

St. Stephen's Youth Programs

Parent Mentor Program Evaluation 2022-2023



About SSYP

Founded in 1999, **the mission of St. Stephen's Youth Programs is to promote equity in education, employment, and opportunity through long-term relationships with young people and their families and communities.** SSYP's out-of-school time programs keep young people safe and healthy within a supportive community and strengthen critical thinking through academics and enrichment. Our teen and alumni programs provide teens and young adults with the tools they need to achieve their own academic and career goals. Our community organizing and engagement programs equip young people and their families to build power and make material changes to their communities.

In 2015, **SSYP began our Family Organizing Initiative, a project aimed at building social capital and leadership of the families of our students.** SSYP's family organizing meetings and programs, interpreted in five languages, allow families to build relationships with one another, learn leadership skills, and define the issues around which they want to organize.

This year, SSYP families made concrete gains toward increasing family voice in the Boston Public Schools. We hosted the BPS Superintendent and her team of District Leaders at a meeting in the fall to share families' top priorities and solutions, and invited her back in the spring to follow up. SSYP families advocated for increased dual language programs and native language literacy instruction, better implementation of BPS and BHA's housing voucher program, and more equitable accountability measures for schools through the Thrive Act.

Past successes of SSYP parents include winning a statewide ballot question to make funding for public schools more equitable across the Commonwealth; passing a Boston City Council resolution affirming Sanctuary Schools and protecting immigrant and undocumented students and families; demanding that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education pause the process of putting BPS into receivership. and securing an additional \$16.4M in state and local funding for public schools, which boosted the numbers of social workers and nurses in schools. **We continue to advocate for family voice at every level of decision-making about public education.**

We attribute all this organizing success to engaging families effectively in local schools. In spring 2017, in collaboration with the Blackstone Elementary School, SSYP ran the first six-week pilot of the Parent* Mentor Program (PMP), a program developed by Palenque LSNA in Chicago. We scaled up the pilot with twice as many parents the following year and have continued to grow. SSYP added the Orchard Garden and Hurley K-8 Schools in 2020-2021, the Roger Clap in 2021-2022 and Lee Academy in 2022-2023. Cumulatively, 112 families have completed the program. SSYP is the first and still only organization in the Northeast to run a program of this kind.

**We utilize an expansive definition of "Parent." Guardians, caretakers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, foster parents, and anyone else who directly cares for a child is included.*

About the Parent Mentor Program

In the PMP model, families work with students in classrooms, develop their own leadership, and become aware of conditions in the school. Families and teachers build mutual trust. Families participate in trainings and workshops, set personal goals such as finding a job or earning their high school diploma, receive coaching to meet these goals, and are paid for their time. Families who complete one year with the PMP become coaches for new families. Equipped with new skills and a confident voice, they become the leadership base for organizing projects around education, housing, safety, immigration, and other public education priorities.

The Parent Mentor Program transforms schools in four key ways:

- 1) Powerful Parents & Families:** Families grow personally and professionally, and are leaders that shape the changes we need in our homes, schools, and communities.
- 2) Powerful Students & Classrooms:** Families collaborate with teachers to co-create caring, encouraging, loving, and sustainable spaces for students and the entire school community to engage, learn, and grow.
- 3) Powerful Community-Centered Schools:** Families' leadership is centered within schools, organizations, and communities, and talent pipelines are created to fill school gaps and build economic stability for families.
- 4) Powerful Communities:** Parents organize with community organizations to build a parent-led movement that creates the resources, policies, and systems that we need. In the process, parents and families experience intergenerational healing and transformation.

Evaluation Methods

We utilize a Palenque LSNA-developed and validated suite of surveys to assess the efficacy of the PMP. These include pre- and post- family surveys, pre- and post- teacher surveys, and a survey with principals. The family surveys include demographic information; questions about the frequency of their involvement with the school, their interactions with their child, and their involvement in Parent Council and community meetings; an assessment of their attitudes toward leadership, their school, and their ability to achieve their own goals; and open-ended questions about how the program has affected them.

The pre- and post- teacher surveys ask for information about how long teachers have been teaching, what kind of interactions they have with students, and the capacity of the teacher to support children one-on-one. The post-teacher survey asks questions about the benefits of the program to their classroom and the school.

