

**KNOWLEDGE IS EMPOWERING:**

**Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership Fellows'  
Involvement and Influence after Training**

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## ABOUT THE PROGRAM EVALUATED:

### COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE FOR PARENT LEADERSHIP

Kentucky's education goal is high levels of achievement for all students. This is not idle rhetoric, since academic progress is measured, publicly reported and has consequences for schools. But to advance this goal, parents and community members must contribute more than they have in the past. National research, as well as personal experience, shows that when parents are engaged in their children's school the achievement of the entire school increases. We also know that a number of conditions have made such involvement more difficult over the past 30 or so years. The Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL) is designed to increase this needed parent engagement and to focus on increasing student achievement by doing so.

The Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership trains parents in leadership and other skills and then supports them as they work in their schools and communities as advocates for all students. The institute trains parents across Kentucky each year, who in turn carry out substantive projects to increase student achievement in their schools. About 1,400 parents have been involved since 1997 and about 30,000 more parents are involved through the local organizing efforts of Commonwealth Institute graduates.

The institute recruits parents to participate in three two-day training sessions. In interactive sessions they receive a combination of information, skills, and data. After participation, parents return to their schools and communities charged with implementing projects they have planned during their training based on analysis of their school's data and priority needs. Their projects, completed within two years, are expected to have a lasting impact as they involve other parents to increase student achievement. Parents are coached and mentored over a two-year period by Prichard Committee staff and engaged in supportive networks of other parents.

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS:** **Dick Corbett** and **Bruce Wilson** are independent educational researchers who collaborate on studying school reform, primarily in low-income settings. Current projects include examining efforts funded by the Benwood, NEA, Osborne, Lyndhurst, and Public Education Foundations to raise student achievement at all levels of the Hamilton County, TN school system; the implementation of collaborative learning communities in two New Jersey districts; the effects of the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership's training program on parents' subsequent involvement in Kentucky schools, and a Michigan Middle Start pilot initiative to improve math instruction in rural Michigan schools. Past work has entailed investigating several Comprehensive School Reform models, including Middle Start, Onward to Excellence II, Talent Development, Different Ways of Knowing, and the Mississippi Arts Commission's Whole Schools Initiative. Their two most recent published books are Effort and Excellence in Urban Classrooms: Expecting--and Getting--Success with All Students, co-authored with Belinda Williams (Teachers College Press, 2002) and Listening to Urban Kids: School Reform and The Teachers They Want (SUNY Press, 2001). A book co-authored with George Noblit and Monica McKinney on the A+ arts integration reform in North Carolina is in press. Corbett received his PhD in education from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and Wilson earned the same degree from Stanford University.

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The phrase “knowledge is empowering” summarizes the overall conclusion of a study of the long-term effects of Kentucky’s Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL) training on its decade of graduates, from 1997-2006. The evaluation examined whether parents’ participation in the program spurred a continuing interest in educational advocacy and involvement well beyond that evidenced during and just after training, as documented in a previous evaluation.

Of the nearly 1,400 CIPL participants who graduated, the study authors contacted 100 for telephone interviews, and mailed surveys to the 1,200 graduates for whom the program had current addresses. Of these, 389 responded, nearly 40 percent.

Using qualitative and quantitative methods, this follow-up evaluation discovered that:

- Fellows (the name by which CIPL graduates are known) changed their perspective on educational involvement from being concerned primarily about their own children to promoting the best interests of all children,
- Fellows sustained their post-training involvement, and, in fact, broadened its scope beyond their children’s schools,
- Fellows reported that they felt empowered to act based on their new levels of knowledge, and that their activity stemmed directly from the confidence and competence they gained from their CIPL training,
- Fellows not only became more actively involved, but also became more influential.

Institute participants repeatedly marveled at their “gumption” in treading where few Kentucky parents had gone before, taking charge in a variety of situations, in schools and out. To a person, Fellows attributed their proactive endeavors to what they had learned in their CIPL training. They said they learned how to read test data, decipher educational jargon, unpack the maze of educational regulations and procedures, and understand “CIA” issues (curriculum, instruction, and assessment). Armed with these skills and knowing their rights as parents prompted Fellows to become engaged meaningfully in local and state educational activities in ways they had never considered before, “not in a million years.” They adeptly found ways to maneuver around wary educators and evidenced a profound sense of obligation to use their training constructively.

Trends documented in the study include:

- Parents shifted from school-based to community- and educational system-based efforts. Prior to training, Fellows tended to be members of the PTA and school based decision-making (SBDM) councils. After training, increasing numbers

branched out into advocacy and joining policy and advisory groups with broader constituencies.

- Although the responding CIPL participants are more highly educated than the general adult population in Kentucky (about two-thirds have a college degree), less well-educated Fellows were just as likely to stay involved after their formal CIPL commitment.
- At the district level, participation post-CIPL included such appointments as curriculum task forces, district PTA boards, text book selection committees, long range and strategic planning committees, countywide visioning boards, superintendent search committees, and regional advisory councils.
- At the state level, Fellows were named to the Commissioner's Parent Advisory Council and various other state boards, such as the SBDM state organization board, special education regulations committee, and state PTA Board.
- About two-thirds of projects that Fellows designed and completed continued well beyond the year in which they were part of the program. For example, a project to help parents and students successfully make the transition from elementary to middle school became adopted by all the middle schools in a district.
- