



Final Report: Interviews and Focus Groups with Albina-Rockwood Promise Neighborhood Students and Caregivers
December 2023

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Introduction

The Albina Rockwood Promise Neighborhood Initiative (ARPNI) is a federally funded grant initiative designed to drive equity through integrated, evidence-based, culturally specific and responsive services in the Albina (N/NE Portland) and Rockwood (East County) neighborhoods in Multnomah County. Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI) is the lead organization working to provide services with four other community-based organizations: Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), Latino Network (LatNet), Metropolitan Family Services (MFS), and Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA).¹

Each organization is implementing the SEI Model of case management for a cohort of students at a specific middle school and/or high school. The model is based on the idea that culturally specific and responsive programs centered on youth that build strong relationships in a supportive environment will empower youth to achieve personal and academic success. The model is designed to offer comprehensive services to the “whole child” across their home, school, and community environments. The guiding, “non-negotiable” components of the SEI Model include:



- 1) **Relationship Model** — Caring staff advocates/mentors who are carefully selected and trained to establish strong prosocial relationships with youth and their families based on trust and mutual respect;
- 2) **Culture of Success** — High expectations coupled with foundational strengths-based beliefs in each child’s potential, teaching of responsible attitudes and behavior through adult role models/mentors, and incentives and rituals to foster respect, shared purpose, and positive bonding;
- 3) **Continuum of Services** — Developmentally appropriate services across key transitions (middle to high school, high school to postsecondary education, training, job/career entry);
- 4) **Comprehensiveness** — Working with the “whole child” across environments (school, at home with parents/guardians, and in the community).^{2, 3}

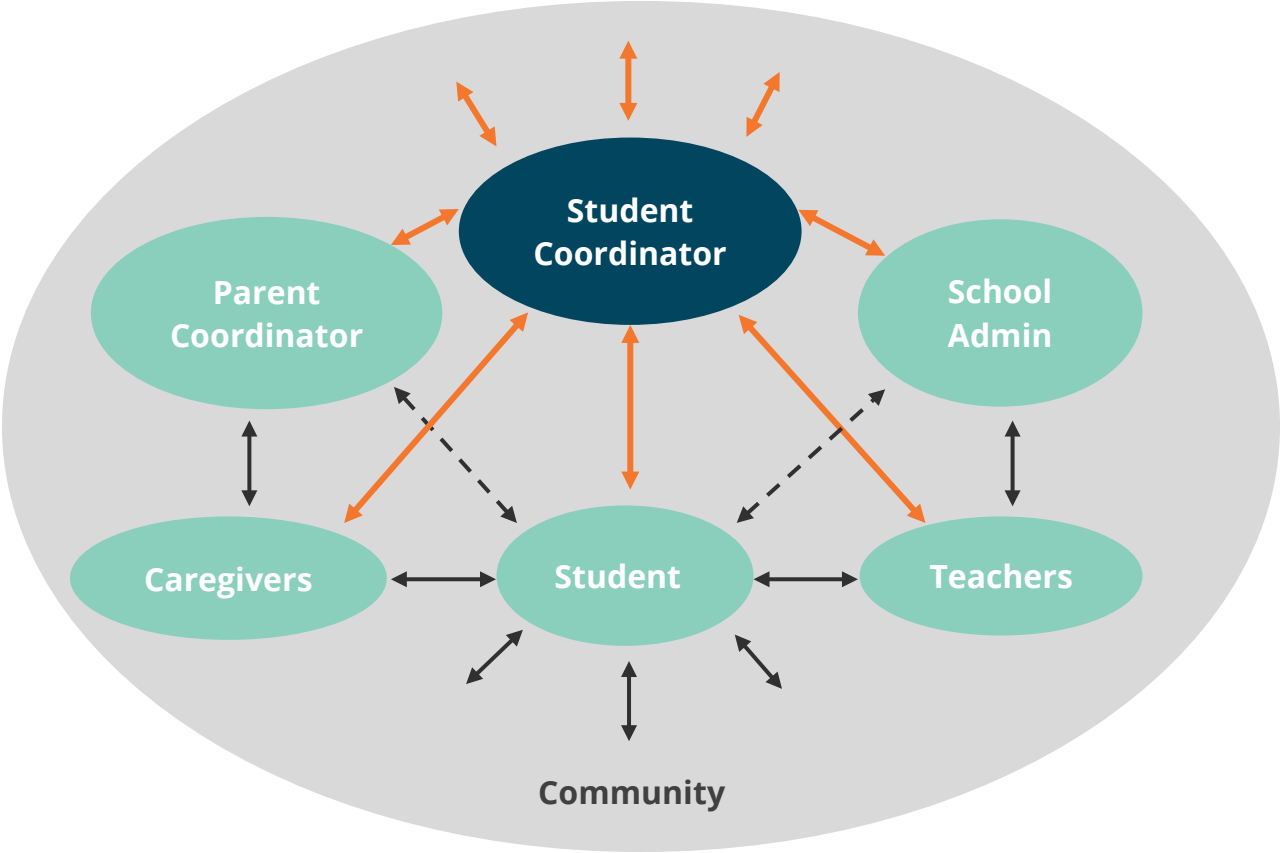
¹ United Way of the Columbia-Willamette is also part of ARPNI, but does not provide services to students. Therefore, United Way’s work was not evaluated.

² Information in the introduction was excerpted from SEI documents.

³ The ARPNI launched during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, these components were delivered remotely for the first two years of the program, which necessitated a multitude of adaptations not captured in this report.

Coordinators arrange resource-sharing and communication across multiple environments to holistically support students (see Figure 1). At school, coordinators support teachers and counselors to better understand students' behavior, needs, and progress through a cultural lens. Engagement with caregivers and families enables coordinators to build a deeper understanding of students' lives at home and connect them to community-based and organizational resources and supports (e.g., rental and energy assistance) as needed. Coordinators also lean on the broader infrastructure of their organizations to plan and implement programming and events and provide wraparound resources to students and families. A separate internal report summarizes interviews with ARPNI staff and details their experiences; a thorough review is encouraged to complement the recommendations made in this report.

Figure 1: The student coordinator works at the nexus of the students' interpersonal and community ecosystem.



Purpose

ARPNI uses quantitative data from surveys, school outcomes, and programs to assess school and neighborhood climate and assess program delivery and impacts. However, those kinds of data do not describe how students and caregivers perceive the services they receive through programs that use the SEI model nor what they find most valuable about the services they receive. Without this information, ARPNI partners may miss aspects of what makes services valuable, where improvements could be made in terms of how and what type of services are delivered, and whether the core of the SEI model is implemented as designed across partners. To address these gaps in the existing evaluation practices, the evaluators chose a qualitative evaluation that asked students and caregivers directly about their experience. As the Albina-Rockwood Promise Neighborhood Initiative wraps up its initial five-year grant, this evaluation complements ARPNI's quantitative data with a view of the breadth of value ARPNI staff provided to the community and where there are opportunities for improvement.