Results: Demographics and Activities

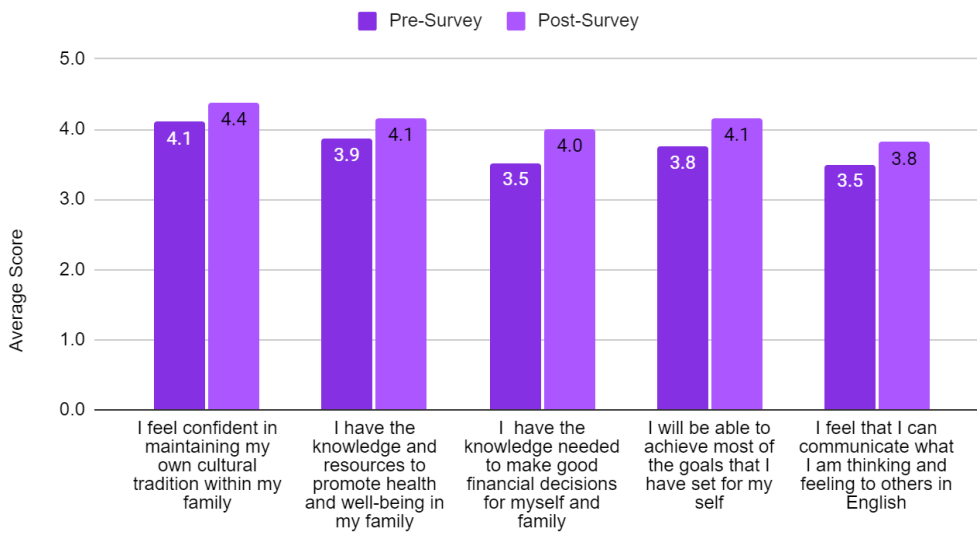
Demographics	Number	Percentage
Number of Parent Mentors hired in 2022-2023	34	100%
Parent Mentors who completed the Parent Mentor Program	29/34	85%
Parent Mentors who are women	34/34	100%
Parent Mentors who are Latina	20/34	59%
Parent Mentors who are African American, Cape Verdean, or Ethiopian	12/34	35%
Parent Mentors who are Arab or Middle Eastern	1/34	3%
Parent Mentors who are White	1/34	3%
Parent Mentors who are Immigrants to the U.S.	23/34	68%
Parent Mentors who primarily speak a language other than English	19/34	56%
Parent Mentors who, prior to PMP, had monthly income of \$2000 or less	32/34	94%
Parent Mentors who are single parents	21/34	62%

Activities	Number
Hours of Parent Mentor leadership trainings	77
Weekly paid hours each Parent Mentor spent in classroom	8
Hours of Teacher Mentor Professional Development	5
Total Parent Mentor hours with BPS students in classrooms 2022-2023	8,432
Number of Parent Mentors hired into school-based roles	6

Results: Powerful Parents and Families

Figure 1: Parent knowledge and confidence

1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree



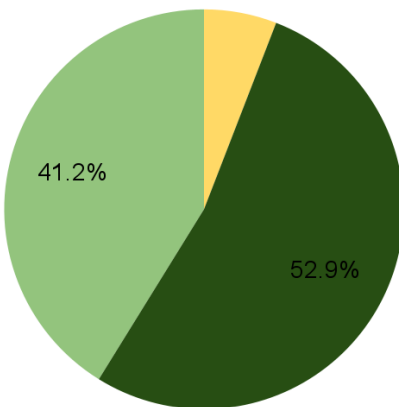
“I feel capable of continuing to be involved in my son's education. Above all, this program has awakened my inner woman leader.”
- Parent Mentor

Results: Powerful Students and Classrooms

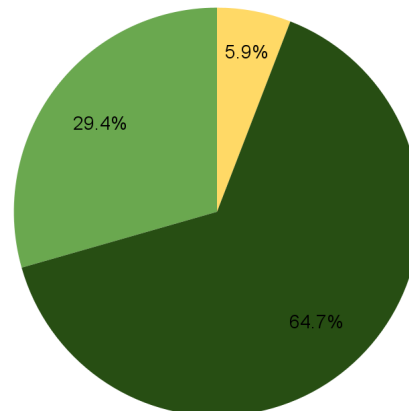
Figs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4: Teacher assessment: Having the support of a Parent Mentor helped...

