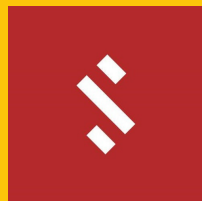


The Wells Fargo logo, consisting of the words "WELLS" and "FARGO" stacked vertically in a yellow, serif font, set against a dark red square background. This logo is positioned inside a white shield-shaped graphic that points downwards.

INNOVATION & COLLABORATION:

A fresh approach at leveraging the
expertise of parents in partnership with
Wells Fargo, Movement School, & Ashley Park

SUBMITTED BY SCHERMCO, JULY 2018



A letter from the team:

Dear Movement School, Ashley Park, and Wells Fargo,

It has been an absolute pleasure working with your school and staff members. The work you do on a daily basis to provide a quality education for the students and families at your schools is remarkable.

We partnered in January of 2018 with the goal to better understand parent engagement needs at Movement School and Ashley Park. In specific, we aimed to gauge the needs of families at each particular school through survey questions and focus groups. In response to survey data, we coordinated efforts to test and implement parent engagement tactics that can be scaled in the 2018-2019 academic school year. One additional scope of the project included the opportunity for collaboration and dialogue between district and charter schools to learn and share strategies that best serve the needs of students and their families. The goal and purpose of this document are to capture key learnings from the project, as well as provide additional value as the new school year approaches.

This innovative project could not have been possible without the initial investment and continued partnership with Wells Fargo. Wells Fargo committed critical resources for this project to further engage parents and families in high-needs schools. Throughout the partnership, we have provided Wells Fargo with monthly updates on our progress and shared our findings. The commitment Wells Fargo has exhibited to the families and students of Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools highlights their intentional aim to ensure that all students receive the best possible education with the best resources available.

What follows in this document is the culmination of our work and related learnings. We look forward to continuing to support your critical work over the coming year.

Onward,

Greg, Ana, Sabrina, Lori, Jessica, Katie, and John
ScherCo



Use

This document and other related deliverables were built to aid in supporting parent engagement at Ashley Park and Movement School. These deliverables should be used to guide discussions between school leadership, parent committees, and other select stakeholders. Further, this plan includes a number of recommendations and considerations to be taken into account.

Movement and Ashley Park may consider reviewing this document in conjunction with the newly developed parent engagement plans and PowerPoint presentation that has also been submitted to capture all learnings.

Lastly, Movement, Ashley Park, and Wells Fargo should feel comfortable sharing these deliverables with other parties. Upon request, our team is happy to provide additional graphics or create a more shareable version.

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Executive Summary

SchermCo, Wells Fargo, Ashley Park PK-8 School, and Movement Charter School teamed up in January 2018 to improve parent and family engagement at two west-side Charlotte schools. SchermCo researched current parent engagement¹ strategies, captured data from families via surveys and focus groups, and piloted engagement tactics to inform our work.

Ashley Park PK-8 School is part of the Project LIFT Learning Community in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and serves approximately 525 families. Movement Charter School opened in 2017 and currently serves approximately 270 families for students in kindergarten through second grade. Both schools are separated by less than two miles and are designated as Title I schools. Critical resources and funding provided by Wells Fargo created a unique opportunity for a charter school and traditional public school to work and collaborate together on how to best to engage families.

Based on early conversations with stakeholders and research conducted by our team, this work was centered on the following questions:

- How do we define engagement?
- How can we get parents to define engagement?
- How do we define levels of engagement?
- How do we measure engagement?
- How can we make parents feel welcomed at the school?
- How do we involve as many parents as possible?

We carried these questions with us through four key stages of our process. These stages included:

- **Internal** - Gathering key information and meeting with the families at Movement School and Ashley Park
- **External** - Performing a market analysis and reviewing best practices in parent engagement/empowerment
- **Analysis** - Creating tailored parent engagement events and analyzing pre and post-survey data
- **Creation** - Formalizing the agreed upon deliverables

This project resulted in critical learnings across four levels of stakeholders that impact parent engagement. A snapshot of these levels of stakeholders and learnings are below:

¹ The term parent engagement will be utilized throughout this document as the main focus of the project. However, we will present later in the document how the word “empowerment” may be a more suitable term for similar projects.

Stakeholder	Learnings
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parents want to be included and be part of their child’s education experience -Parents want to view their school as a resource -Barriers such as transportation, food, and child-care prohibit parents from attending evening events
School Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Charter and traditional district school leaders are willing and able to work together on behalf of students and families -The right mindset of a school leader is critical for this work -Engagement is not a one-off activity. It must be valued with its own comprehensive plan
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers are vital to the success of these initiatives (often the main contact point for families) -Teacher incentives are important (returning surveys) - Teachers were positively affected in a number of ways (staff retention and leadership opportunities)
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student incentives work -Anecdotal evidence of grades and behavior improving -Strong communication between the school and family produces results

We will use the remaining sections of this document to provide additional detail, context, and considerations from this project.

