators. Many educators see the potential value of this contribution, yet it is a challenge to change deep-seated school cultures. According to Arne Duncan, then chief executive officer of the Chicago Public Schools, the kind of parent engagement that LSNA promises requires a change in school culture and a restructuring of the educational environment traditionally conceived:

I would argue that historically we created an environment where not only weren’t parents welcome, they were sort of actively told not to come, and so again, we’re talking about now trying to change that culture so that our schools are welcoming, that they’re inviting parents in and that schools are places where parents feel they want to come.

According to Duncan, who developed a community schools initiative in Chicago, community organizations like LSNA with a rich tradition and experience in local communities offer viable solutions for school districts, that often need success stories to drive school reform and practice:

When you’re trying to push the kind of culture change I’m pushing, you need success stories. You need to be able to point at something, and they came to me early on to say this not only can work, but is working, and to have something that’s concrete, and to have something that’s real I think is so important at changing people’s beliefs and aspirations about what’s possible.

Within school environments that are so separated from the life of families, organizations like LSNA do the intense work necessary to break traditions and to alter the attitudes and beliefs of school staff.

LSNA has been gradually making progress in this endeavor, offering powerful success stories for meaningful parent engagement and new kinds of relation- ships in schools. Indeed, when school staff, families, and communities work together in support of school environments that open up lines of communication between parents and teachers and develop models of engagement that invite and integrate families into schools, students ultimately benefit. Parents and teachers work together for the healthy development of children. Students, meanwhile, receive powerful messages about the role models and educators in their lives.

LSNA, with its Parent Mentor program at the center, has found a potent way to work with schools and families to develop parent participation that moves beyond the distant, deficit-oriented patterns that often exist in schools. Instead, through LSNA organizing, parents emerge as powerful actors both in school and community life. In the process, schools begin to re-create themselves as community institutions that integrate families and build communities.

### http://www.lsna.net/uploads/lsna/images/lsna_program_congress_201820190.jpgArtifacts

**Holistic Plan 2018**



**Logan Square Neighborhood Association Key Funders**

**2002**[[1]](#footnote-1):

LSNA’s school-based programs funded through many sources, including:

* The Chicago Board of Education
* The Chicago Department of Human Services
* The Chicago Annenberg Challenge (a school reform initiative that supported LSNA as an external partner to five Logan Square schools)
* The MacArthur Foundation
* The Polk Bros. Foundation
* The Illinois State Board of Education
* The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs
* The Illinois Community College Board
* The Federal government’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers program

**2018-2019**[[2]](#footnote-2):

* Active Transportation Alliance
* After School Matters
* Albert Pick, Jr. Fund
* America Baila: Folkdance and Arts Company of Chicago
* Anonymous Challenge Grant
* Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD)
* Changing Children’s Worlds Foundation – International Child/Parent Development Program
* Chicago Community Trust
* Chicago Housing Initiative
* Chicago Foundation for Women
* Chicago Public Schools
* Conant Family Foundation
* City of Chicago - Department of Family & Support Services – OST
* City of Chicago - Department of Family & Support Services – SYEP
* DePaul University Criminology Department
* Edward W. Hazen Foundation
* Elevated Chicago
* Enterprise Community Partners
* Evanston Community Foundation
* Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights (ICIRR) – Illinois Department of Human Services – New Americans Initiative
* Field Foundation of Illinois
* Illinois Department of Human Services – TANF Special Project
* Illinois Department of Human Services – Teen REACH
* Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) – State-Wide Parent Mentor Program
* Impact 100 Chicago
* Institute of International Education (IIE)
* Landau Family Foundation
* Liberty Bank for Savings
* Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) – Chicago
* Latin United Community Housing (LUCHA)
* John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
* Marguerite Casey Foundation
* Mennonite Foundation
* NextGen Illinois
* Polk Bros Foundation
* Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC)
* Ravenswood Health Care Foundation
* Schott Foundation for Public Education
* Unitarian Universalist Fund for a Just Society
* United Methodist Church – General Board of Global Ministries
* W.K. Kellogg Foundation
* Wieboldt Foundation
* Woods Fund of Chicago

**Logan Square Neighborhood Association Local Partners**

LSNA works together with community leaders, banks, and churches. Local YMCA representatives are on the board[[3]](#footnote-3).

**Logan Square Neighborhood Association Staff as of June 1, 2017**[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Directors**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Name** |
| Executive Director | Nancy Aardema |
| Early Learning & Health Director | Lucy Gomez-Feliciano |
| Immigration Director | Marcelo Ferrer |
| Development Director | Shana Wills |
| New Communities Program Director | Susan Adler Yanun |

**Organizers**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Name** |
| Education Organizer | Bridget Murphy |
| Youth Organizer | Brian Perea |
| Youth Organizer | Jennifer Velazquez |
| Youth Organizer | Liliana Diaz |
| Housing Organizer | Christian Diaz |
| Education Organizer | Juliet de Jesus Alejandre |
| Housing and Education Organizer | Tami Love |
| Lead Parent Mentor & PEI Organizer | Leticia Barrera |

**Coordinators**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Name** |
| Goethe Parent Mentor Coordinator | Carmina Hernandez |
| McAuliffe Parent Mentor Coordinator | Hilda V. Arias |
| Sotow and Yates Parent Mentor Coordinator | Monica Espinoza |
| Funston Parent Mentor Coordinator | Reynalda Covarrubias |
| Mozart Parent Mentor Coordinator | Rosa M. Brito |
| McAuliffe Community Learning Center Coordinator | Silvia Gonzalez |
| Avondale-Logandale Parent Mentor Coordinator | Sonia Cortez |
| Early Learning Project Coordinator | Delia Bonilla |
| Adult Education Coordinator | Shirley Reyes |

**Administrative**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Name** |
| Receptionist | Araceli Carrillo |
| Accounting | Itzel Moreno |
| Accounting and Data Associate | Rosita De La Rosa |
| Development & Parent Mentor Program Assistant | Iyabo Anifowoshe |

**Media Mention: The Chicago Reporter[[5]](#footnote-5)**

When it comes to forging solid relationships between communities and schools, Logan Square Neighborhood Association has it all figured out.

Its roster of programs includes classroom mentoring, in which parents assist teachers in the classroom; one-on-one tutoring by parents of struggling students in benchmark grades; a “literacy ambassadors” initiative that sends teams of parents and teachers on home visits to teach literacy skills; community centers that offer programs for children and adults; and a teacher preparation program, called Grow Your Own, that has helped 25 community residents become bilingual teachers and sparked the creation of a similar statewide initiative.

“It is a model that not [only] gets parents active in schools, but breaks down barriers between the community and schools, helps schools, and builds on parent strengths,” says Chris Brown, who co-authored a case study of the organization in 2002. (Brown is now the director of education programs at LISC/Chicago, a national nonprofit redevelopment group.)

In 2000, LSNA won the Chicago Community Trust James Brown IV Award for Community Service; in 2005, the group won a national Leadership for a Changing World award from the Ford Foundation. The Southwest Organizing Project, a grassroots group in Chicago Lawn, is seeking to replicate LSNA’s approach.

LSNA’s success got a jump-start in the early 1990s, with the election of the first local school councils. “All of a sudden, we had a base of people talking about education,” says Nancy Aardema, the executive director of LSNA for the last 21 years. Foremost in their minds, she adds, was increasing parent involvement and relieving overcrowding—a long-standing concern in schools with large Latino enrollment, like those in Logan Square.

So the group gathered parents, local school councils and school administrators from Avondale, Monroe and Darwin elementary schools, and successfully petitioned CPS to build Logandale and Ames middle schools; redraw attendance boundaries for Monroe and Darwin; and build additions at other schools.

**Buoyed by its early success,**LSNA began to look deeper, exploring ways to improve what was happening inside classrooms. The change in strategy was sparked when community stakeholders—churches, block clubs, social service agencies, local leaders and businesses—came up with a holistic plan for neighborhood revitalization that stressed the importance of school/community collaboration.

To bring parents into the school, LSNA launched the parent mentor program. Funston Principal Sally Acker (now retired) came up with the idea out of frustration with her students’ lack of academic progress. “It occurred to me that if you want to change the child, you have to change the family,” Acker says. If mothers were trained to work as classroom aides, she reasoned, they would not only feel more connected to the school, but learn first-hand the work that goes into educating children.

Another grassroots group, Community Organizing and Family Issues (known as COFI), trained stay-at-home moms, focusing on raising self-esteem and awareness of the contributions that they could make in the home and at school.

The initiative grew—from a handful of parents at Funston in 1994 to 132 mentors at nine schools last year—and proved beneficial in other ways. When parents who weren’t involved in the school complained about something at LSC meetings, the parent mentors stood up for the teachers and the school.

“I loved it,” says Acker. “The parents who worked here told the others, ‘You have no idea what is going on in this school and how hard it is to do the work here.’”

Trust between teachers and parents grew. Teachers learned that parents were real assets to them, and developed an appreciation for the culture of the community. Moms who had never been active in their communities boosted their self-confidence and learned how to help children who were struggling academically.

Later, LSNA created a tutoring program, where parents work one-on-one with students who are failing in the benchmark grades. Last year, there were 13 tutors; this year, there will be 24.

OER Associates, an independent research group founded by the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, completed an evaluation of the parent tutor program last year, comparing students who were mentored with students who were not. OER found that students who were tutored had slightly better skills in areas such as alphabet recognition, word recognition and vocabulary development.

**A community survey found that what residents most wanted** in schools were after-school programs, for themselves and their children. LSNA stepped in, designing centers tailored with services that the neighborhood wants.

At Funston, the focus is on serving adults with GED preparation and adult literacy classes. At Brentano, the focus is on children, with programs such as art, music and dance.

“They are not cookie-cutter centers,” says Joanna Brown, LSNA’s director of education organizing.

The centers are staffed by parents who have participated in other LSNA ventures.

 “As a principal, you are involved in a lot of organizations and a lot of them were a lot of talk,” says Acker.  “But LSNA listened and acted. I trusted them or I would not have opened my school up to so many new things. They made a huge difference in the community.”

**Media Mention: NBC Today Show Case Study**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title | Video Length |
| [NBC Today Show: Education Nation - Putting Parents to Work in the Classroom](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubo6L0qQv6Q) | 2:43 |

## Media Mention: The Seattle Times

Pilot program to train Seattle parents for larger role at school[[6]](#footnote-6)

Claudia Rowe - Seattle Times  
Published: September 8, 2014

Many parents long for a greater role in their children’s schools, something beyond being asked to raise money. This year, through a grass-roots program modeled on a Chicago success story, about 20 moms and dads in Seattle will get that chance.

In Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood, many parents don’t speak English at home. Yet the local community association has trained hundreds to volunteer in their children’s schools, where they tutor kids in math and reading and, in the process, elevate their own career horizons. A number have gone on to become certified teachers.

Inspired by this model, [Community & Parents for Public Schools](http://cppsofseattle.org/), a local parent-involvement group, has wanted to bring it to Seattle for years, and recently secured $65,000 in grants to recruit and train at least 20 volunteers here.

The first 10 will be deployed at Seattle’s Dearborn Park International School later this fall.

“It will make a huge impact,” said Dearborn Principal Angela Sheffey Bogan. “Having more adults able to work with small groups of students will definitely help with academic achievement.”

Calculating the cost-benefit of such mentorship is not easy, but improved student attendance is clearly correlated with parent engagement, said Stephanie Alter Jones, executive director of the local community group.

On Monday, three of her members were in Chicago, learning how to recruit and train other parents. Those who then complete 100 hours at their designated school will earn a $500-$600 stipend.

“It’s a stipend, not a paycheck,” said Alter Jones. “It’s not a give-a-man-a-fish program. It’s a teach-a-community-to-fish type of program, and we really like that aspect.”

In Chicago, the Parent Mentor Program relies heavily on word-of-mouth, training one parent who recruits the next, and so on.

In 2013, Education Lab [spotlighted this effort](http://seattletimes.com/html/education/2022413246_edlabchicagoxml.html), which is in its 19th year and has recruited nearly 2,000 moms and dads to spend 10 hours a week in their children’s schools.

Since the mid-1990s when it began, **Chicago’s Parent Mentor Program** has spread to more than five dozen schools throughout Illinois.

Seattle’s pilot version received $50,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, plus another $15,000 from the Satterberg Foundation. Alter Jones aims to stretch that money over two years.

Beyond Dearborn Park, five other schools — all with high populations of Latino or Somali families — are under consideration for the second wave of parent mentors, expected to begin work in the Spring.

“We are targeting schools with families who are learning about our school system and, often, are under-engaged,” Alter Jones said.

“The cost-benefit is potentially very good when we think about volunteers impacting a class full of kids, plus their own kids, plus their communities.”

*Claudia Rowe:*[*crowe@seattletimes.com*](mailto:crowe@seattletimes.com)*or 206-464-2531. On Twitter*[*@RoweReport*](http://www.twitter.com/RoweReport)

## Testimonials

**Internal**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Speaker | Title | Link | Video Length |
| Joanna Brown | LSNA Member | [NBC Today Show: Education Nation - Putting Parents to Work in the Classroom (Joanna Brown)](https://youtu.be/bFym2whEpTo) | 4:10 |
| Patricia Lopez | Former Parent Mentor, Current Bilingual Teacher | [NBC Today Show: Education Nation - Putting Parents to Work in the Classroom (Patricia Lopez)](https://youtu.be/-hTXRl30n0Q) | 2:34 |
| Leticia Barrera | Education Organizer, LSNA | [NBC Today Show: Education Nation - Putting Parents to Work in the Classroom (Leticia Barrera)](https://youtu.be/UpuG03LPeUQ) | 1:55 |
| Rosa Rivera | Parent Mentor, LSNA | [NBC Today Show: Education Nation - Putting Parents to Work in the Classroom (Rosa Rivera)](https://youtu.be/kTMjL5608Hs) | 2:12 |