● = Strongly Agree ● = Agree ● = Neutral ● = Disagree ● = Strongly Disagree

1. Achieve or maintain good classroom management

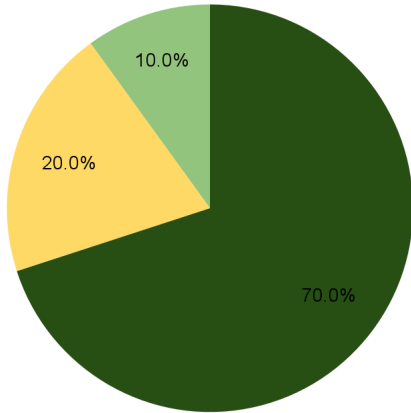


2. Strengthen students' social-emotional development

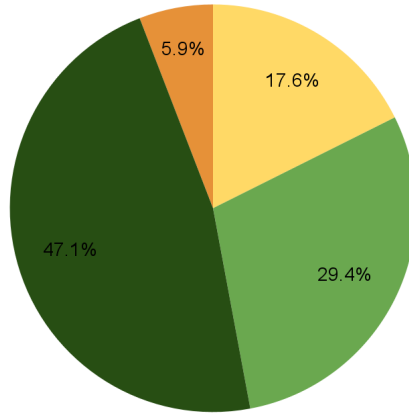


“My students love my Mentor. She helped our classroom in so many ways, especially with communication of our newcomers.”
- BPS Teacher

3. Improve homework completion & maintain a high expectation



4. Improve students in reading and/or math



Results: Powerful Community-Centered Schools

Figure 3: Parent engagement in schools

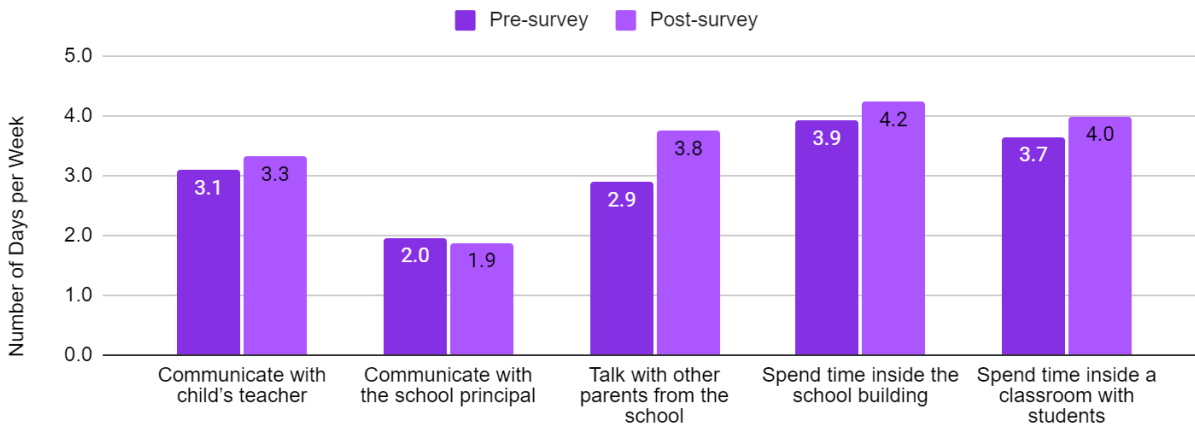
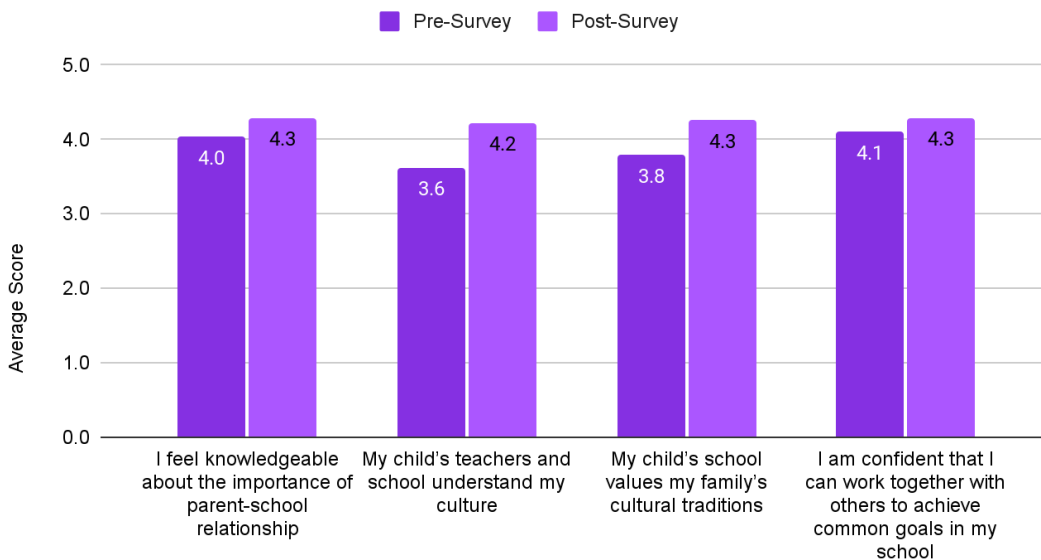