Family Engagement

Family engagement has been a key component of federal legislation since the Elementary and Secondary School Act (ESSA). By 2010, 39 states and Washington DC had a law calling for the implementation of family engagement policies; some states had gone as far as to include family engagement as a portion of teacher evaluations². In 2016, California followed up its state requirement with a funding stream, in which every school received a per-student allotment to work toward family engagement. Yet, even with so much attention paid to engaging families - and so much research attests to its value - schools and districts struggle to build the skills, knowledge, and beliefs required to successfully engage families.

Students benefit when families form meaningful partnerships with schools. Increased family engagement has been linked to improvements in school readiness, student achievement, graduation rates, and attendance. With this, school suspensions and expulsions see decreases³.

Increased family engagement has been linked to improvements in school readiness, student achievement, graduation rates, and attendance. With this, school suspensions and expulsions see decreases.

Effectively engaging families cannot be done with a single event or one-time program but instead must be built upon each interaction with families, how welcome they feel at the school, the communication and

engagement offered to them from teachers and administrators throughout the school year and summer. True engagement requires a systemic approach that spans a child's school career and is not separated from instructional practices.

Given the immense opportunity to improve student outcomes through parent and family engagement, districts and states around the country have made a move to enhance the ways schools and families connect and work together. At present, Washington D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) is considered a leader in its commitment to district-led initiatives that prioritize family engagement⁴. The district has a department committed to the work, both engaging external stakeholders on the major issues facing the district, and internally training educators to engage families. DCPS worked with families and community stakeholders to develop a strategic plan with clear goals and commitments. DCPS also continues to be the fastest improving urban district in the country, based on the 2015 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) data. Further, their success is often credited to their comprehensive plan and focus on clear communication and feedback to parents⁵.

² SEDL in collaboration with the US Department of Education. Partners in Education, a Dual Framework. 2013. Accessed June 2018.

³ Xiato, Fan & Michael Chen, "Parental Involvement and Students' Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis" Institution of Education Sciences. April 1999. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED430048>. Accessed June 2018.

⁴ *The New Teacher Project* <https://tntp.org/blog/post/engaged-parents-and-communities-the-secret-to-defying-expectations-in-d.c>. Accessed March 2018

⁵ *The New Teacher Project* <https://tntp.org/assets/documents/IntroFeedbackLoop.jpg>. Accessed March 2018.

District and Charter Schools

Charter schools are public schools of choice, meaning that families select them for their children. Charters generally operate with freedom from some of the regulations that traditional public district schools face but are still held accountable for academic results. Charter schools receive public funding and cannot charge tuition. In North Carolina, there are 173 charter schools which receive approximately \$6,900 per pupil in funding and no funds for capital or facilities funding. Charters were initially started to provide an opportunity for innovation in publicly funded schools.

Collaboration between traditional public schools and charters has historically been rare. In fact, the two are often painted on different sides of the political spectrum and shown to be at odds with each other, particularly in North Carolina⁶. Critics of charter schools suggest that they take the best students from neighborhood public schools along with a portion of taxpayer dollars. However, that divide has been narrowing and charters and traditional public schools are finding an increasing number of ways to work together for the improvement of kids and families.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has made grants to formalize district-charter collaboration compacts in 23 school districts around the country⁷. Gates has large-scale goals, such as creating joint professional development for teachers in charter and district schools, creating personalized learning experiences for students, building universal enrollment systems for all public schools in a city, and agreeing common metrics to help families evaluate all schools on consistent criteria. Districts and school sites outside of the compacts have also sought out smaller ways to partner together for the good of communities and helping to move past the zero-sum rhetoric that once framed the charter vs. traditional public school debate. These types of partnerships, when formed under the right condition, often produce results that are positive for kids⁸

The majority of collaboration takes place between charters and whole districts. Washington D.C., for example, has a shared lottery system for charters and district schools of choice. In addition, New York City and Uncommon Schools share professional development materials, and Chicago has a shared framework for accountability. There is room in the sector for neighboring schools to collaborate without the urging of districts or networks and better serve families and students in neighborhoods. That makes this example of collaboration between Ashley Park and Movement all the more exciting.

Given the often tumultuous relationships between districts and charters in North Carolina, a project in which two schools come together to best support students, is quite rare. Therefore, this project represents a monumental signal for schools in Charlotte and across the state. With this, we believe the innovative approach for this project can serve as an exemplary model for future partnerships between public and charter schools and hope to spark more collaboration.

⁶ *The Charlotte Observer* <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/opinion/op-ed/article207714174.html> Accessed April 2018.

⁷ *The Gates Foundation* <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2011/12/Foundation-Announces-Investments-for-Cities-Supporting-Collaboration-Bold-Reform-and-High-Performance> Accessed April 2018.

⁸ *Center For Reinventing Public Education* <https://www.crpe.org/publications/passing-notes-share-instructional-practices-across-district-charter-lines>. Accessed April 2018.



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Market Analysis

As previously mentioned, our team spent time most of January and February of 2018 researching similar efforts and connecting with education stakeholders from across the country. This section will provide additional information on our research and early learnings.

Stakeholder Conversations

A breakdown of our stakeholder conversations are below:

Category	Number of Conversations
Education Sector Experts	13
Teachers and Staff	7
Community Partners	4
Funders	3
PTSA Presidents	2
Executive Leadership	2
Principals	2
Total	32

⁹ A full list of stakeholder names and information can be found in the Appendix.

The stakeholders that we spoke with were overwhelmingly positive about the two main focuses of the project (district/charter collaboration and parent engagement). These conversations also provided valuable insights and considerations that guided our work. The following are common themes from the stakeholder's conversations:

1. Engagement and empowerment are two very different approaches to working with community members. Engagement is generally viewed as more transactional and that any power is held with the school. Empowerment gives power, resources, and tools to community members and families to advocate for their beliefs and needs.
2. Listening and communication are key. Parties must be willing to actively listen, challenge their own beliefs, and communicate what they heard to the related parties.
3. Parents are an asset and often, if not always, know what is best for their children. Therefore, an outside organization should not bring change to a group of parents but rather create change with parents.

These conversations and themes led us to conduct additional research on related organizations.

Related Organizations

The following organizations were reviewed based on suggestions from our stakeholder conversations and our own experience.

Memphis Lift¹⁰

In July 2015, the Memphis Lift organization began as a movement by and for parents and grandparents who had children zoned for consistently low-performing schools. The Memphis Network serves to build awareness on how many students within Memphis schools remain underserved and how to engender change for high-quality schools and significant change within Memphis public schools. Parents and grandparents comprise the staff at Memphis Lift and the network has grown to over 1,000 volunteer parents, grandparents, and other community members since 2015. Core values within Memphis Lift include: cultivate capacity, drive results, bust barriers, and empower members to create the meaningful change needed to ensure that their children receive the best possible education. Memphis Lift provides all services for free and to ensure that children receive the best education possible, the organization educates, empowers, and engages parents by a public advocate fellowship, surge parent outreach team, and choice counseling. Through each particular service, Memphis Lift can involve parents in a positive and productive way to advocate for change on behalf of countless Memphis students. Members of Memphis Lift live in the communities that the organization serves so parents maintain a powerful lens into the unique challenges faced by the community.

Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE)¹¹

In April 2016, the Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE) began with an all-parent board designed to advocate for change with the children and families of Washington DC. PAVE strives to collaborate with communities and parents as partners to create great DC public schools. Through the PAVE program, parents and families can understand the education system, build connections with political stakeholders, and either lead or organize other families to champion policy change within public education. Long-term goals within PAVE include: PAVE parents achieve policy objectives that promote and support high-quality public schools for all students, build and sustain accessibility to the best DC schools on behalf of all families, and create a culture of parent leadership that contributes to consistent engagement to meaningfully impact the public education system in DC.¹² In 2016, PAVE met with over 100 families to identify and understand the issues that mattered most to parents. With the connections and relationships PAVE parents forge with one another, they set the agenda for a given year and the PAVE organization supports their initiatives. PAVE believes in a unique place-based approach in which parents and communities of a particular place exist, create, and reimagine the change they want to see in an area that benefits all children in a particular area. Parental voice holds immense power and value to enact meaningful change and the opportunity to connect with local stakeholders catalyzes change that can significantly impact a place and numerous students.

¹⁰ *The Memphis Lift*. www.memphislift.org/. Accessed 8 July 2018.

¹¹ Martin, Maya. *Walton Family Foundation*. www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/stories/k-12-education/pave-ensures-the-voices-of-parents-are-front-and-center Accessed 8 July 2018.

¹² *DC PAVE*. www.dcpave.org/. Accessed 8 July 2018

McPie

On the east side of Charlotte, a CMS middle school and a local church have formed a partnership that bridges the divide often seen between wealthier schools and their less affluent counterparts. McClintock Partners in Education, or McPIE as it is often called, was started in 2007 by Christ Lutheran Church, with a mission of ensuring every student at McClintock have access to rigorous curriculum and opportunities for enrichment. Volunteers from the church have revolutionized the offerings that McClintock has, turning the high poverty school into a hub for robotics and engineering activities. While the list of opportunities now available to students is impressive, the biggest change has been McPIE's ability to engage the community and families in supporting the school¹³.

McPIE began the partnership by hosting a weekly Family Night - providing transportation and a warm meal, childcare, and family enrichment activities. This support has grown to include summer camps and enrichment activities, tutoring, field trip funding professional development, parent courses in English and financial literacy, and a plethora of other activities that engage the community in supporting the school and build capacity in the school staff and its families.