**External**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Speaker | Title | Link | Video Length |
| Dr. Charles Payne | Professor, University of Chicago | [NBC Today Show: Education Nation - Putting Parents to Work in the Classroom (Dr. Charles Payne)](https://youtu.be/MhKp8_Uf36A) | 5:03 |
| Edwin Rivera | Principal, James Monroe Elementary | [NBC Today Show: Education Nation - Putting Parents to Work in the Classroom (Edwin Rivera)](https://youtu.be/6TPqwVVmuPE) | 2:41 |
| Audrey Navarro | Teacher, James Monroe Elementary | [NBC Today Show: Education Nation - Putting Parents to Work in the Classroom (Audrey Navarro)](https://youtu.be/muL2y1Zz8pI) | 2:50 |
| Multiple Teachers and Students | Teachers and Students | [Thank You Parent Mentors! Parent Mentor Program 2013-14](https://youtu.be/srw4PxGGyPo) | 4:14 |

**Testimony: Family Math and Family Literacy Program**[[7]](#footnote-7)

“Improved relationships between parents and teachers, known as “bridging capital,” are another result of school/community partnerships in Logan Square classrooms. As parents work closely with teachers, they develop an understanding of what actually happens in the classrooms and learn how they can help their own children. This leads to increased parent involvement with homework, in reading to their children, and in leading activities such as Family Math and Family Literacy.”

Parent quote: “Being here has helped me work more with my children. I pay attention to the work that is assigned to them. I know how they work and how to help them improve.”

One teacher explained, “Before, parents were seen as disciplinarians at home and teachers were the educators at the school. Now parents are seen as partners in educating the children in the school and in the home.”

**Webinar**

Working Together to Create Meaningful Parent Engagement – The Annenberg Institute and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation

<https://vimeo.com/26962806>

Webinar

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Timestamp | Speaker | Description |
| 0:00-3:30 | Moderator | Welcome and Introduction |
| 3:31-21:10 | Dr. Soo Hong, Wellesley College, author of “A Cord of Three Strands” | Rethinking Our Approach to Community Engagement, The Ecology of Parent Engagement |
| 21:11-21:38 | Moderator | Thanking Dr. Hong, Introducing Monica Espinoza and Bridget Murphy |
| 21:39-30:44 | Bridget Murphy, Community Organizer for LSNA | Explaining the Parent Mentor Program |
| 30:45-38:39 | Monica Espinoza, Parent Mentor with LSNA | Person Testimony |
| 38:40-44:39 | Bridget Murphy | Other LSNA initiatives including community learning centers and Grow Your Own, results from LSNA involvement including test scores and qualitative results |
| 44:40-46:37 | Moderator | Additional information about GYO, Introducing Stephen Zrike and Thomas Hoffman |
| 46:38-1:02:09 | Stephen Zrike, Chief Area Officer, Area Four | Leveraging Community and School partnerships, Questions about pay, parent-teacher dynamics, and agenda |
| 1:02:10-1:11:04 | Thomas Hoffman, Principal Ames Middle School | A principal’s perspective on the Parent Mentor Program |
| 1:11:05-1:35:12 | Multiple | Question and Answer Session |

Q&A

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Timestamp | Speaker | Question |
| 1:11:18-1:13:07 | Bridget Murphy | What do you look for in a school partner? |
| 1:13:08-1:18:32 | Bridget Murphy, Stephen Zrike, Thomas Hoffman, Soo Hong | Do you have examples of high school engagement? What lessons can transfer to that age group? |
| 1:18:33-1:23:56 | Bridget Murphy, Monica Espinoza | How do you engage parents who are not native English speakers? |
| 1:23:57-1:30:57 | Thomas Hoffman, Stephen Zrike, Soo Hong | Were there policy issues or procedural issues involved with bringing parents into the school? Was there conflict with the teachers union having parents in class helping with the lessons? |
| 1:30:58-1:35:12 | Bridget Murphy | What are the strategies to reach out to parents to get them involved in the Parent Mentor Program? How do you get parents “fired up”? |

PDF Summary

<http://www.annenberginstitute.org/sites/default/files/documents/315/NMEFwebinar2Summary.pdf>

PowerPoint

<http://www.annenberginstitute.org/sites/default/files/documents/315/NMEF_webinar_parent072611.pdf>