Figure 4: Parent attitudes toward connection with school

1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

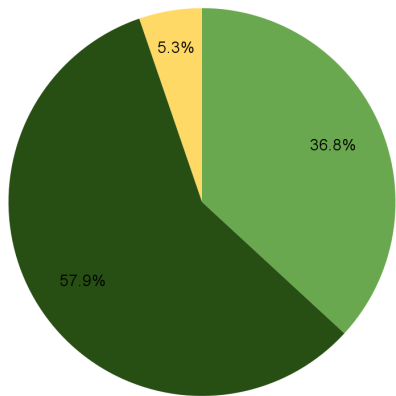


“I interact with more parents in the schoolyard because their children recognize me, helping me to build my community.”
- Parent Mentor

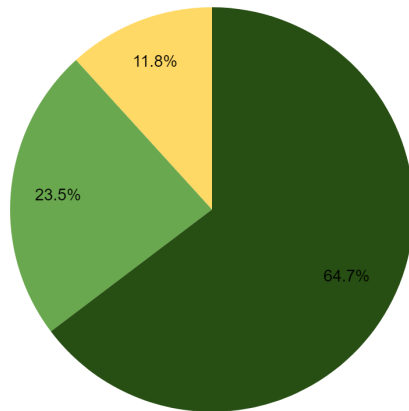
Figs. 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4: Teacher Assessment: Having a Parent Mentor helped...

● = Strongly Agree ● = Agree ● = Neutral ● = Disagree ● = Strongly Disagree

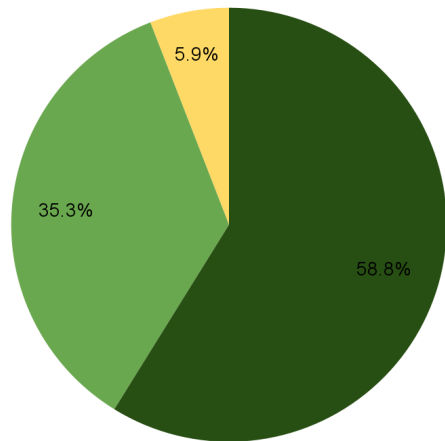
1. Strengthen teacher's understanding of and connection to the community



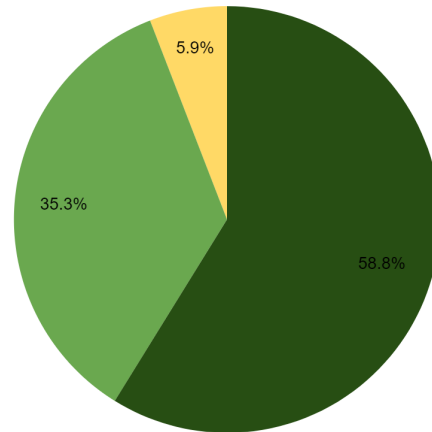
2. Create a welcoming and communicative environment for all parents