Over ten years, McPIE has raised approximately \$2.6MM and 40% of their annual budget goes toward their weekly Family Nights. McPIE hosts 24 Family Nights over the course of the year with a total budget of about \$86,000 (not including 4 full-time employees). In recent years, McPIE's annual budget has been approximately \$400,000. A breakdown of the Family Night expenses is included below.

Category	Approximate Expense
Food	\$21,200
Meal Preparation	\$6,100
Program Expenses and Supplies	\$10,000
Transportation	\$17,160
Security	\$8,640
Family Night incentives	\$1,000
School Store	\$1,000
Pathways out of Poverty	\$8,390
Volunteer Appreciation	\$2,500
Admin	\$10,000
Total	\$85,990

¹³ More information about McPIE can be found in their Tenth Anniversary report here: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/61fff9_e1e1f65e58b044e89fb0442b3b67ce1f.pdf

Project Summary

The aforementioned research and conversations were leveraged to guide our work throughout the remainder of the project.

The project began with a series of meetings with each school’s leadership team, as well as with a pre-survey aimed to capture the feelings parents held about their respective schools. In response to the survey data, each school created parent-focused events and focus groups with parents to address some of the challenges identified in the data and solicit more information about what parents were hoping to see from their children's schools.

SchermCo was able to work with the staff of each school and present findings to parent committees. At the end of the school year, SchermCo followed up with a post-survey that asked the same original survey questions in order to measure progress and added a few additional questions to gain further insights. Throughout the process, SchermCo held three distinct professional development sessions with the school leaders of Ashley Park and Movement to discuss data, analyze results, plan events, and form a collaborative group working toward engaging and empowering families in the West Charlotte Corridor.

The table below highlights some of the key actions from February through June.

February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Held more than 30 conversations with local and national stakeholders ● Met with school leaders to confirm the scope of the project ● Schools created Parent Engagement committees ● Developed a Parent Engagement survey focused on the areas of Communication, Policy, and Involvement
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sent surveys to all families at both schools ● Analyzed survey data to share with school leaders and staff ● Collaboration lunch with school principals ● Held conversations with stakeholders from Indianapolis, Oakland, and Charlotte ● Movement held a Reading Night with over 200 families in attendance
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presented survey data to the Parent Committees at Ashley Park and Movement ● Collaboration lunch with school principals ● Held two parent events at Ashley Park - a focus group and a more family-centered event ● Movement held a parent night for focus groups ● Collected and analyzed survey data from each event
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sent survey to all families at both schools ● Held Parent Night at Movement School
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyzed survey data to inform end of project deliverable ● Final collaboration lunch with both schools ● Ashley Park teachers and administrators held a school parent committee meeting to outline actions steps on how to build parent engagement during the summer and upcoming school year

From this process, we believe there are three critical elements that allowed each school to accomplish so much in a relatively short amount of time:

- **Creating the Parent Committees** – Each committee was comprised of staff members from each school that expressed interest in this project. These committees allowed each school leader to distribute responsibilities and ownership to their staff members. Further, this structure allowed teachers to take more of an active role in the school and leverage their experience in the classroom to better inform parent engagement efforts.
- **Collaboration Lunches** - The collaboration lunches between both school leaders created a safe space for these leaders to reflect on their learnings, share insights, and discuss adjustments moving forward. School leaders built such strong relationships with each other and also voluntarily visited the other school to observe and learn from their respective events.
- **Conducting mini-tests** - We believed that running mini-tests (introducing a new strategy and collecting data to gauge its effectiveness) throughout the project would allow us to capture the greatest amount of learnings. We leveraged the testing framework of 'Plan - Test - Analyze - Reflect - Repeat'

Data

Our team leveraged pre and post-surveys, exit tickets (mini-surveys given at the conclusion of each parent event) from parent events, and focus group conversations with parents to capture as much relevant data as possible. In all, we collected and analyzed 947 data points throughout the project. The table below shows the respective data points for each school:

Ashley Park		Movement	
Events	Data Points	Events	Data Points
Initial Survey	266 Surveys (51%)	Initial Survey	223 Surveys (83%)
Parent Focus Group	15 Exit Tickets	Parent Focus Group	24 Exit Tickets
EOG Night	25 Exit Tickets	Reading Night	10 Exit Tickets
Post Survey	141 Surveys (27%)	Spring Into Movement ¹⁴	52 Exit Tickets
		Post Survey	191 Surveys (71%)
Total	447	Total	500
Combined Total			
		947	

The pre and post-surveys were a large portion of the 947 data points that were collected. The following tables show the pre and post survey¹⁵ results for each school. Areas highlighted in green illustrate the improvement between the pre and post survey, which encompassed every prompt for Movement (9/9) and all but one for Ashley Park (8/9).

Therefore, in percentage points, **Movement displayed improvement in 100%** of the survey areas and **Ashley Park improved in 88%** of the survey areas. We believe this increase is a direct result of the efforts of this project.

The remaining pages of this section include pre and post survey comparison data for each school and additional narrative about select data points.

¹⁴ Movement already had a 3rd event scheduled and due to timing and end of year testing, AP was not able to schedule a 3rd event.

¹⁵ The full post survey can be found in the Appendix.

Movement

Movement School Survey Questions	Pre Survey	Post Survey	Categories
Participation Rate	82% (223)	71% (191)	
1). I feel welcome at my child's school	5.71	5.79	Parent Involvement
2). I agree with the way my child is disciplined at school	5.46	5.61	School Policy
3). The school invites me to celebrate my child's successes at school	5.53	5.60	Parent Involvement
4). The school communicates with me when there is a problem	5.52	5.62	School Communication
5). I know who to contact if I have a concern about something happening at school	5.57	5.63	Parent Involvement
6). I feel informed about what my child is learning in the classroom	5.55	5.61	School Communication
7). Communications from the school regarding my child's academic performance (such as test scores and report cards) are easy to understand	5.54	5.58	School Communication
8). Teachers suggest activities for my child and me to complete at home	5.49	5.62	School Communication
9). I feel my voice is heard at my child's school	5.37	5.41	Parent Involvement

Select Data Points

- Movement’s strongest data point (5.79) from the survey is parents “feel welcome at my child’s school”
- Movement made the most progress (+.15) in the prompt “I agree with the way my child is disciplined at school”. Although there were no major shifts to Movement’s behavior policy during this project, this increase may be due to the relationships built between Movement staff and families
- Although still a very high ranking, prompt 9 “I feel my voice is heard at my child’s school” was ranked the lowest at 5.41
- A **Net Promoter Score** of 78¹⁶--a measure of parents who felt loyal to Movement School and operate as promoters. An NPS score of 78 is considered world class
- 41% of parents shared their contact information (name, phone number, and email addresses) on the Movement Post Survey to remain in touch about parent empowerment/engagement

¹⁶ See the Appendix for additional information on Net Promoter Scores.

Our team also reviewed qualitative responses from the surveys as well as exit tickets from parent events. The common themes that emerged from these comments were:

- Additional and consistent parent events
- Parent events should be focused on supporting the development of the entire family (both parents and students)
- Advanced noticed and consistent communication for parent events

This data presents a strong case that Movement parents feel valued and appreciated at the school. It will be critical that Movement continues to nurture and build upon this early success for years to come.

Ashley Park

Ashley Park School Survey Questions	Pre Survey	Post Survey	Categories
Participation Rate	51% (266)	27% (141)	
1). I feel welcome at my child's school	5.41	5.45	Parent Involvement
2). I agree with the way my child is disciplined at school	5.04	5.28	School Policy
3). The school invites me to celebrate my child's successes at school	5.11	5.40	Parent Involvement
4). The school communicates with me when there is a problem	5.13	5.30	School Communication
5). I know who to contact if I have a concern about something happening at school	5.30	5.39	Parent Involvement
6). I feel informed about what my child is learning in the classroom	5.07	5.18	School Communication
7). Communications from the school regarding my child's academic performance (such as test scores and report cards) are easy to understand	5.24	5.22	School Communication
8). Teachers suggest activities for my child and me to complete at home	4.95	5.30	School Communication
9). I feel my voice is heard at my child's school	4.81	5.15	Parent Involvement

Select Data Points

- Similar to Movement, Ashley Park's strongest data point (5.45) is that parents "feel welcome at my child's school"
- Ashley Park made the most progress (+.35) in the prompt "Teachers suggest activities for my child and me to do at home". This increase is likely a direct result of the EOG Night held at the Bette Rae Center
- Also similar to Movement and again a rather high ranking, prompt 9 was rated by Ashley Park parents "I feel my voice is heard at my child's school". It should be noted that although this is the lowest rated prompt from the survey, this specific prompt increase by .34 from the pre-survey
- A **Net Promoter Score** of 20--a measure of parents who felt loyal to Ashley Park and operate as promoters. A score of 20 is considered good
- 47% of parents shared their contact information (name, phone number, and email addresses) on the Ashley Park Post Survey to remain in touch about parent empowerment/engagement

In summary, Ashley Park improved on eight of the nine survey questions posed by the post-survey with no score seen in the four range—a significant improvement from previous survey responses. Ashley Park parents provided considerably positive qualitative feedback with numerous glowing remarks of “keep up the good work”, “I love the way things are now”, and “I would recommend this school to anyone” to highlight noticeably more positive expressions than in the previous survey. Additional themes captured from the qualitative responses include:

- Providing resources for Spanish speaking families
- More advance notice of events and consistent communication
- More consistent parent events
- Leveraging email and text reminders about upcoming events

Wins, Learnings & Innovations

The data and experiences captured throughout this project point to significant wins and learnings that should be considered. We will use this section to highlight the major learnings from this effort.

Data

This project allowed both schools to capture a significant amount of parent data for the first time. The current data and analysis have isolated trends and feedback that will allow both schools to better serve families and students.

Parents

As previously stated, it is proven that parents (or legal guardians) are a key resource in a child's education. The 947 data points collected provided key insights into the needs and thoughts of families from Ashley Park and Movement. These insights can be found below:

- Parents want to be included and part of their child's education experience. Parents from both schools completed surveys, were present at events, and communicated their desire to be an active member of their school community
- Parents want to view their school as a resource and have opinions about the framework for how schools communicate with them. When asked, Movement parents were more favorable to being empowered to make decisions and advocate for themselves and students. Ashley Park parents leaned towards an engagement model and communicated that they trusted the intentions of Ashley Park staff members and leadership
- Barriers such as transportation, food, and child-care prohibit parents from attending evening events. Parents communicated the need for these options at our events and we also believe that these events were fairly well attended because of the food and child-care that were offered

School Leaders

This project would not have been possible without Jamie from Movement School and Meaghan from Ashley Park, the two school leaders. Their willingness to be vulnerable, thoughtful, and open to this project was monumental. Our conversations and professional development sessions with these school leaders highlighted additional learnings:

- School leaders must have a willingness to collaborate and a mindset to get better. This project was data heavy and required that each school leader review multiple cycles of data for a new initiative in order to better lead their school
- A comprehensive and consistent plan is key. These sorts of efforts cannot be happenstance. Rather, a clear plan, with goals, objectives, and a communication schedule must serve as the foundation for this work moving forward
- Regardless of leading a district or charter school, both leaders faced similar challenges to support parent engagement

Teachers

Teachers were a vital piece in the success of this project. Specifically, we learned the following about how teachers are instrumental to parent engagement:

- Teachers were monumental in the success of the parent committees. Teachers were either asked or volunteered to serve on a committee that would drive the planning and programming of the parent events. As teachers are often the main points of contact with families, their insights were invaluable on the committees
- Teachers were excited about a leadership opportunity to engage with parents in a different way. Many teachers displayed a renewed sense of urgency and optimism in their work
- Teacher incentives work. Incentivizing teachers with free lunches and additional perks served as extra motivation during the survey collection phases of this project

Students

This project would not be complete without discussing the effect on the students at each school. Although we were not able to evaluate the impact parent engagement had on specific students, we believe the following are noteworthy learnings:

- Student incentives work. Student-focused incentives and competitions led to higher rates of parent surveys collected
- Principals and parents cited anecdotal evidence of increased grades and behavior from select students as a result of this project

Technology

Both schools leveraged new and innovative communication tools to support this effort. While each school was aware of both applications, they preferred to leverage separate tools that most aligned with their needs.

- **Possip**
 - Movement School teachers and staff members cite Possip as an innovative and concrete way to involve parents directly into the school building on a consistent basis. The Possip tool creates automated feedback prompts to which parents can respond on a weekly basis to share any praise or feedback they have with the school. Schools receive weekly reports from the mini surveys and direct quotations shared by parents for review purposes. Trend reports and highlights also exist for teachers and administrators to examine to note patterns within a school or community. Parents are able to share their concerns and ideas with the school in a tangible way through an online forum so that less disconnect between the parents, families, teachers, and administrators can exist.

- **Remind App**
 - In a staff-parent committee meeting held by Ashley Park, one staff member shared her success with communicating with parents and families through the Remind App. The Remind App serves as a communication tool to help teachers reach students and parents through text messages for free. Teachers can send quick messages, schedule announcements, attach files, share office hours, and coordinate group conversations with Remind to maintain open lines of communication with parents and families. The Ashley Park staff member cited an increased level of communication from parents and families as she was easily accessible through text to answer questions and concerns. Ashley Park administrators explained they could further scale the use of Remind as an additional measure to communicate with parents about school events, academic items, and upcoming news.

Innovations

We also believe it is important to highlight a few of the innovations that took place during this project.

- **District / Charter Collaboration** - As previously mentioned, this is one of, if not the first district/charter collaboration project in Charlotte and likely in North Carolina. This type of collaboration project has the possibility of driving further collaboration efforts across the southeast
- **Data Driven Engagement** - We also believe that leveraging quantitative and qualitative data to best capture the beliefs of parents should be considered as an innovative approach. Continually collecting similar sets of data will allow both schools to be more effective in their engagement efforts
- **Resources** - Given the short time frame of this project, we were not able to test all innovative strategies. However, after reviewing the collected data, we believe resources such as paid teacher stipends for extra responsibilities, employing parent engagement coordinators, offering event transportation to parents and other resource-rich innovations should be considered as these efforts continue

Recommendations

In conjunction with the data and learnings from this project, we also want to present recommendations for both schools to leverage as they move forward with their engagement efforts. The following recommendations should be utilized in conjunction with the separate plans created for each school (Excel documents).

Comprehensive Plan and Framework

Schools and districts often struggle to move from informing and consulting with parents on specific topics to truly collaborating and empowering parents, giving the school community more planning and decision-making authority. To avoid this common misstep, Ashley Park and Movement should consider leveraging a comprehensive plan and framework to guide their efforts. The table below was created by the International Association for Public Participation and can be used as a guiding framework on how to move toward truly empowering families.

	inform	consult	involve	collaborate	empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Websites • Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberate polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Advisory committees • Consensus-building • Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

Further, each school should consider the importance of building a comprehensive engagement plan to capture key definitions, values, and a schedule of events for each school year. Such a plan would allow all key stakeholders to chart a course for these critical efforts. Our team has created an Excel document unique to each school that is broken down by summer and each quarter of the school year; these plans are based on best practices in the field and the specific data from surveys and parent feedback. The following are the categories each school should consider as they finalize their comprehensive plans. To fully engage in this work, the principal, administration, and parent committees in each building will need to train and support all staff to be part of this initiative.

Communication and Feedback Loop

A 2017 study from Columbia University had middle and high school parents receive weekly texts about their children's grades, absences, and missed assignments, resulting in an 18% increase in student attendance and 39% reduction in course failure.¹⁷

- Do families know who to contact for questions or concerns they may have?
- Do schools share timely information about events, student progress, and either challenges or successes in the school building
- Do schools share information in a variety of methods, languages, and times?
- Is there two-way communication between the parents and school? Do parents have meaningful ways to respond?

Building Trust

Data from DCPS showed that students who received a home visit missed an average of 24% fewer school days and had 1.55x greater odds of reading on or above grade level at the end of the year¹⁸.

- Can home visits be a part of the summer and first quarter priorities?
- How can schools and teacher make parents feel like a partner in educating their children, rather than a consumer?

Goal Setting and Data Sharing

Having families engage in setting goals and understanding the data used to measure progress will only help them become more invested in the process. Each school should consider and plan for how they can invite parents into the process from the beginning to mutually create goals and share data.

- How can teachers and families work together to set student achievement goals and share data toward that progress?
- What data can schools and teachers share, both in aggregate and individual performance to help families understand the progress students are making?

Parent Capacity Building

Many schools and districts are replacing traditional parent-teacher conferences with a new model designed to build parents' capacity to support academic growth.

- How can schools and teachers provide opportunities for parents to understand the standards and curriculum that are being taught?
- How can schools and teachers model different ways families can support student learning at home?
- How can parents and families have the opportunity to practice supporting student learning?

¹⁷ Berg, Peter and Eric Chan. Leveraging Parents: The Impact of High-Frequency Information on Student Achievement, September 2017. Accessed June 2018.

¹⁸Sheldon, S and Jung, Sol Bee. The Family Engagement Partnership: Student Outcome Evaluation. Johns Hopkins University, Center of School, Family and Community Partnerships. 2015.

Evaluation

Similar to this project, both schools should also decide how they will best measure their progress toward family engagement. SchermCo recommends the use of a rubric where parents and school staff are able to rate progress over time. Suggestions for already created tools are included in each school's implementation plan. Schools should also consider creating their own tool in conjunction with parents to ensure the components they are measuring are valuable to parents and staff. With the aid of additional resources, each school may be able to partner with a third party to truly evaluate the effectiveness of their engagement efforts.

Project Management and Leadership

Both school leaders noted that working with SchermCo brought a level of validity and focus to this work that likely would not have been present without the partnership. Given the demanding schedules of school leaders and the early wins captured in this project, our team would be happy to continue supporting this effort and partnership with both school leaders. In doing so, our team would serve as the project lead and help coordinate the comprehensive efforts throughout the 2018-2019 school year.

Next Steps

In order to start the 2018-2019 school year successfully, the school leadership and committees from each school will need to do significant planning over the summer to determine what is reasonable to manage and implement with consistency. Start and stop or inconsistent initiatives will not help to build trust in the community and should be avoided. This plan, in conjunction with the paired Excel document, lays out a proposed set of events and focus areas for the 2018-2019 school year.

Ashley Park and Movement both have an invested group of families that form a strong base of engagement from which to build. Given the insights from surveys and focus groups this year and an ongoing commitment to soliciting feedback from families, both schools are well positioned to move toward empowered families that support scholar growth on the west side of Charlotte.

Appendix

Stakeholder Conversations

Name	Organization	Title	Location
Jay Everette	Wells Fargo	Senior Community Relations Manager	Charlotte, NC
Kristi Thomas	Wells Fargo	Community Relations Senior Consultant	Charlotte, NC
Johanna Anderson	Belk Foundation	Executive Director	Charlotte, NC
Jamie Sumter	Movement School	Principal	Charlotte, NC
Latoya Belin	Movement School	Assistant Director	Charlotte, NC
Jazzi Goode	Movement School	2nd Grade Teacher	Charlotte, NC
Tracee Weston	Movement School	Social Worker	Charlotte, NC
Shamayaie Haynes	Movement School	PTSA President	Charlotte, NC
Tim Hurley	Movement Foundation	Executive Director of Education	Charlotte, NC
Meaghan Loftus	Ashley Park	Principal	Charlotte, NC
Shanequa Lassiter	Ashley Park	2nd Grade Teacher	Charlotte, NC
Brittany Dawson	Ashley Park	3rd Grade Teacher	Charlotte, NC
Nicole Hardy	Ashley Park	Kindergarten Teacher	Charlotte, NC
Stephanie Edwards	Ashley Park	PTSA President	Charlotte, NC
Denise Watts	Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools	Community Superintendent	Charlotte, NC
Jarrod Jones	Project LIFT	Community Coordinator	Charlotte, NC
James Ford	Filling The Gaps	Founder & Principal	Charlotte, NC
Marc Dickman	Freedom Communities	Director of Education and Community	Charlotte, NC

Stephen Smith	Freedom Communities	Executive Director	Charlotte, NC
Luke Barrett	Center City Church	Director of Local & Global Missions	Charlotte, NC
David Docuson	Center City Church	Lead Pastor	Charlotte, NC
Charlene Mack	Leaders for Educational Equity	Director, National Organizing Initiatives	Charlotte, NC
Angela Davis	McClintock Partners in Education	Program Coordinator	Charlotte, NC
Gina Esquivel	READ Charlotte	Community Impact Manager	Charlotte, NC
Shanitria Cuthbertson	Emmaus1	Pastor and Program Director	Charlotte, NC
Amalia Deloney	Democracy Media Fund	Program Director	Charlotte, NC
Brenda Berg	Best NC	President/CEO	Raleigh, NC
Mebane Rash	EdNC	CEO	Raleigh, NC
Shani Dowell	Possip	Founder	Nashville, TN
John Little	Strategy Redefined	Managing Partner	Nashville, TN
James Fogarty	A+ Schools	Executive Director	Pittsburgh, PA
Jesus Gerena	Family Independence Initiative	CEO	Oakland, CA
Joe White	The Mind Trust	Senior Director of School Support	Indianapolis, IN

Post Survey

The following statements are designed to assist Movement School in supporting communication and engagement efforts between the school, parents, and families. The goal of these statements is to ensure that Movement School is creating an environment where you feel your opinion is heard and valued. Please circle the answer choice for each statement with which you most agree and return to school by June 8th, 2018. Please complete both sides of this survey!

Thank you so much for your time and thoughts!

Name: (optional) _____

Contact number/email (optional) _____

Grade level of scholar _____

1. I feel welcomed at my child's school

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	5	4	3	2	1

2. I agree with the way my child is disciplined at school

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	5	4	3	2	1

3. The school invites me to celebrate my child's successes at school

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	5	4	3	2	1

4. The school communicates with me when there is a problem

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	5	4	3	2	1

5. I know who to contact if I have a concern about something happening at school

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	5	4	3	2	1

6. I feel informed about what my child is learning in the classroom

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	5	4	3	2	1

7. Communications from the school regarding my child’s academic performance (such as test scores and report cards) are easy to understand

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	5	4	3	2	1

8. Teachers suggest activities for my child and me to complete at home

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	5	4	3	2	1

9. I feel my voice is heard at my child’s school

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	5	4	3	2	1

10. How likely are you to recommend Movement School to a friend or family member?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not Recommend									Highly Recommend	

11. Do you face any challenges in attending parent events that Movement School could help with?

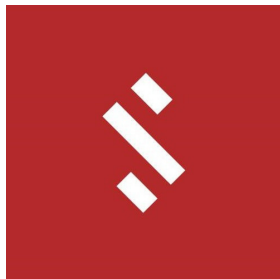
12. What else could Movement School do to support your engagement and experience at the school?

Please submit this survey to your school or give it to your scholar to return. Thank you!

Net Promoter Score

Participants answering 9 or 10 for a Net Promoter Score (NPS) question are considered Promoters, those answering 7-8 are considered Passives and those who answer between 0 and 6 are considered Detractors. This question is used to calculate an NPS and is an index that ranges from -100 to 100 and measures loyalty to a brand or service. In this case, it's a rough measure of satisfaction or loyalty to the school. The NPS score is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters. For context, a general framework for the NPS scale can be found below:

Category	Scale
World Class	70-100
Excellent	50+
Good	0+
Needs Improvement	0-



Submitted by SchermCo
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scherm.co