## Organizing Evaluation Framework Rubric

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Underdeveloped (Level 1)** | **Developing (Level 2)** | **Proficient (Level 3)** | **Well Developed (Level 4)** |
| **Organizing Infrastructure** | | | | |
| **Commitment to Building Parent Power** | The organizing initiative’s mission, culture, and priorities demonstrate **no commitment** to developing the capacity of low-income public school parents and communities in Connecticut and/or beyond to demand educational equity | The organizing initiative’s mission, culture, and priorities demonstrate a **weak commitment** to developing the capacity of low-income public school parents and communities in Connecticut and/or beyond to demand educational equity  [EX 1.1](#EX1_1" \o "Describing the parent mentor program, \“organizers use a training curriculum throughout the program that focuses on providing parents with knowledge about schools, connects them to each other to create a supportive network, and serves as a foundation ... ) | The organizing initiative’s mission, culture, and priorities demonstrate a **satisfactory level of commitment** to developing the capacity of low-income public school parents and communities in Connecticut and/or beyond to demand educational equity | The organizing initiative’s mission, culture, and priorities demonstrate a **powerful commitment** to developing the capacity of low-income public school parents and communities in Connecticut and/or beyond to demand educational equity |
| **Community Understanding** | The organizing initiative’s staff displays **no understanding** of the community context in which the initiative operates (e.g., they are **not able** to speak about community resources, political dynamics, school quality issues, and member experiences) | The organizing initiative’s staff displays a **weak understanding** of the community context in which the initiative operates (e.g., they are able to speak **in a limited way** about community resources, political dynamics, school quality issues, and member experiences) | The organizing initiative’s staff displays **some significant understanding** of the community context in which the initiative operates (e.g., they are able to speak **in a relatively informed way** about community resources, political dynamics, school quality issues, and member experiences) [EX 1.2](#EX1_2" \o "LSNA did a door knocking campaign. \“This experience gets us in contact with all these families around the neighborhoods. We start to feel connected as a group and as a community and we start to understand what our neighbors care about\” (pg 183 *) ...) | The organizing initiative’s staff displays a **strong understanding** of the community context in which the initiative operates (e.g., they are able to speak **in a well-informed way** about community resources, political dynamics, school quality issues, and member experiences) |
| **Organizing Model**  *Theory of Change* | The organizing initiative **does not have a theory of change** for increasing parent leadership and collective power to improve education | The organizing initiative has a **weak theory of change** for increasing parent leadership and collective power to improve education (e.g., the initiative’s strategies and desired outcomes **are not well-defined** or there is **limited** logic, research, experience, and/or other support backing the strategy for achieving change) [EX 1.3.A](#EX1_3_A" \o "As described in indicator 1.1 in the parent mentor program, \“organizers use a training curriculum throughout the program that focuses on providing parents with knowledge about schools, connects them to each other to create a supportive network ...) | The organizing initiative has a **viable theory of change** for increasing parent leadership and collective power to improve education (e.g., the initiative’s strategies and desired outcomes **are sufficiently** **defined** or there is **some significant** logic, research, experience, and/or other support backing the strategy for achieving change) | The organizing initiative has a **well-developed and compelling theory of change** for increasing parent leadership and collective power to improve education (e.g., the initiative’s strategies and desired outcomes **are very well defined** and there is **strong** logic, research, experience, and/or other supportbacking the strategy for achieving change) |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Underdeveloped (Level 1)** | | **Developing (Level 2)** | | **Proficient (Level 3)** | | **Well Developed (Level 4)** |
| **Organizing Infrastructure** | | | | | | | | |
| **Organizing Model**  *Measureable Outcomes* | The organizing initiative uses **no measurable outcomes and goals** for evaluating its change theory's validity and implementation rigor | | The organizing initiative uses **limited measurable outcomes and goals** for evaluating its change theory's validity and implementation rigor | | The organizing initiative uses **satisfactory measurable outcomes and goals** for evaluating its change theory's validity and implementation rigor | | The organizing initiative uses **well developed and rigorous measurable outcomes and goals** for evaluating its change theory's validity and implementation rigor [EX 1.3.B](#EX1_3_B" \o "Some specific goals mentioned include: Reverse the decision to use ISAT for bilingual students (pg 168 *) Strong LSCs (local school councils) that would function smoothly and encourage broad participation in the community (pg 171 *)...) | |
| **Organizing Model**  *Reflective Practice* | The organizing initiative **does not** adapt and improve its strategy based on evidence of success or failure (e.g., it engages in **no** debrief sessions after events and **does not** develop and use data-based reports and reflections to help improve its work) | | The organizing initiative takes **limited steps** to adapt and improve its strategy based on evidence of success or failure (e.g., it **only** **occasionally** engages in debrief sessions after events and **only rarely** develops and uses data-based reports and reflections to help improve its work) [EX 1.3.C](#EX1_3_C" \o "\“LSNA’s ability ‘to move with the times and to intimately involve themselves in what’s going on in the community and intelligently know what the next step needs to be,’ is critical in pushing for change in schools\” according to City Clerk...) | | The organizing initiative takes **some significant steps** toadapt and improve its strategy based on evidence of success or failure (e.g., organizing staff and parent leaders engage **with some frequency** in debrief sessionsafter events and develop and use data-based reports and reflections to improve their work **in a sufficient way**) | | The organizing initiative takes **well developed and effective steps** to adapt and improve its strategy based on evidence of success or failure (e.g., organizing staff and parent leaders **consistently** engage in debrief sessionsafter events and **actively and frequently** develop and use data-based reports and reflections to make changes in their work) | |
| **Financial Stability** | The organizing initiative **does not have a stable financial base** (e.g., it **lacks capital** to satisfy current obligations **and/or a plan** to satisfy future obligations) | | The organizing initiative has a **weak financial base** (e.g., it has **limited capital** to satisfy current obligations and/or a **limited plan** for satisfying future obligations) | | The organizing initiative has a **satisfactory financial base** (e.g., it has **sufficient capital** to satisfy current obligations and/or? a **sufficient plan** for satisfying future obligations) | | The organizing initiative has **ample financial resources** (e.g., its **capital exceeds its obligations** and/or? it has a **well-developed plan** for satisfying future obligations) [EX 1.4](#EX1_4" \o "\“LSNA’s school-based programs are funded through many sources, including: the Chicago Board of Education; the Chicago Department of Human Services; the Chicago Annenberg Challenge...) | |
| **Organizing Staff Capacity**  [EX 1.5](#EX1_5" \o "Example not in text, see hypothetical) | The organizing initiative includes lead organizers with **no experience, expertise or observed success** in enhancing parents’ or other community members’ exercise of collective power (e.g., staff have **never** worked in the field of community organizing or social action and has no observable results | | The organizing initiative includes lead organizers with **limited experience, expertise or observed success** in enhancing parents’ or other community members’ collective power (e.g., staff have worked for **only a limited time**, in a **limited way or with limited results** in the field of community organizing or social action) | | The organizing initiative includes lead organizers with **some significant experience, expertise** **or observed success** in enhancing the exercise of collective power of parents or other community members (e.g., staff have worked for **several years** in the field of community organizing or social action with observable results) | | The organizing initiative includes lead organizers with **substantial experience, expertise or observed success** in maximizing the exercise of collective power of parents or other community members (e.g., staff have worked in the field of community organizing or social action for **many years with observable results**) | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Underdeveloped (Level 1)** | **Developing (Level 2)** | **Proficient (Level 3)** | **Well Developed (Level 4)** |
| **Organizing Skill** | | | | |
| **Leadership Development**  *Parent Leader Base-Building* | The organizing initiative **takes no steps to build** an expanding cohort of committed parent leaders (e.g., it **does not** conduct 1:1 conversations, house meetings, community meetings, or other events to build relationships and engage leaders) | The organizing initiative **takes** **limited steps** to build an expanding cohort of committed parent leaders (e.g., it **only** **infrequently** conducts 1:1 conversations, house meetings, community meetings, or other events to build relationships and engage leaders and has **limited** turnout and follow-up) [EX 2.1.A](#EX2_1_A" \o "The parent mentor program encourages participation from parents who don’t typically get involved. For example, a Spanish speaking parent was placed in a bilingual classroom. (pg 178 *)...) | The organizing initiative **takes some significant steps** to build an expanding cohort of committed parent leaders (e.g., it **regularly** conducts 1:1 conversations, house meetings, community meetings, or other events to build relationships and engage leaders and has a **sufficient amount** of turnout and follow-up) | The organizing initiative **takes strong and consistently effective steps** to build an expanding cohort of committed parent leaders (e.g., it conducts **extensive** 1:1 conversations, house meetings, community meetings, or other events to build relationships and engage leaders and has **substantial** turnout and follow-up) |