Methods

In 2023, [Insight for Action](#) and [Austin Advocates With](#) partnered with the SEI Research and Evaluation Analyst to conduct individual and group interviews with middle and high school students participating in ARPNI programming and their caregivers. The evaluators asked students and caregivers about their experiences with mentoring and support received through ARPNI as well as what they would like to change or improve about the support received. Caregivers were asked about their own experiences and their assessment of their students' experiences with ARPNI services. Focus group protocols can be found in **Appendix C**. As shown in **Table 1** on the following page, 65 students participated in the interviews. All participating organizations and schools are represented in the data. With regard to gender composition, 65% of interviewees were female and 35% were male. As compared to the ARPNI student population overall, in which 52% of students identify as female, this perspective was somewhat overrepresented among the interview sample.⁴

The evaluation team conducted three feedback sessions to cross-check the findings, seek additional input and insight, and to gather additional recommendations and support for using the report to inform future work. A session for each of the following audiences took place: ARPNI staff, caregiver session in English⁵, caregiver session in Spanish. In general, the sessions confirmed the findings of the evaluation, though some diversity of opinion

⁴ A detailed description of the analysis methods is provided in **Appendix B**.

⁵ An ARPNI staff member attended the English session to translate for a Russian-speaking caregiver.

arose around the desire for expanding services. A detailed summary of the sessions can be found in **Appendix D** of this report.

Table 1. Student Interview Participants

Organization and School	Female	Male	TOTAL
Latino Network			
Reynolds High School	4	3	7
Metropolitan Family Services			
H.B. Lee Middle School	5	2	7
Native American Youth and Family Center			
Reynolds High School	5	2	7
Reynolds Middle School	1	2	3
Self Enhancement, Inc.			
Harriet Tubman Middle School	2	5	7
H.B. Lee Middle School	6		6
Reynolds Middle School	5	4	9
Reynolds High School	3	3	6
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization			
Reynolds Middle School	7		7
H.B. Lee Middle School	3		3
Reynolds High School	1	2	3
Interview TOTAL:	42	23	65
Interview Percentage:	65%	35%	100%
ARPNI Student Participants OVERALL	52%	46%	98%⁶

Table 2 summarizes the number of caregivers who participated in the interviews parsed by the organization serving their student. All participating caregivers were female except for one male whose student receives ARPNI services through SEI.

Table 2. Parent/Caregiver Interview Participants

Organization	Count
Latino Network	7
Metropolitan Family Services	2
Native American Youth and Family Center	6
Self Enhancement, Inc.	5
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization	3
TOTAL:	23

⁶ Among all ARPNI participants, 2.5% did not report their gender.

Key Contextual Factors

Promise Neighborhoods is a federally funded, place-based program with the goal of improving the academic and developmental outcomes of children living in the most distressed communities of the United States. The program serves neighborhoods with high concentrations of low-income individuals and multiple signs of distress, which may include high rates of poverty, childhood obesity, academic failure, juvenile delinquency, adjudication or incarceration and schools that are implementing comprehensive support and improvement activities or targeted support and improvement activities as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (US Department of Education Office of Elementary and Secondary Education). These challenges were reflected in the comments of the focus group and interview participants.

Poverty and Under-Resourced Schools

In the Rockwood and Albina neighborhoods, the median household income is far below what is considered a “livable wage” for the Portland Metropolitan Area (Thompson and Glasmeier, 2023); more than half of families report struggling to pay their rent or mortgage (Holmgren and Labissiere, 2021).⁷

Children experiencing poverty often need more services and support, yet public schools in lower-income areas receive *less* funding because they are partially funded through property taxes received from surrounding areas (Ayers, 2022). The impacts of poverty and under-resourced schools are reflected in graduation rates. According to the Oregon Department of Education, just 62% of high school students in Reynolds School District graduate while Oregon’s statewide graduation rate was 86% for the 2021-22 school year. Meanwhile, Jefferson High School, which has been working under the SEI model since 2010, achieved an 84% graduation rate in 2016 (ARPNI Grant 2017). Moreover, according to the 2021 ARPNI School Climate Survey, 82% of families in the Rockwood neighborhood reported concern about the quality of local schools.

“If I didn’t have the program, I don’t know what I would have done, it helped so much. When you have really high utility bills, you don’t know where else to turn.” - Caregiver, NAYA

⁷ Direct quotes have been edited for grammar and readability.

School Staff Do Not Reflect Student Race/Ethnicity

The majority of students attending public schools in Rockwood and Albina identify as People of Color. School administrators and teachers do not reflect this ethnic and racial diversity; 92% of teachers in Reynolds School District and 89% in Portland Public School District identify as white (Holmgren and Labissiere, 2023; Jensen, 2020). Furthermore, in the Reynolds School District, families come from over 125 countries and speak 90 different languages (Reynolds School District, 2023) and up to 52% of families speak an additional language at home (American Community Survey, 2015). This breadth of cultural diversity is not represented among school staff nor is language support comprehensively available. According to the American Community Survey (2015), up to 16% of families spoke a language other than English at home, while 7% of students who attend Harriet Tubman Middle School are English language learners (Portland Public Schools, 2023). While this is a smaller percentage, again, Albina neighborhood school staff identities do not reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of neighborhood families.

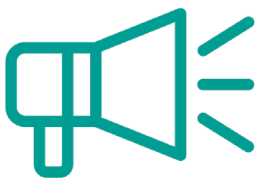
“The only non-white folks are a couple of teachers and the coordinator; none of the custodians are white.” -Middle School Student. SEI

To fully address these structural issues would require broad, collaborative efforts from schools and communities coupled with comprehensive local and national policy changes. However, ARPNI is making substantive inroads.

The remainder of this report presents key findings demonstrating the ways in which ARPNI is supporting students and families to build upon their strengths and navigate challenges. Opportunities to strengthen services for greater impact offered interview participants, drawn from peer-reviewed literature, or are logical, actionable responses to the themes in the data are also presented. Additionally, agency-specific findings are highlighted in *agency-specific boxes* when the data was reflective of just one partner organization.

Overview of Key Findings

1. Word of mouth, positive agency reputation, and culturally and linguistically specific services motivate caregivers to enroll in programming.
2. ARPNI coordinators build trusting relationships with students and families with respect, support, and active communication.
3. Coordinators support students to regulate their emotions and navigate relationship challenges in school and at home.
4. Culturally responsive/specific services help students and families cope with institutional racism and prejudice.
5. Non-stigmatizing financial support protects against serious hardship and helps students to stay focused on school.
6. Coordinators partner with caregivers to ensure the student's school-based needs are met.
7. ARPNI is achieving positive impacts on academic performance, high school graduation, and the pursuit of college.
8. Offering new and fun experiences expands students' horizons and fosters positive peer-to-peer relationships.
9. Students enjoy that programming is offered in a school setting and the sense of belonging they find there.



1. Word of mouth, positive agency reputation, and culturally and linguistically specific services motivate caregivers to enroll in programming.

Caregivers often learned about programming by **word of mouth** from friends or family members. Many also had **previous positive experiences with the agency providing services** at their child's school or in the community. Others learned about ARPNI programming from **flyers sent home by their student's school** or they **received referrals** when they reached out to the school for resources.

- *"I know Metropolitan Family Services is a good program. I went through it a few years back with their Ways to Work program. I figured that it will be beneficial for my student to join some different programs and just to have an outlet after school."*
- Caregiver, MFS

- *"I was in need of some assistance. I had recently lost my job due to COVID. The school reached out to SEI; they connected me to SEI."* - Caregiver, SEI

Caregivers with prior knowledge and positive regard for ARPNI agencies encourage their students to participate despite uncertainty.

- *"Introducing SEI programming to my kids, they were nervous at first, just because some of them are shy around new people. I told them, 'Just give it a shot. You may love it.'"* - Caregiver, SEI

Many caregivers value the **cultural and/or language focus** as a compelling component of programming.