3. Build parent-teacher trust

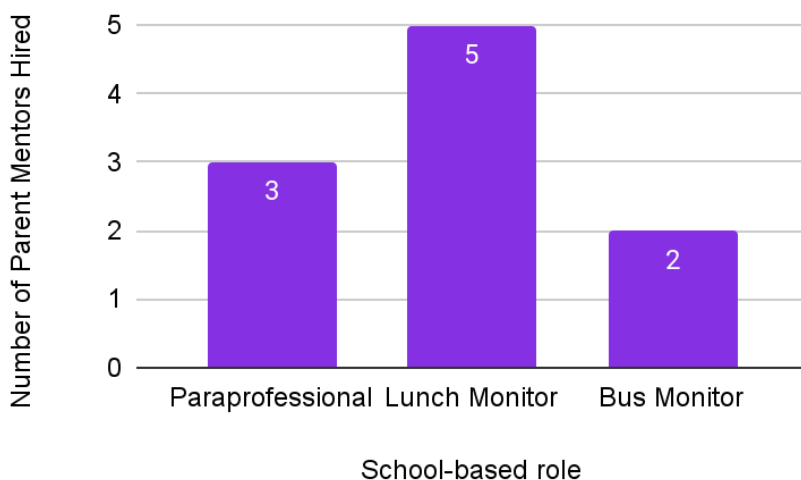


4. Teachers and parents think of each other as partners in educating children



“ This is my 3rd year with a Mentor. I love having my Mentor support in my classroom and be so involved in the day-to-day happenings of the classroom. ”
- BPS Teacher

Figure 6: Parent Mentors hired into school-based roles for SY22-23 and anticipated SY23-24 (35% of total Parent Mentors who completed the program)

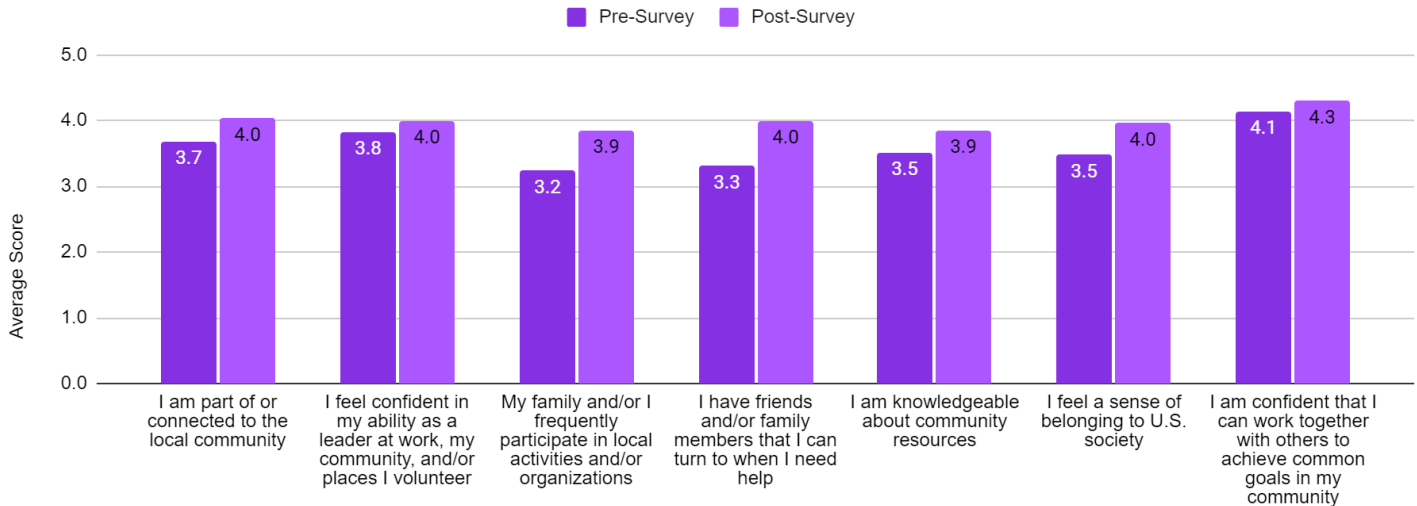


“ We have more voice on School Family and School Site council. Our families are sharing the impact of the school in the broader community and we've hired one of them as a paraprofessional for next year! ”
- BPS Principal

Results: Powerful Communities

Figure 7: Parent attitudes toward connection with community

1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree



Recommendations for the Future

- Obtain funding to expand the PMP to additional schools, prioritizing Community Hub schools, Dual-Language schools, and Transformation schools.
- Increase the number of hours Parent Mentors work in their classrooms and provide a raise to keep up with cost of living increases.
- Offer training for Parent Mentors targeting instructional skills including age-appropriate reading, math, behavior management, curriculum, and restorative justice.
- Expand partnerships with nearby colleges to create Parent Mentor pipelines for teacher training programs.