| **Leadership Development**  *Parent Leader Capacity-Building* | The organizing initiative **does not develop** parent leadership capacity (e.g., parents receive **no support and opportunities** to take ownership over organizing work and to learn about education and education systems) | The organizing initiative **takes limited steps** to develop parent leadership capacity (e.g., parents receive **weak and infrequent support** **and opportunities** to take ownership over organizing work and to learn about education and education systems) | The organizing initiative **takes some significant steps** to develop parent leadership capacity (e.g., parents receive a **fair amount of support** **and opportunities** to take ownership over organizing work and to learn about education and education systems) | The organizing initiative **takes** **strong and consistently effective steps** to develop parent leadership capacity (e.g., parents receive **substantial support and opportunities** to take ownership over organizing work and to learn about education and education systems) [EX 2.1.B](#EX2_1_B" \o "\“Parent Mentor training sessions are also designed to foster parent leadership. LSNA teaches parents about issues of power and inequality and builds the skills they need to work together to improve the school and community life.\” (pg 177 *)...) |
| **Strategy Development and Implementation**  *Research and Issue Definition* | Parent leaders, with the support of staff, **gather no information** to hone their understanding of education issues and craft solutions (e.g., they **do not** elicit parents’ concerns about the local education context; engage with experts, current research, and data; or assess the political climate surrounding issues) | Parent leaders, with the support of staff, **take limited steps** to gather information to hone their understanding of education issues and craft solutions (e.g., they **take** **only occasional opportunities** to elicit parents’ concerns about the local education context; engage with experts, current research and data; and assess the political climate surrounding issues)  [EX 2.2.A](#EX2_2_A" \o "\"As a parent mentor, Ofelia found that schools needed parents like her; that is, adults who knew the experiences of families in the communities and could relate to them\” (pg 188)) | Parent leaders, with the support of staff, **take some significant steps** to gather information to hone their understanding of education issues and craft solutions (e.g., they **take a fair number of opportunities** to elicit parents’ concerns about the local education context; engage with experts, current research and data; and assess the political climate surrounding issues) | Parent leaders, with the support of staff, **take strong and consistently effective steps** to gather information to hone their understanding of education issues and craft solutions (e.g., they **undertake substantial and successful efforts** to elicit parents' concerns about the local public education context, engage with experts, current research and data; and assess the political climate surrounding issues) |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Underdeveloped (Level 1)** | **Developing (Level 2)** | **Proficient (Level 3)** | **Well Developed (Level 4)** | |
| **Organizing Skill** | | | | | |
| **Strategy Development and Implementation**  *Strategic Campaign Development*  [EX 2.2.B](#EX2_2_B" \o "Example not in text, see hypothetical) | Parent leaders, with the support of staff, **develop no strategic campaigns** for educational equity (e.g., they **do not** define campaign strategies and goals, devise campaign tactics, or allocate resources to campaigns) Or, the organizing initiative is entirely led by staff | Parent leaders, with the support of staff, **take only weak steps** to develop strategic campaigns for educational equity (e.g., campaign strategies and goals are **poorly** defined, campaign tactics are **inappropriate or** **inadequately developed**, and **few** resources are allocated to campaigns) | Parent leaders, with the support of staff, **take** **some significant steps** to develop strategic campaigns for educational equity (e.g., they **sufficiently** define campaign strategies and goals, utilize **appropriate** tactics in those campaigns, and allocate **adequate** resources to them) | | Parent leaders, with the support of staff, **take strong and consistently effective steps** to develop strategic campaigns for educational equity (e.g., they **expertly** define campaign strategies and goals, use an **optimal balance** of tactics,includingnegotiation and/or collaboration and public pressure to address their defined education issue, and **expertly** allocate resources) |
| **Strategy Development and Implementation**  *Campaign Execution*  [EX 2.2.C](#EX2_2_C" \o "LSNA had sustained campaigns and years of meetings about overcrowding (pg 13 ^) ...) | Parent leaders, with the support of staff, **do not implement campaign plans** for achieving educational equity | Parent leaders, with the support of staff, implement their campaign plans for achieving educational equity in a **limited way** (e.g., they **do not follow through with many** of their campaign plans, and/or campaign strategies are **poorly** executed) | Parent leaders, with the support of staff, implement their campaign plans for achieving educational equity in a **satisfactory way** (e.g., they **follow through with most** of their campaign plans, and campaign strategies are **adequately** executed) | | Parent leaders, with the support of staff, implement their campaign plans for achieving educational equity in an **exemplary way** (e.g., they **follow through with nearly all** of their campaign plans, and campaign strategies are executed in a comprehensive and effective way) |
| **External Relationship- building** | Parent leaders and staff **do not** collaborateand negotiate with other institutions, organizations, and stakeholders to envision and implement educational changes (e.g., they engage in **no meetings** with allies or prospective allies, and they do not partner on or co-plan events or actions with them) | Parent leaders and staff **only occasionally** collaborate and negotiate with other institutions, organizations, and stakeholders to envision and implement educational changes (e.g., they engage in only a **small number of** meetings with allies or prospective allies, and they partner on or co-plan only a **small number** of events or actions with them)  [EX 2.3](#EX2_3" \o "LSNA works together with community leaders, banks, churches. Local YMCA representatives are on the board (pg 15 ^)...) | Parent leaders and staff engage in **some significant amount** ofcollaborationand negotiation with other institutions, organizations, and stakeholders to envision and implement educational changes (e.g., they engage in **a moderate number of** meetings with allies or potential allies and partner on or co-plan a **moderate number** ofevents or actions with them) | | Parent leaders and staff **actively and effectively** collaborate and negotiate with other institutions, organizations, and stakeholders to envision and implement educational changes (e.g., they **often meet** with allies or potential allies and **actively** partner on or co-plan events or actions with them) |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Underdeveloped (Level 1)** | **Developing (Level 2)** | **Proficient (Level 3)** | **Well Developed (Level 4)** |
| **Organizing Impact** | | | | |
| **Expanded Parent and Community Power**  *Constituent Growth* | Since its inception, the organizing initiative has experienced **no** growth inits constituency for improving educational equity, including its base of parents, parent leaders, and partners | Since its inception, the organizing initiative has experienced **limited growth** in its constituency for improving educational equity, including its base of parents, parent leaders, and partners  [EX 3.1.A](#EX3_1_A" \o "Forty people a year go to week long training on advanced leadership (pg 184 *)...) | Since its inception, the organizing initiative has experienced **some significant growth** in its constituency for improving educational equity, including its base of parents, parent leaders, and partners | Since its inception, the organizing initiative has experienced **steady and substantial growth** in its constituency for improving educational equity, including its base of parents, parent leaders, and partners |
| **Expanded Parent and Community Power**  *Knowledge about Schools and School Systems* | Parents **have no understanding** of how to support children's academic success and how to address barriers to student learning within schools | Parents **have a limited understanding** of how to support children's academic success and how to address barriers to student learning within schools | Parents **have some significant understanding** of how to support children's academic success and how to address barriers to student learning within schools | Parents have a **deep and shared understanding** of how to support children's academic success and how to address barriers to student learning within schools [EX 3.1.B](#EX3_1_B" \o "•See \“Artifact: Testimonials-Audrey Navarro\”) |
| **Expanded Parent and Community Power**  *Civic Capacity* | The parent base **has no belief** in their ability to work together to affect change and **no sense** of collective belonging and mutual commitment to the organizing initiative and its goals | The parent base has an **emerging belief** in their ability to work together to affect change and a **limited sense** of collective belonging and mutual commitment to the organizing initiative and its goals | The parent base has **some significant belief** in their ability to work together to affect change and **some significant sense** of collective belonging and mutual commitment to the organizing initiative and its goals [EX 3.1.C](#EX3_1_C" \o "\“Maria reports the sense of self-empowerment that comes through this kind of experience, ‘After an event or accomplishment like that-whether it’s leading our annual congress or testifying to state legislators, you leave the event feeling ...) | The parent base has a **deep belief** in their ability to work together to affect change and a **deep sense** of collective belonging and mutual commitment to the organizing initiative and its goals |
| **Expanded Parent and Community Power**  *Civic Participation* | Parents have taken on **no** new roles in the public sphere resulting from organizing efforts, including in leadership positions in their children's school and school districts and in school-related and other elections | Among parents, there is **limited growth** in participation in the public sphere resulting from organizing efforts, including in leadership positions in their children's school and school districts and in school-related and other elections | Among parents, there is **some significant growth** in participation in the public sphere resulting from organizing efforts, including in leadership positions in their children's school and school districts and in school-related and other elections | Among parents, there is **substantial growth** in participation in the public sphere resulting from organizing efforts, including in leadership positions in their children's school and school districts and in school-related and other elections [EX 3.1.D](#EX3_1_D" \o "After the parent mentor program \“they start working in the schools as tutors or paraprofessionals, serve on school committees, lead one of our programs, or become elected on the local school council.\” (pg 177 *)...) |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Underdeveloped (Level 1)** | **Developing (Level 2)** | **Proficient (Level 3)** | **Well Developed (Level 4)** |
| **Organizing Impact** | | | | |
| **Expanded Parent and Community Power**  *Perceived Influence* | Parents in the initiative are **not recognized** as effective and expert change agents by important education stakeholders (e.g., education stakeholders **do not believe** in the initiative's ability to effect change, and the initiative has **no** media recognition) | Parents in the initiative are **beginning to be recognized** as effective and expert change agents (e.g., education stakeholders have an **emerging belief** in the initiative's ability to effect change, and the initiative has **limited** media recognition) | Parents in the initiative have received **some significant** **recognition** as effective and expert change agents (e.g., education stakeholders have **some confidence** in theinitiative's ability to effect change, and the initiative has a **fair amount of** media recognition) | Parents in the initiative are **widely recognized** as effective and expert change agents (e.g., education stakeholders have **substantial confidence** in the initiative's ability to effect change, and the initiative has **broad** media recognition)  [EX 3.1.E](#EX3_1_E" \o "In 2000, LSNA won the James Brown Award for Outstanding Community service. (See Artifact: Media Mention The Chicago Reporter)) |
| **Expanded Parent and Community Power**  *Mutual Accountability* | Parents in the initiative have **no** relationshipswith educators, education officials, and other influential actors | Parents in the initiative have **few or** **modest relationships** with educators, education officials, and other influential actors (i.e. relationships are characterized by **limited** responsiveness and transparency, and there is **limited** shared decision-making) | Parents in the initiative have **some significant relationships** with educators, education officials, and other influential actors (i.e. relationships are characterized by a **fair degree** ofresponsiveness and transparency, and there is **a fair degree** ofshared decision-making) | Parents in the initiative have developed **deep and substantial relationships** with educators, education officials, and other influential actors (i.e. relationships are characterized by **strong degree** ofresponsiveness and transparency, and there is **consistent and active** shared decision-making) [EX 3.1.F](#EX3_1_F" \o "The suggestion to have a parent mentor program...) |
| **Improved Educational Institutions**  *Articulation of the Win* | Parents have **no** ability to describe the education win or how they achieved that win (e.g., **they cannot say** how the education win aligns with or differs from original goals, how obstacles or opposition was overcome, how partnerships or alliances formed, or how and why strategies evolved over time) | Parents have a **limited ability** to describe the education win and how they achieved that win (e.g., they have a **weak ability** to explain how the education win aligns with or differs from the original goals, how obstacles or opposition was overcome, how partnerships or alliances formed, and how and why strategies evolved over time) | Parents have an **adequate ability** to describe the education win and how they achieved that win (e.g., they **can speak with some significant degree of authority** about how the education win aligns with or differs from the original goals, how obstacles or opposition was overcome, how partnerships or alliances formed, and how and why strategies evolved over time) | Parents have an **advanced ability** to describe the education win and how they achieved that win (e.g., they **can speak expertly** about how the education win aligns with or differs from the original goals, how obstacles or opposition was overcome, how partnerships or alliances formed, how the win strategically sets up additional campaigns, and how and why strategies evolved over time)  [EX 3.2.A](#EX3_2_A" \o "LSNA worked with Chicago State University to develop a GYO program. Based on the success, they worked together with other community organizers to develop GYO programs across the state. Members of LSNA testified to state legislature and in 2004 ...) |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Underdeveloped (Level 1)** | **Developing (Level 2)** | **Proficient (Level 3)** | **Well Developed (Level 4)** |
| **Organizing Impact** | | | | |
| **Improved Educational Institutions**  *Education Landscape Changes* | The organizing initiative had **no** education win or its win **did not and most probably will not** result in shiftsin the education landscape, including shifts in leadership, governance, policy or practice at the community, school, district, or state level | The organizing initiative’s education win resulted in, or will likely result in, **only** **modest** shiftsin the education landscape, including shifts in governance, policy or practice at the community, school, district, or state level | The organizing initiative’s education win resulted in, or will likely result in, **some significant** shiftsin the education landscape, including shifts in leadership, governance, policy or practice at the community, school, district, or state level | The organizing initiative’s education win resulted in, or will likely result in, **large and important** shiftsin the education landscape, including shifts in leadership, governance, policy or practice at the community, school, district, or state level [EX 3.2.B](#EX3_2_B" \o "The GYO programs puts teachers from the community in schools (pg 188-190)...) |
| **Improved Educational Institutions**  *Educational Equity* | The change to the education landscape **did not** and most probably will notimprovethe equitable distributionof learning outcomes for children in high-need communities | The change to the education landscape has **only** **modestly** improved, or probably will only modestly improve, the equitable distribution of learning outcomes for children in high-need communities | The change to the education landscape has generated or probably will generate **some significant** improvements **in** the equitable distribution of learning outcomes for children in high-need communities [EX 3.2.C](#EX3_2_C) | The change to the education landscape has **substantially** improved, or probably will substantially improve, the equitable distribution of learning outcomes for children in high-need communities |
| **Improved Educational Institutions**  *Sustainability* | There are **no reasons** to predictthat the change in the education landscape or improvements in the equitable distribution of learning outcomes will be sustained, replicated, and/or augmented over the next five years (e.g., the change in the education landscape is **strongly opposed** bytheeducators and education officials responsible for implementing it, or it affected onlya s**mall and isolated** aspect of current inequities) | There are **limited reasons** to predict that the change in the education landscape and improvements in the equitable distribution of learning outcomes will be sustained, replicated, and/or augmented over the next five years (e.g., the change in the education landscape has **little support** amongtheeducators and education officials responsible for implementing it, or it affected only **a modest and atypical** aspect of current inequities) | There are **some significant reasons** to predictthat the change in the education landscape as well as improvements in the equitable distribution of learning outcomes will be sustained, replicated, and/or augmented over the next five years (e.g., the change in the education landscape has a **fair degree of** **support** amongtheeducators and education officials responsible for implementing it and provides a **meaningful precedent** for removing other aspects of current inequities) | There are **strong reasons** to predict that the change in the education landscape as well as improvements in the equitable distribution of learning outcomes will be sustained, replicated, and/or augmented over the next five years (e.g., the change in the education landscape has a **substantial support** amongtheeducators and education officials responsible for implementing it and provides a **compelling precedent** for removing other aspects of current inequities)  [EX 3.2.D](#EX3_2_D" \o "GYO programs provide new teachers. Even if the mentor program stopped right away, these new teachers would still be in the schools. In 2004 Illinois expanded the program state wide. (pg 190)...) |

## Rubric Examples

## Organizing Infrastructure

## [EX 1.1](#EX1_1R" \o "Back to Rubric: 1.1 Commitment to Building Parent Power) Commitment to Building Parent Power

* Describing the parent mentor program, “Organizers use a training curriculum throughout the program that focuses on providing parents with knowledge about schools, connects them to each other to create a supportive network, and serves as a foundation for building leaders.” (pg 26)
* “Training program focused on developing personal goals, confidence in the public sphere of schools…encouraged to think about their experiences…person contributions…potential acts of leadership within schools and classrooms.” (pg 27)
* To be “Well Developed”, there would be evidence that parents are making decisions or running meetings. This is not evident within the case study.

[EX 1.2](#EX1_2R" \o "Back to Rubric: 1.2 Community Understanding) Community Understanding

* LSNA did a door knocking campaign. A member described participating, “This experience gets us in contact with all these families around the neighborhoods. We start to feel connected as a group and as a community and we start to understand what our neighbors care about.” (pg 25)
* One door knocking campaign was to ask what kinds of classes parents would want at the community learning centers LSNA was trying to open in the new schools. (pg 28)
  + The community learning centers serve 200 adults and 600 kids each week. (See “[Artifact: Webinar](#Webinar)”, PowerPoint page 56)

[EX 1.3.A](#EX1_3_AR" \o "Back to Rubric: 1.3.A Theory of Change) Theory of Change

* “By investing in our public neighborhood schools, we will strengthen our community and ensure all of our students are life, college and career ready.” ([2018 Holistic Plan](http://www.lsna.net/About-us/Holistic-Plan.html), [Artifact: Holistic Plan](#HolisticPlan))

[EX 1.3.B](#EX1_3_BR" \o "Back to Rubric: 1.3.B Measurable Outcomes) Measurable Outcomes

* Some specific goals mentioned include:
  + Reverse the decision to use ISAT for bilingual students (pg 2)
  + Strong LSCs (local school councils) that would function smoothly and encourage broad participation in the community (pg 7)
  + Reduced overcrowding (pg 9)
  + Passage of statewide “Grow Your Own” (GYO) (pg 30)
* LSNA creates a [holistic plan](http://www.lsna.net/About-us/Holistic-Plan.html) each year outlining their goals.

[EX 1.3.C](#EX1_3_CR" \o "Back to Rubric: 1.3.C Reflective Practice) Reflective Practice

* “LSNA’s ability ‘to move with the times and to intimately involve themselves in what’s going on in the community and intelligently know what the next step needs to be,’ is critical in pushing for change in schools” according to City Clerk Miguel Del Valle. (pg 22)
* Because not all parents can participate in parent mentoring in the classroom, due to work or other obligations, LSNA worked to get community learning centers (CLCs) that are open at night providing adult ed classes, babysitting and child activities. (pg 22-23)
* “LSNA organizers found the need for a more advanced leadership-development strategy” so they created a week-long training session. (pg 23)
* [Holistic plans](http://www.lsna.net/About-us/Holistic-Plan.html) are rewritten every year.
* To be “Well Developed,” LSNA would need to demonstrate higher frequency of reflection.

[EX 1.4](#EX1_4R" \o "Back to Rubric: 1.4 Financial Stability) Financial Stability

* See “[Artifact: Key Funders](#Funders)”

[EX 1.5](#EX1_5R" \o "Back to Rubric: Organizing Staff Capacity) Organizing Staff Capacity

* The case study and artifacts did not demonstrate organizing staff capacity. Organizing staff capacity could be evident through parents being trained to take charge and make decisions for the organization.

**Organizing Skill**

[EX 2.1.A](#EX2_1_AR" \o "Back to Rubric: 2.1.A Parent Leader Base-Building) Parent Leader Base-Building

* The parent mentor program encourages participation from parents who don’t typically get involved. For example, a Spanish speaking parent was placed in a bilingual classroom. (pg 11)
* Going door to door to talk about community learning center allowed them to have conversations with parents who weren’t otherwise involved. The community learning center (CLC) allow families access to the schools outside of normal hours. (pg 22-23)
* “[The] Parent Mentor program is seen as a foundational first step to encourage parents to participate in school-community life.” (pg 28)
* To be “Well Developed”, the actions listed above would need to be more frequent.

[EX 2.1.B](#EX2_1_BR" \o "Back to Rubric: 2.1.B Parent Leader Capacity Building) Parent Leader Capacity Building

* “Parent Mentor training sessions are also designed to foster parent leadership. LSNA teaches parents about issues of power and inequality and builds the skills they need to work together to improve the school and community life.” (pg 10)
* One parent leader reported that “[Door knocking] encourages her to tap into those leadership skills LSNA nurtures.” (pg 28)
* In the parent mentor program, “organizers use a training curriculum throughout the program that focuses on providing parents with knowledge about schools, connects them to each other to create a supportive network, and serves as a foundation for building leaders.” (pg 28)
* “The training program is focused on developing personal goals, confidence in the public sphere of schools…encouraged to think about their experiences…person contributions…potential acts of leadership within schools and classrooms.” (pg 29)
* In the Parent Mentor program, parents have personal goals to gain a GED, take English classes, or get employed. (pg 10)
* There is a week-long training in advanced leadership skills for 40 parents per year on community organizing, power and accountability within community. (pg 29)
* See “[Artifact: Testimony Family Math and Family Literacy Programs](#FamilyMath)”

[EX 2.2.A](#EX2_2_AR" \o "Back to Rubric: 2.2.A Research and Issue Definition) Research and Issue Definition

* “As a parent mentor, Ofelia found that schools needed parents like her; that is, adults who knew the experiences of families in the communities and could relate to them.” (pg 33)
* Former parent mentor Leticia Barrera, “In the schools we could see there is a great need for good bilingual teachers…but here we have these parents who find out they are enjoying the time in the classroom and are successful in working with the children.” (pg 34)
* “This connection-between what schools needed and what parents had to offer became the basis for LSNA’s campaign to develop the first GYO initiative.” (pg 34)
* To be “Well Developed”, LSNA would need to show that they are frequently and systematically listening to the parents, and having the parents do the work to research issues and develop solutions.

[EX 2.2.B](#EX2_2_BR" \o "Back to Rubric: 2.2.B Strategic Campaign Development) Strategic Campaign Development

* The case study does not explain how LSNA develops campaigns.
* To be “Well Developed” evidence of LSNA holding quarterly meetings to discuss campaigns, evaluating what methods are working, and dividing the labor to sustain the campaigns would be present.

[EX 2.2.C](#EX2_2_CR" \o "Back to Rubric: 2.2.C Campaign Execution) Campaign Execution

* The case study does not explain how LSNA executes campaigns.

[EX 2.3](#EX2_3R" \o "Back to Rubric: 2.3 External Relationship Building) External Relationship Building

* LSNA collaborated with school principals on the issue of overcrowded schools. (pg 7)
* See “[Artifact: LSNA Local Partners](#LocalPartners)”

**Organizing Impact**

[EX 3.1.A](#EX3_1_AR" \o "Back to Rubric: 3.1.A Constituent Growth) Constituent Growth

* Forty people per year go to week-long training on advanced leadership. (pg 29)
* To be “Well Developed”, the case study would show evidence of parents continuing to work with Logan Square Neighborhood Association after completing the training.