- *"I want her to be a part of her heritage. I want her to be able to know more about where she came from and stay in the cultural activities. My mom's involved, my brother is, and then I was as a kid, too. I just want to continue that for her; she really enjoys having something to belong to like that."* - Caregiver, NAYA

Caregivers expressed that they knew programming would be a positive influence in their students' lives and that this helped them to encourage their students to enroll, especially in cases where the student was initially hesitant. Seeing students enjoy ARPNI programming and make **positive progress motivates caregivers to re-enroll** them from year to year.

- *"I didn't have time for my kids, so with the club I felt like I had a 'second me' over there trying to help my daughter to keep on track."* - Caregiver, IRCO

→ **Opportunity:** Despite ARPNI organizations' existing promotion efforts, some students felt that more concerted efforts to engage prospective students would increase enrollment among students and families who could benefit from program services.

Recommendations to Consider: Strengthen recruitment and promotion to raise awareness of the program by:

1. Developing parent and student "representatives" to positively represent ARPNI programming and promote it on school campuses and at key events.
2. Expanding recruitment efforts.
 - a. Conduct a survey of ARPNI-enrolled students asking how they learned about programming to identify the most effective recruitment methods and leverage those more robustly.
 - b. Survey what policies are in place at participating schools for communicating with students and families about ARPNI. Build upon these policies to implement more comprehensive approaches to prospective student recruitment.



AGENCY SPECIFIC FINDING

Several caregivers enrolled their students in SEI because they had participated in the organization's programming in their youth.

"I wanted my kids to enroll because I participated, and I know the benefits that I reaped." - Caregiver, SEI



✦ 2. ARPNI coordinators build trusting relationships with students and families with respect, support, and active communication.

Trusting relationships are central to the ARPNI **Relationship Model**, as trust enables coordinators to positively influence student behavior and respond effectively to family needs. Students shared that they often view coordinators in the role of family members and friends, describing them as **supportive, respectful, good listeners, helpful, trustworthy, warm, and a positive role model**. Some caregivers regard the quality time that students spend with their coordinator on par with that of a family member.

- *"She doesn't treat us like students, she treats us like family."* - Middle School Student, IRCO

Numerous caregivers and caregivers described a mutually respectful, comfortable relationship with their student's coordinator marked by easy communication. They appreciate the financial assistance and other resources coordinators provide to meet their needs, often going **"above and beyond"** such as by hand-delivering items, including paperwork to be signed. Caregivers particularly value that coordinators provide transportation that helps students arrive to school on time, return home after programming ends, or to attend field trips. This approach to service provision was framed as a demonstration of authentic care. In addition to working with students, **coordinators often anticipate families' needs** and proactively offer support, which serves to further strengthen their close and trusting relationships.

- *“She’s very approachable. If I have questions, she’s able to answer them. If she doesn’t know, she’ll say, ‘I’ll find that out for you.’ And then she’ll find it out. Send me an email or text me personally. She’s a very people-friendly person, easy to talk to. And I really, really like her.”* - Caregiver, MFS

→ **Opportunity:** Although ARPNI agencies strive to deliver programming in families’ native languages, this is not always achievable. When a parent, guardian, or caregiver does not speak the same language as their student’s coordinator, this complicates their ability to enroll in programming, understand the services offered and communicate with coordinators and staff.

Recommendation to Consider:

1. Offer key materials in families’ primary language. Ensure availability of interpreters in all language reflected among participants (Learning for Justice 2017).

→ **Opportunity:** While many families reported that the frequency and content of the communication with their student’s coordinator was excellent, others shared that they rarely heard about agency events, incentives, or available resources. A number of caregivers also reported that coordinators rely on students to communicate with them about programmatic offerings and their academic progress.

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Standardize the types of information that coordinators are expected to communicate to caregivers such as school attendance, behavior incidents, and academic performance.
2. If one does not already exist, create and maintain a channel of communication between coordinator and caregiver via email, text messaging and/or telephone based on caregiver preference.
3. Standardize the frequency of communication coordinators are expected to deliver to caregivers (e.g., weekly or monthly).

→ **Opportunity:** Research shows that high-quality mentoring contributes to positive social and academic outcomes. Staff turnover, which was discussed during the interviews, creates service delivery gaps and disrupts the bond between student and coordinator. These can in turn negatively impact student progress (Keller, 2007).

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Regularly solicit coordinator feedback about workplace conditions and, to the extent possible, address their concerns and requests.
2. Set caseload size to align with the level of effort needed to develop rapport and support students’ varied needs.

3. Solicit students' recommendations for the qualities they value in coordinators and incorporate these characteristics into the employee selection process (McGuinness-Carmichael, 2019).



3. Coordinators support students to regulate their emotions and navigate relationship challenges in school and at home.

Coordinators support students' **emotional regulation** during the school day by offering breaks to step away from stressful situations. These brief interventions cultivate students' coping skills and could reduce the frequency of In School Suspensions (ISS). Students also shared that their coordinators help them communicate with teachers to clear up misunderstandings.

- *"My friend and I get angry; I feel like we have anger issues. If we need a break, we go to the partner room. My friend already punched a hole in the wall. So, when we need a break, we go and talk with our coordinators or anybody in the partner room that we know and can talk to."* - Middle School Student, MFS

Multiple students described pervasive bullying at school and reported that interventions such as "no contact contracts" put in place by school administrators are largely unsuccessful. Sometimes this bullying is explicitly racist, taking a toll on students' mental health and their sense of safety on campus. Students shared examples of coordinators **effectively working with school staff to stop bullying**. They noted that bullying generally does not occur during coordinator-facilitated after-school programming. Because of this support, students have more bandwidth to focus on their studies and may be less likely to miss school.

- *"She'll ask, 'What's going on? Why are you so down? Why are you mad, sad, or anxious?' And you reply, 'Somebody has been bullying me.' And she will help you solve that problem. She will tell the principal to come check in with you and talk to the person that's bullying you."* - Middle School Student, NAYA

Students and caregivers also described instances where coordinators aided students with **difficult interpersonal interactions outside of school**.

- *"Something happened to me and I was having a really hard time, and I called [coordinator] and told her about it. I had so much anxiety and she came and brought me flowers, and she was like, 'You're going to do so good,' and that just really touched my heart."* - High School Student, NAYA



LatinoNetwork

AGENCY SPECIFIC FINDING

Caregivers and caregivers enrolled in Latino Network shared how essential parent workshops were for learning parenting techniques and improving communication with their students. Many caregivers expressed a desire for Latino Network to offer more parent workshops, particularly in person.

"I received a lot of information from parent meetings. They are about how to communicate with children, have a good relationship with them, and learn about their self-esteem." - Caregiver, LatNet



4. Culturally responsive/specific services help students and families cope with institutional racism and prejudice.

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups (Potapchuk et al., 2005). Public education hiring practices produce a pattern whereby students of color are often educated by teachers who do not reflect their race or ethnicity. For many students in ARPNI, their coordinator is the only adult they interact with at school who shares their race or ethnicity. ARPNI's provision of **diverse spaces, especially Black, Indigenous, Latino/x, Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian, and Ukrainian culturally relevant activities** such as traditional dances and indigenous cooking classes counterbalance these challenges. Many interview participants shared how meaningful it is for them to have a safe, comfortable after-school program where they do not feel different due to their race, ethnicity, or cultural background and they can count on people understanding their lived experiences. Students from countries with lower representation such as Kenya and Tonga talked about how coordinators provide respite from feeling "different" and protect them from discrimination.

- *"Being around Black people makes you feel more empowered."* - Middle School Student, SEI

- *“My coordinator made me feel more comfortable. I found that I was changing who I was in front of non-Islanders. But now I’m comfortable with who I am in front of people because my coordinator showed me it was alright.”* - Middle School Student, IRCO

In addition to institutional racism, Black and Native students shared incidences of prejudice at school including one substitute teacher’s use of a racial slur and another reprimanding a student for speaking Spanish in class. Students know their coordinators will believe what they share, empower them to report incidents to school administrators and advocate on their behalf to end discriminatory behavior on campus.

- *“It’s a safe haven because of racial issues. Like if a teacher or someone says something that’s just out of pocket in the middle school, they have a place to go where they can vent safely.”* - Caregiver, SEI



AGENCY SPECIFIC FINDING

Native identified students and families discussed feeling “othered” due to their cultural background and found refuge in school- and agency-based cultural activities and education on their heritage.

“I was able to participate in all the cultural events that my son has done like learning about traditional teas and traditional medicines that are native here—it has been amazing!”

- Caregiver, NAYA

Several Latino families enrolled in NAYA would like services that more explicitly reflect the Latin American aspect of their cultural identity.



5. Non-stigmatizing financial support protects against serious hardship and helps students to stay focused on school.

In alignment with the **Comprehensiveness** component of the ARPNI model, coordinators support the “whole student” with various forms of financial assistance. In interviews and focus groups, many students and caregivers mentioned having received **financial assistance for essential needs** through their involvement in ARPNI, particularly at the height of the pandemic. Forms of economic assistance included funds for rent, utilities, transportation, and therapy sessions. Caregivers reported that coordinators helped to **reduce the stigma** associated with accepting financial assistance by proactively reaching out to offer resources and delivering them quickly, without judgment.

- *“I’m so independent. It takes a lot for me to ask for help. And I expressed that to the coordinator as well. She was like, ‘Okay, if anytime I feel like you’re needing help, and you’re not asking, I’m going to reach out to you.’” - Caregiver, SEI*

Students expressed that the financial support their families received **positively influenced their mental health** by taking their minds off of the stress of financial difficulties, which allowed them to **focus on schoolwork and attendance**. One middle school student who otherwise sat quietly during the focus group spoke up to emphasize how important financial assistance had been for his family. Another cried as she recounted how the partner agency helped her family avoid becoming homeless during the pandemic when her caregivers were unable to work.

- *“We have been getting help with rent and other expenses. It really does lift the weight off your shoulders when you have so much stress already. When we’re in school we can focus on school because we’re not worried about things going on at home because she’s there to support and help us if we need help.” - High School Student, NAYA*

→ **Opportunity:** While some families expressed appreciation for funds received for groceries, others indicated that their grocery budget did not suffice for the entirety of the month. One family reported that their income was too high to qualify for financial assistance from their ARPNI agency but stressed they would still benefit from support.

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Offer organization-sponsored grocery store gift cards to families experiencing food insecurity regardless of income.



AGENCY SPECIFIC FINDING

Some IRCO families requested more resources for newly arrived families. Students mentioned the need for newcomer orientations.

"It was hard when we just arrived. Some people got furniture, but we didn't receive anything." - Caregiver, IRCO



6. Coordinators partner with caregivers to ensure the student's school-based needs are met.

Coordinators **serve as an accessible "bridge" between caregivers and school staff**. Caregivers shared that when their efforts to obtain accommodations for their children are not successful, coordinators set up meetings that result in students receiving needed support.

- *"I told her I had called the school on behalf of my son [about his Individualized Education Plan], but nothing happened. The coordinator helped me set up a meeting that she attended so that they would take us seriously because it is really hard to get [the school] to listen to you."* - Caregiver, NAYA
- *"I've contacted the coordinator, 'Hey, if you have a chance, such and such is going on, if you could just look into it. I've tried reaching out to the principal, the teachers, I'm not getting the appropriate response, can you step in?' And she's always, 'Yep, give me a few days, I'll see what's going on and pull your student in and talk with him.' And she's always followed through with me."* - Caregiver, SEI

Coordinators also **liaise between schools and immigrant families**, explaining practices in the U.S. school system, setting up meetings with teachers, and helping overcome language barriers. Caregivers appreciate the ease of communication they experience with coordinators, particularly those who speak a language other than English.

- *"The education they gave me in Mexico was very different. That's what my kids tell me; I often do not understand. What I really liked when they told me about the program is that, for example, in my case the coordinators act as intermediaries between teachers and parents."* - Caregiver, LatNet



7. ARPNI is achieving positive impacts on academic performance, high school graduation, and the pursuit of college.

By delivering programming aligned with the SEI model's **Culture of Success**, coordinators support students to **improve academically** by setting achievable goals, providing one-on-one tutoring, creating undistracted opportunities to study and complete homework assignments, and offering words of encouragement. Students particularly appreciate their coordinators' use of encouraging and inclusive language such as, "We're going to get through this." Caregivers characterized coordinators' efforts as integral in getting their students "back on track" academically. Students affirmed how **the use of incentives such as** field trips and money for good grades has motivated them to improve their academic outcomes.

- *"When I have homework, I want to do it first so when I get home I can sit down and relax because I already got my homework done because I was studying with [Coordinator]."* - Middle School Student, NAYA
- *"Incentives helped me to push myself to do good in school and keep my grades up. Otherwise, I don't get to go on the trips."* - Middle School Student, IRCO

Students and caregivers value the support they receive from coordinators to **graduate and continue their progress beyond high school**. They reported that their coordinators had taken students on college tours, assisted them with college applications, and helped them learn about opportunities after high school.

- *"Latino Network helped me a lot with graduation. By getting all my credits and checking in with my mom to make sure I was still in school."* - High School Student, LatNet
- *"In after school programming, the coordinator helped answer a lot of questions and helped with applying to college. She helped fill out documents and send them."* - High School Student, IRCO

→ **Opportunity:** The SEI model focuses on preparing for graduation and beyond, yet some caregivers feel that this focus is not early or strong enough to ensure their students attain the best possible post-graduation outcomes.

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Deliver a college preparatory focus in middle school (Heppen et al., 2017).

"I hope programming will look different, maybe even trying to get her college ready starting early. She'll be going to high school next year so getting her prepared and showing her what that looks like. Hopefully, it'll look a lot different from this year." - Caregiver, MFS

2. Communicate and disseminate information about ARPNI's college services so caregivers can support and reinforce post-secondary education goals at home.
3. Develop individualized goals for students after graduation in their Individual Success Plan (ISP) and include caregivers.
4. Increase support for applying for college scholarships.
5. Gather and compile statistics on ARPNI participants' graduation rates and post-secondary pathways.

→ **Opportunity:** While some caregivers reported receiving regular updates about their students' academic performance and observed their grades improve, others did not, and expressed interest in being informed when their student is not performing well in school.

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Communicate with caregivers about realistic academic outcomes when students participate in APRNI programming.
2. Create a protocol for sharing student academic progress and share it with caregivers so they know what to expect.
3. Consider incorporating other, more structured academic supports into afterschool curriculum (Afterschool Alliance, 2014).

"Communication doesn't include any real academic updates. SEI hasn't done much regarding academics because my student's grades have dropped dramatically in the last year." - Caregiver, SEI

→ **Opportunity:** Incentives are a key component of the SEI model; many students and families agree that they motivate students academically. However, some students feel that the point in time at which grades are measured to receive incentives is not indicative of their actual grades and that this method for awarding incentives is unfair.

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Review grades on dates that reflect students' cumulative work.
2. Create a clear strategy about incentives and communicate it to students and caregivers to avoid misunderstandings.



8. Offering new and fun experiences expands students' horizons and fosters positive peer-to-peer relationships.

Students and caregivers view field trips, summer programming, and the overall positive, fun environment for socializing as valuable components of ARPNI programming. Students discussed the **positive friendships they build in these afterschool settings**, sharing how this allows them to try different activities and spend time with new peers. They also expressed how much they enjoy traveling off campus to **go to places they could not afford to visit otherwise**. Many students affirmed that ARPNI **strikes a good balance between academics and fun**. They appreciate opportunities to dance, play sports, and socialize. Students, who described themselves as shy, highlighted how the social aspects of the programming particularly benefitted them.

- *"Dancing, because for me, it's like therapy. And getting to meet new people and trying new things and getting out in the world and seeing if you like things or not." - Middle School Student, SEI*
- *"I'm an introvert so it's hard to meet new people. IRCO helped me to step out of my comfort zone." - High School Student, IRCO*
- *"Latino Network brought a bunch of students together and now a lot of them are friends; we spend time together on field trips to visit universities. This program has helped us connect with each other." - High School Student, LatNet*

Caregivers, whose work schedules limit their availability to take their students on excursions, appreciate how ARPNI **field trips expose students to new experiences**. Caregivers also recognize the social benefits of programming. Some see the friendships formed through ARPNI programming as protective factors that **keep their students engaged in positive behaviors**.

- *"NAYA programming exposes the kids to fun activities and new things, which the parent doesn't have as much time and resources to do." - Caregiver, NAYA*
- *"The programs are very helpful for the kids because they're not getting into trouble. To this day, mine has never gotten into any trouble. He's never been on drugs or anything like that, either. Being involved in a program helps them a lot." - Caregiver, LatNet*

→ **Opportunity:** Some students discussed negative interactions with peers during field trips or at events in which students from different schools were combined.

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Prior to shared events create clear expectations of pro-social behavior and specify consequences for negative peer interactions.
2. Consider offering a conflict resolution curriculum. Teach conflict resolution skills, facilitate student role-playing, and build emotional regulation activities and support into afterschool programming (Graves et al., 2007).
3. Offer a debrief with students after interschool events to process any conflict that may have occurred. Debrief activities may range from individual written reflections to facilitating a group discussion.



9. Students enjoy the fact that programming is offered in a school setting and the sense of belonging they find there.

Students and their caregivers identified partner spaces as places of refuge from the commotion and disconnection that some students experience at school. Students described coordinator-staffed partner spaces as fostering a **sense of belonging**.

- *"A place with people I'm comfortable with and can relate to, where I'm not the odd one out, where people know more about where I'm coming from."* - High School Student, IRCO
- *"It's a safe place... a home away from home."* - High School Student, SEI
- *"Having the coordinator on site makes it a safe haven for my student; there's somebody students can talk to."* - Caregiver, SEI

→ **Opportunity:** Most participating ARPNI school sites provide one large room for all partner agencies, including non-ARPNI programs. Partner spaces are often crowded during the school day and at lunchtime, which makes it difficult to discuss private matters.

- *"It would be great to have a couch, a TV, and a workspace. Also snacks as well as self-care kinds of items."* - Middle School Student, SEI
- *"I don't have a lot of friends in sixth period lunch, so I usually go [to the partner room] and I'll either work on something or just like talk to [coordinators]."* - Middle School Student, SEI

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Advocate with school administration for more space, such as a dedicated room for each partner agency on school campuses.
2. If additional space cannot be made available, work closely with staff across organizations to improve the space provided. Emphasize creating a relaxed environment with comfortable seating and games. Consider enhancing the space with movable partitions that allow for more private, one-on-one conversations.

→ **Opportunity:** Because students dislike much of the food offered at school, they often skip these meals and feel hungry throughout the school day and during afterschool programming. Food was a recurrent theme in student focus groups. Students appreciate the supplemental meals provided in APRNI programming, but these still fall short.

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Increase the supplemental meals and food offered to students, including protein and fiber-rich options.
2. Poll students for input on the foods they prefer, while conforming to research that shows that healthy foods are correlated with more positive academic outcomes (Correa-Burrows et. al, 2017).



AGENCY SPECIFIC FINDING

Some SEI students expressed a desire for another center in outer Southeast Portland or Gresham or for the agency to become an actual school.

"If I had a magic wand, I am going to get a center out here, in Troutdale." - High School Student, SEI

Conclusions

These findings provide strong evidence that **the four components of the SEI model were implemented by ARPNI partners, but benefits extend beyond the model to include advocacy in schools, supporting students with emotional regulation, and helping students cope with racism and cultural isolation.** Throughout the evaluation, it was evident that students and families hold ARPNI agencies and their coordinators in positive regard and deeply appreciate the services they receive. Building on their positive experiences, families would like to see ARPNI expand where and when services are offered. This input was in response to an invitation to students and caregivers to offer their ideal vision for ARPNI's future.

→ **Opportunity:** Some students and caregivers think the number of days and times that coordinators are available in schools is insufficient.

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Hire additional coordinators so their time is not divided between schools and they can be present more days at individual schools.
2. Reduce coordinators' caseloads so they have more time with individual students.

"It's always been on Monday and Wednesday, and that's it, two days a week. It would be good if more days were added."
- Caregiver, LatNet

→ **Opportunity:** Caregivers and families discussed the importance of including even younger students in ARPNI programming. As part of its current approach to service delivery, some agencies deliver early learning interventions, including AARP Experience Corps wherein seniors provide one-on-one support to struggling readers in elementary school. However, afterschool and mentorship programming are not currently offered at elementary schools through ARPNI.

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Assess the need and explore the feasibility of implementing mentorship services in elementary schools. If elementary services are desired and feasible, adapt the model for elementary-aged students and pilot test ahead of broader rollout (Attendance Works, 2017).

→ **Opportunity:** Several students and caregivers reported that they receive ARPNI services from more than one of the partner agencies.

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Survey students and staff enrolled in more than one ARPNI agency to determine the challenges and advantages of dual enrollment. If assessment findings are positive, decide whether dual enrollment can be established moving forward.
2. Create a clear policy for clients enrolled in two or more ARPNI organizations and disseminate the policy among the partners.
3. Address the following issues around dual enrollment:
 - Collect release of information forms from students served by two agencies so coordinators are permitted to communicate about them.
 - Establish clear expectations for communication and decision-making for coordinators serving the same student.
 - Track dual enrollment to assess the impact, if any, on student progress.



Moving Lives Forward.



AGENCY SPECIFIC FINDING

Students are concurrently enrolled in SEI and MFS and accessing services and resources from both.

"SEI is great, but to be able to have both of these programs go hand in hand means that I've been able to get resources. Like I said, help from MFS when SEI didn't have help for us". - Caregiver, MFS, SEI

Appendices

Appendix A. References

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Appendix B. Detailed Methods

The interviews were conducted with semi-structured protocols developed for students and caregivers. All student interviews were conducted in-person at the schools. Parent interviews were conducted by telephone, over Zoom, and in-person during community events. The conversations were audio recorded with participant permission and transcribed with Otter.ai. After each interview, the interviewers completed reflective memos to document emerging themes, notable learnings, identify areas to probe more deeply in subsequent interviews, and refine the protocol for increased clarity to support robust participant engagement. The transcripts were coded inductively using coding schemes developed to align with questions posed in the interview protocols and to capture comments about key areas of program function including in-school and out-of-school services focused on academics, interpersonal relationships and basic needs, among others. The coders worked through two rounds of intercoder reliability checks; the first round was among all four interviewers and the second was with the primary analyst the SEI Research and Evaluation Analyst. Following these sessions, the coders agreed that common understanding of the codes had been achieved and the remaining transcripts could be coded by the primary analyst in Dedoose.

Synthesis of the data into themes was executed in an iterative manner through the following five-step process:

Step 1. Review memos and create an outline draft of key findings based on themes elevated through the memo process.

Step 2. Identify codes relevant to each key theme.

Step 3. Extract all text units for the relevant codes for each theme from Dedoose into individual spreadsheets.

Step 4. For each theme, review the text unit spreadsheet, highlighting exemplary quotes with potential for inclusion in the report. Concurrently, craft a synthesis paragraph for the theme that builds from the memos, adding detail about noteworthy subthemes and takeaways drawn from the text units.

Step 5. Once this process is completed for all themes, review collectively and adjust as appropriate to tighten key themes and synthesis paragraphs. Copy exemplary quotes into a bulleted list beneath each key theme synthesis paragraph.

Appendix C. Caregiver and Student Focus Group Protocols

ARPNI Parent-Caregiver Focus Groups – FACILITATION PROTOCOL

Introductory Language

LEAD FACILITATOR: Hello my name is [Facilitator Name] and I will be guiding our time together today. I work for an organization called Insight for Action/Austin Advocates With. We specialize in gathering information to inform services for children, youth, and families.

CO-FACILITATOR: Hello everybody. My name is [Co-Facilitator Name]. I work for [employer, describe role]. I'm here today to help with anything you may need during this conversation, so let me know if there's anything I can do to help you feel more comfortable. I'm also going to take notes to make sure we do a good job of capturing your feedback.

LEAD FACILITATOR: Thanks everybody for coming to this important conversation. **We know your time is valuable and we're grateful to you for making the time to talk with us.** Today's conversation is about the mentoring and support your child is getting at their school from [Organization(s)], as well as things you might have received through the program as parents and caregivers. This is one of several group interviews we're holding at four schools that are part of the Albina-Rockwood Promise Neighborhood Initiative, also known as ARPNI. ARPNI is a government funded collaboration between the organization you and your student work with and five other Portland non-profits whose aim is to help the people living and going to schools that serve the Albina and Rockwood neighborhoods. The project is being led by Self Enhancement, Inc.

Over the summer, we'll pull together what we hear during these conversations into a preliminary set of findings. Next fall, we'll hold community sessions where we'll share out those results. We hope you'll attend so you can help us be sure we've gotten your feedback right.

Let me pause there. Does anybody have any questions so far?

- [Answer any questions posed]

Consent Process

You may have gotten a link to a consent form. We will also go over that now.

[Lead Facilitator shares screen and walks through consent form. Co-facilitator shares link to form in chat.]

[Co-facilitator takes a screen shot of participants with the consent form being shared to document].

[Lead Facilitator asks participants to enter their name in chat to confirm willingness to participate. Co-facilitator takes a screen shot of names in chat.]

[Lead Facilitator excuses anybody who opts out, thanking them for considering.]

[After the group, Co-facilitator sends participants a written copy of the form.]

That form was pretty formal. I think it's important to emphasize that your participation in this conversation is ***totally voluntary***. You can decide you don't want to participate at any time. You can also say "pass" if you prefer not to share about a particular question. You have the power to decide how you

want to participate, even if that means you don't want to participate at all. You will get a gift card even if you don't participate during the discussion or decide to leave early.

[If parents have not already stated their preference] Please put in the chat "Target" if you would like a gift card to Target and "Amazon" if you would like a gift card for Amazon

Confidentiality

To protect your confidentiality, we will only use *first* names here today. We'd also like to ask everyone in this group to respect our confidentiality by agreeing not to mention anything that is shared once this session is over.

Does anyone in this group **NOT** agree to keep the conversation confidential?

- [Excuse anyone who opts out because they do not agree to maintain confidentiality.]

Permission to Record

[Name] is going to take notes but we would like to record this conversation so we can be sure to accurately capture your comments. We know that you have a lot of experiences and insights, and it's hard to write fast enough to get everything down. The recording will help us when we write up the results. Would anybody prefer we NOT record this conversation?

- [Acknowledge response and confirm the conversation will not be recorded if anyone prefers.]

Discussion Instructions

This is *your* discussion. As the facilitator, it's my job to ask good questions, and then lean back as much as possible so you all can have a lively conversation. I may invite you specifically to contribute if I haven't heard anything from you. As I mentioned before, if you'd prefer not to share, feel free to say "pass" if I do that. Likewise, if you're someone who has a lot to share, please be mindful to allow space for others to offer their perspective. My hope is that this feels like a friendly and casual conversation. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. You are the expert on your experiences and we want to learn from you. Let me pause one more time. Does anybody have any questions before we get going?

- [Answer any questions posed.]
- [If all in group consented to recording, begin recorder.]

Focus Group Questions for Parents/Caregivers

Introductions

Before we jump into the discussion, let's get everybody introduced to one another. Please share your first name, as well as what is most alive for you right now as the parent or caregiver of a [middle/high] school student. [Alternative options for "most alive" include: What is most up for you, what is pulling your attention, what is giving you the most joy, what is most energizing.]

Questions

Now I have some questions about the mentoring and support your student has been getting at their school.

Deciding to Participate

1. I'm curious, how did you all hear about the program?

2. Why did you decide you wanted your student to participate? What was appealing to you about it?
3. What worries did you have about the program? Were there any reasons you thought it might NOT be a good idea to have your student in the program?

Experiences - STUDENT

4. Tell me about the best parts of having your student in the program.
 - 4.1. **Probe:** Describe what you'd like to have more of for your student. [Why?]
5. How has the program helped your student?
 - 5.1. **Probe:** Interpersonal relationships with their mentor, school staff, peers, (you) parent/caregiver, siblings, other family members.
 - 5.2. **Probe:** Academics
 - 5.3. **Probe:** Physical health and mental health
 - 5.4. **Probe:** Connection to cultural heritage
6. What could be improved to better support your student?
 - 6.1. **Probe:** To help your student do their best learning?
 - 6.2. **Probe:** To help them feel engaged and connected to the school, classroom, learning process?
7. Considering your student's cultural identity or other qualities, what changes are needed to make the program more relevant or relatable to them?

Experiences – PARENT/CAREGIVER

I also have some questions about your experiences with the program, as parents and caregivers.

8. How has your advocate or coordinator engaged you as the parent caregiver?
9. What have been the best parts of the program for you?
 - 9.1. **Probe:** Home visits, classes, help getting other services or supports.
 - 9.2. **Probe:** Describe what you'd like to have more of for your family or your community. [Why?]
10. Thinking about how the program could be its best, what kinds of things could be improved
 - 10.1. **Probe:** How could the program better meet your needs as the parent/caregiver of a middle/high school student? Are there things you or your family still needs help with?
 - 10.2. **Probe:** Are there any areas where you'd like to get more feedback or engagement from the program?

Closing Questions

I'd like to wrap up our conversation by thinking big about future possibilities.

11. Imagine that a year from now the program your student is enrolled in is providing them with *exactly* what they need to thrive. What would that look like?
12. Is there anything we haven't discussed that you feel is important for us to know?
13. Any advice or words of encouragement for the program staff as they continue to support young people?

Wrap Up

Ok! That's all the questions that I have. Thank you so much for sharing with us. This has been a great opportunity for us to learn from you. We've provided our contact information [describe location] so please reach out to us if you have any other thoughts you'd like to share.

[End recording]

[Provide instructions on delivery of \$50 gift card incentive].

ARPNI Student Focus Group PROTOCOL

Hello! Thanks for being here. Feel free to grab a snack if you haven't already.

LEAD FACILITATOR: Hello my name is [Facilitator Name] and I will be guiding our time together today. I work for an organization called Insight for Action/Austin Advocates With. We specialize in gathering information to inform services for children, youth, and families.

CO-FACILITATOR: Hello everybody. My name is [Co-Facilitator Name]. I work for [employer, describe role]. I'm here today to help with anything you may need during this conversation, so let me know if there's anything I can do to help you feel more comfortable. I'm also going to take notes to make sure we do a good job of capturing your feedback.

LEAD FACILITATOR: Before we jump in, I want to tell you a bit more about why we're having this conversation and what I will do with the information you all share with me. Then you can decide if you would like to continue.

We are interested in hearing your thoughts and feelings about the mentoring and support you've been getting from [Organization name(s)] which are part of the Albina-Rockwood Promise Neighborhood Initiative, also known as ARPNI. ARPNI is a government funded collaboration between the organization you work with and five other Portland non-profits whose aim is to help the people living and going to schools in your neighborhoods. The project is being led by Self Enhancement, Inc.

We are talking to you because we want to learn how we can help all the organizations in ARPNI improve their programs for you and for students who will participate in the future.

Over the summer, we'll pull together what we hear during these conversations into a preliminary set of findings. In the fall, we'll hold community sessions where we'll share out those results. We hope you'll attend so you can help us be sure we've gotten your feedback right.

Voluntary

You've already filled out a consent form, but I want to offer a couple of reminders. First, it is important to emphasize that your participation in this conversation is ***totally voluntary***. You can decide you don't want to participate at any time. You can also say "pass" if you prefer not to share about a particular question. You have the power to decide how you want to participate, even if that means you don't want to participate at all. You get to keep your gift card even if you don't participate during the discussion or decide to leave early.

Confidential

We will keep the comments you share during this group private. What I mean by private is that none of your comments will be tied to your name in any reports. To further protect your confidentiality, we will only use ***first*** names here today. We'd also like to ask everyone in this group to respect our confidentiality by agreeing not to mention anything that is shared once this session is over. Does anyone in this group ***NOT*** agree to keep the conversation confidential?

- [Excuse anyone who opts out because they do not agree to maintain confidentiality.]

Permission to Record

You probably noticed this [recording device]. When we are done today, we will use this recording to help us remember what you said. We won't share this recording with anyone, and we'll destroy it after we use it to create a transcript and clean up our notes. Would it be okay for us to record this conversation? If you prefer that we not record, that's no problem. We can take notes.

- [Acknowledge response and confirm the conversation will not be recorded if anyone prefers.]

Discussion Instructions

So today, I am going to ask you all a few questions, and I want to set a few group agreements for our time together. First, we will be out of here no later than [FOCUS GROUP END TIME]

Group Agreements:

- You can say "pass" if you don't want to answer.
- Take time to think before you answer.
- Tell me if I misunderstand something you say, or if you don't understand me.
- There are no right or wrong answers; say what you want.
- Take turns talking.
- Practice respect towards one another.

Let me pause there. Does anybody have any questions before we get going?

- [Answer any questions posed.]
- [If all in group consented to recording, begin recorder.]

Introductions

1. Before we jump into the questions, let's start with some introductions. Starting here and going to the right around the circle, can you **share your first name, what grade you are in, and one thing you like to do for fun.**

Questions

Thanks for introducing yourselves. Now I would like to hear your thoughts and feelings about the mentoring and support you've been getting in the ARPNI program.

2. **OPTION 1: Picture Selection Activity:** Print numerous stock images that reflect school, home, and community life. Spread the images around the table/room. Make sure there are far more images than students. Then, ask students to pick an image that is a good representation of how they feel about the program, and expand on why.
3. **OPTION 2: Notecard Activity:** Everyone has a notecard in front of them (pass out). Take a few minutes to think about the statement on the card, and fill in the blank with how you would finish the sentence. When I meet with my advocate/coordinator/mentor I feel... _____

Notecard statement: *When I meet with my advocate/coordinator/mentor [adjust based on title commonly used by organization that staff the program with this group], I feel... _____*

Prompt: Who would like to start by sharing what you wrote and more about why meeting with your advocate/coordinator/mentor makes you feel that way?

Probes:

- What is it about the program that makes you feel this way?
- What things do you do in the program that make you feel this way?
- Is this feeling different than other programs or activities you participate in?
-

4. What are your favorite parts of the program?

5. What are some stories or specific experiences that are examples of how the program has helped you, or made a positive impact on your life? Examples might be about your academics, your relationships, your health, or extracurriculars.

Probes:

- How did you use that at home/at school/with friends (if a particular service or support was mentioned)?
- How did it help you at home/at school/with friends?
- Why has it mattered to you?
- How did it make you feel?
- Your Coordinator on campus, after school, summer programming, 1:1, group activities, student-to-student interactions.

6. If you had a magic wand, what would you change about the program?

Probes:

- What do you wish was different?
- What would help you feel more supported at school?
- What would help you feel more supported out of school or at home?
- What would make the program more relevant or relatable to you?

7. Is there anything we haven't asked you or discussed that you would like to share with us?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me today!

Wrap Up

Ok! That's all the questions that I have. Thank you so much for sharing with us. This has been a great opportunity for us to learn from you. We've provided our contact information [describe location] so please reach out to us if you have any other thoughts you'd like to share.

[Provide instructions on delivery of \$25 gift card incentive].

Closeout and end recording. The move towards Data Management Plan for Focus Groups (link to be attached)

Appendix D. Listening Session Summary

ARPNI Qualitative Evaluation Feedback Session Synthesis

Good qualitative evaluation must connect its findings to the on the ground lived experiences of the people the evaluation is about. In order to do this, four key themes from the analyzed data were presented to ARPNI staff and community members to hear their reflections about how the findings relate to them and invite recommendations to about how ARPNI can improve its ability to make meaningful impact relevant to the diverse communities being served. In December 2023, three virtual sessions were held (**Table 1**). Caregiver sessions were 1 hour long, and the staff session was 1.5 hours long. Below a general summary of caregiver sessions and detailed summary of the staff session for each point is included. The use of Google Jamboard for the staff session enabled more detailed notes with specific thoughts for each theme to be recorded.

Overall, the discussions confirmed the importance of the themes outlined in the main report. A few additional points did arise. Staff mentioned that support for caregivers on the topic of conflict management and career would be helpful. Some caregivers said that they did not need more days of after school programming from ARPNI partners because their students were already involved in other activities and/or could use some evenings off from programming.

Table 1. Summary of Evaluation Feedback Sessions

Session Type	Attendees
Caregiver session - English	5 caregivers (4 women, 1 man) NAYA, IRCO, and SEI were represented
Caregiver session - Spanish	7 caregivers (all women) LatNet was represented
ARPNI staff	Organizations represented: LatNet (n=3), MFS (n=1), NAYA (n=2), IRCO (n=2), SEI (n=3), and United Way (n=1) TOTAL Attendee count: 12

Theme 1. Culturally responsive services are vitally important to support students to navigate racism, microaggressions, and cultural differences.

Opportunities to increase services available:

- ◆ Increase the size and number of spaces where students can engage with ARPNI services.
- ◆ Build up services – more programming, more days, more coordinators with more capacity.

CAREGIVERS

Overall, caregivers agreed that this theme resonated with their experiences. They reflected that ARPNI’s culturally responsive services are important and appreciated because such programming is lacking at their students’ schools. Caregivers generally agreed that building

up services is a good idea, and some lamented the space limitations of the program. Others indicated that their children are involved in many activities and meeting two times per week is enough.

STAFF

REFLECTIONS:

- Getting the space and time needed to address this is challenging. Space and infrastructure are currently big barriers. We need space to utilize the relationship model, current buildings do not have very many spaces for confidentiality or doing activities like ISPs.
- Even without sufficient space, the ARPNI model builds trust and security with students.
- It takes much longer than we thought and wish to build real relationships and that is a difficult message to communicate in grant reports, but it is the truth. COVID hasn't helped, and the post COVID era shows hesitancy of students to jump back in.
- If we are going to increase program size and caseloads, it then becomes hard to connect with students and can overwhelm coordinators.
- We really like being able to partner with other culturally responsive partners for services, etc.
- Some folks struggle to differentiate ARPNI from SUN services.
- This focus strengthens the policy/program asks we regularly make. ARPNI data team could the information provided in the report to integrate with internal learning reports and program asks. Resources are needed to continue the work and make staff feel secure in their positions.
- We need support from school districts to be able to provide more CBO coordinators in schools.
- This is an opportunity to figure out the current gaps in culturally responsive supports. Are there other partners that could join to meet groups that are left out?
- Keeping in mind the critical importance of students having the skills to navigate racism and cultural difference; these skills help them be able to learn!
- The model has created an increased interest from other caseworkers from other grants to join the program and participate in the ARPNI model.
- The current collaboration between different culturally responsive partners with culturally specific partners is a model for others.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

- Increase opportunities for peers from different cultures to come together and learn from one another.
- Rather than simply adding more coordinators, we could build capacity in informal and formal ways by connecting students to each other, family members and other organizations in case ARPNI leaves, students are not left "hanging". Can not assume that the school will not/cannot provide these services. By building community, families can increase their knowledge of and reliance on community members.

- If there are microaggressions between students, PNI coordinators may work together to solve the issues that may come up.

Theme 2. Coordinators help students and caregivers navigate conflict.

Opportunities to increase support for students' relationships with peers, school, and family:

- ◆ Offer more staff training on conflict resolution.
- ◆ Continue to provide support for students and caregivers.

CAREGIVERS

Caregivers agreed that conflict is prevalent, and their students need a safe space and person to speak with at school. One caregiver reported that their student's coordinator helped them resolve a conflict with the school, sticking with them until they found a solution.

STAFF

REFLECTIONS:

- Could be helpful to outline how evaluation defines conflict—safety is one theme in the school climate survey.
- There has not been enough conflict resolution training or de-escalation skills.
- We have been hearing about increased conflicts from both our students and Caregivers. There seems to be an uptick with conflict since students have returned to onsite learning post COVID.
- School surveys asking, "do you feel safe at school, what do you need to feel safe?" have been answered by students requesting more engagement from school resource officers, but others indicate that school resource officers act unprofessionally towards them. Ultimately students are asking for stability and structure in schools and appear to be looking for some authority figure to step in and professionally help to create a sense of safety.
- When it comes to conflicts, principals approach them with "blaming, shaming and yelling", and because of coordinators' trusting relationships they can potentially break up fights with just words. However, sometimes staff feel that they are being taken advantage of because of these relationships and ARPNI values. Often times coordinators are even asked to help when a student is not on their caseload. Coordinators are sometimes expected to step into incidents that they are not trained to handle; the school should provide additional support to assist coordinators.
- Coordinators work with students to instill values and practices that potentially help them avoid conflicts and prepare them to be adults.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Offer more frequent and consistent conflict resolution training. Look into aligning with the school district and their conflict resolution trainings.
- Schedule trainings for staff on assisting students in self-regulation. This would have to be culturally responsive and recognize that different cultural communities need different strategies. Research whether there is a team of providers that could offer this kind of training. As part of this training, we could learn about cultural norms and responses to conflict amongst the partners.
- Provide support to adults (caregivers) on conflict resolution and self-regulation.
- Increase students' ability to self-regulate. Build up coordinators skills sets to help students do that.
- Seek more information from schools as to what the expectations are for coordinators regarding school fights. (vs expectations of teachers)

Theme 3. Trusting relationships are built with active communication.

Opportunities to provide more consistent and inclusive communication:

- ◆ Provide translation of key materials in primary languages reflected among ARPNI families and deliver additional support as needed.
- ◆ Ensure coordinators provide consistent updates on students' experiences and progress to Caregivers.

CAREGIVERS

Caregivers generally agreed that they have positive relationships with their students' coordinators, and that communications are delivered in an attentive, friendly, kind manner. This includes updates by text message and telephone. One reflected that their coordinator proactively reached out to them about their student's academic performance, proposing to pull them from class to support them with their schoolwork. Another said they rely heavily on communication with the coordinator. However, one caregiver stated that their coordinator sometimes forgets to inform them of classes or events, and another said a little more communication wouldn't hurt.

STAFF

There was not enough time to address this theme during the session.

Theme 4. Caregivers and students value academic supports.

Opportunities to strengthen college and career readiness support:

- ◆ Deliver consistent supports across schools and programs.
- ◆ Help students envision their future earlier. Starting in middle school, provide career exploration and college awareness programming.
- ◆ Involve caregivers in college and career programming.

CAREGIVERS

Caregivers generally agreed that academic supports are helpful and post-graduation college and career readiness could be increased. One caregiver wishes that their student could go to an autobody shop for career exposure. Latin@ caregivers shared that their students also receive college readiness through AVID¹, with the caveat that a student must have “pretty good” grades to be able to participate. Field trips to university campuses were mentioned as particularly helpful, although another caregiver said their student described a university campus trip as “boring.”

STAFF

REFLECTIONS:

- We recognize there is a need to help students make the connection between the schoolwork they are doing and post-graduation work or studying.
- There is a lot of collaboration across ARPNI and Reynolds School District in this area; we need to continue to do this.
- School climate survey data shows that students report wanting to learn more about what they can do after high school.
- A lot of students struggle with not knowing all the possibilities of different careers and need support in being exposed to more.
- Coordinators have observed students have higher self-confidence after they come back from a career or trade fair because they connected with something they saw there.
- Lunch & Learn activities are offered at HB Lee; Reynolds Middle School and Reynolds High School could incorporate lunch and learn with career and college prep/exposure.
- MFS is pivoting to shift to career exploration not just college.
- Could offer a youth internship program at the high school, connect Interns for 8 weeks at different agencies.
- We are interested in sharing more about trade schools and college technical careers. We want to offer a more wholistic view of post-graduation beyond college. We need to seek out scholarships for studying trades.
- MFS offered an economic empowerment class at middle school level; financial readiness.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Help students learn about more trades, how to get onto that path and provide support to students with finding resources.
- Look into the possibility of having Clackamas Community College come to schools to offer one-on-one supports in post-secondary education and career options.
- Increase offerings in this theme to English Language Development student and families.

¹ AVID is a model for Latino Network to incorporate a college focus.

- Begin to focus on college/career prep in middle school; offer college and career events in middle school.
- Include events and workshops for the whole family.
- Bring speakers from different career paths to share their journey with students.