[EX 3.1.B](#EX3_1_BR" \o "Back to Rubric: 3.1.B Knowledge of Schools and School Systems) Knowledge of Schools and School Systems

* See “[Artifact: Testimonials-Audrey Navarro](#Audrey)”
* See “[Artifact: Testimony Family Math and Family Literacy Programs](#FamilyMath)”
* Parents have enrolled in Grow Your Own (GYO) to become teachers. (pg 32)
* “[after the parent mentor program] these parents go on to find full time jobs outside…or become elected on the local school council. (pg 12)
  + Local school councils have “the authority to hire principals and approve the school’s improvement plans and discretionary budget.” (pg 7)

[EX 3.1.C](#EX3_1_CR" \o "Back to Rubric: 3.1.C Civic Capacity) Civic Capacity

* “Maria reports the sense of self-empowerment that comes through this kind of experience, ‘After an event or accomplishment like that-whether it’s leading our annual congress or testifying to state legislators, you leave the event feeling like you have changed, that your voice is important, and that you have the ability to make a difference and can lead others to action.’” (pg 30)
* See “[Artifact: Testimony Family Math and Family Literacy Programs](#FamilyMath)”
* When it was announced that the city council was holding an immediate meeting to push through an ordinance that would impact housing costs. “Given the urgency of the matter, parent mentors decided to use the time during the meeting to call the alderman’s office. As cell phones across the room dialed into the alderman’s office, the lines became busy…due to this temporary setback, several parents suggested that they stage a rally at the alderman’s office…thirty parent mentors decided to go immediately to the 31st Ward neighborhood…for the next two hours, parent mentors led a protest at the alderman’s office.” (pg 36-37)

[EX 3.1.D](#EX3_1_DR" \o "Back to Rubric: 3.1.D Civic Participation) Civic Participation

* After the parent mentor program “they start working in the schools as tutors or paraprofessionals, serve on school committees, lead one of our programs, or become elected on the local school council.” (pg 17)
* “Once parents completed the [parent mentor] program, then they were recruited to be members of the local school council, for which they needed to be elected.” (pg 31)
* Alderman Rey Colon started as an activist for LSNA. (pg 38)
* “By 2016 GYO Illinois hopes to place one thousand teachers in the state’s low-income, often hard-to-staff schools.” (pg 35)

[EX 3.1.E](#EX3_1_ER" \o "Back to Rubric: 3.1.E Perceived Influence) Perceived Influence

* In 2000, LSNA won the James Brown Award for Outstanding Community service. (See Artifact: [Media Mention The Chicago Reporter](#ChicagoReporter))
* “School leaders realized that in smaller, isolated efforts, they failed to generate the power and momentum that was necessary to win significant change. Through the collective effort initiated by LSNA, however, local educators began to be heard.” (pg 8)
* “LSNA’s ability ‘to move with the times and to intimately involve themselves in what’s going on in the community and intelligently know what the next step needs to be,’ is critical in pushing for change in schools” according to City Clerk Miguel Del Valle. (pg 21)
* “LSNA can mobilize its parents -- they’ve got people working in the schools who can get other people together and if they need to send people to the alderman’s office, then it’s a lot easier, because you have people in all these different schools.” - Alderman Rey Colon (pg 28)
* See “[Artifact: Testimonials](#Testimonials)”

[EX 3.1.F](#EX3_1_FR" \o "Back to Rubric: 3.1.F Mutual Accountability) Mutual Accountability

* The parent mentor program was created based on the suggestion of a principal. (See “[Artifact: Testimonials](#Testimonials)”)
* “The teacher was mentoring the parent but the parent was also helping the teacher understand more about the culture of the community.” (pg 19)

[EX 3.2.A](#EX3_2_AR" \o "Back to Rubric: 3.2.A Articulation of the Win) Articulation of the Win

* LSNA worked with Chicago State University to develop a GYO program. Based on its success, they worked together with other community organizers to develop GYO programs across the state. Members of LSNA testified to state legislature and in 2004 Illinois passed the “Grow Your Own Teachers Act.” (pg 31-35)
* The campaign to prevent overcrowding “produced the development of five new annexes and two new middle schools.” (pg 9)

[EX 3.2.B](#EX3_2_BR" \o "Education Landscape Changes) Education Landscape Changes

* The GYO programs puts teachers from the community in schools. (pg 33-36)
* The campaign to prevent overcrowding “produced the development of five new annexes and two new middle schools.” (pg 9)

[EX 3.2.C](#EX3_2_CR" \o "Back to Rubric: 3.2.C Educational Equity) Educational Equity

* See “[Artifact: Testimony-Audrey Navarro](#Audrey)”
* “LSNA has initiated a second GYO cohort, the Maestros Sin Fronteras program.” (pg 35)
* Students at level on tests go from 25% to 80% and 4th quartile students drop from 10% to 1.5%. ([Artifact: Webinar](#Webinar)-PowerPoint pg 56)

[EX 3.2.D](#EX3_2_DR" \o "Back to Rubric: 3.2.D Sustainability) Sustainability

* GYO programs provide new teachers. Even if the mentor program stopped right away, these new teachers would still be in the schools. In 2004 Illinois expanded the program state wide. (pg 85)
* “By 2016 GYO Illinois hopes to place one thousand teachers in the state’s low-income, often hard-to-staff schools.” (pg 35)

1. Blanc, Suzanne. [*Case Study: LSNA, Logan Square Neighborhood Association*](http://www.newcommunities.org/cmadocs/LSNAindicatorsstudy.pdf). Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, 2002. pp 15 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Our Funders 2018-2019 - Logan Square Neighborhood Association.” *- Logan Square Neighborhood Association*, 2018, [www.lsna.net/About-us/Logan-Square-Neighborhood-Association-Thanks-its-Funders-.html.](file:///C:\Users\hm\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\AFNWNWT3\www.lsna.net\About-us\Logan-Square-Neighborhood-Association-Thanks-its-Funders-.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Blanc, Suzanne. [*Case Study: LSNA, Logan Square Neighborhood Association*](http://www.newcommunities.org/cmadocs/LSNAindicatorsstudy.pdf). Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, 2002. pp 15 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.lsna.net/About-us/LSNA-Staff.html> Retrieved 7/31/18 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Williams, D. (2008) From Outside to Inside Schools. *The Chicago Reporter.* [Online] <https://www.chicagoreporter.com/outside-inside-schools/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Claudia, Rowe. “Pilot Program to Train Seattle Parents for Larger Role at School.” *The Seattle Times*, 8 Sept. 2014, www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/pilot-program-to-train-seattle-parents-for-larger-role-at-school/. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Blanc, Suzanne. [Case Study: LSNA, Logan Square Neighborhood Association](http://www.newcommunities.org/cmadocs/LSNAindicatorsstudy.pdf). Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, 2002. pp 18 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)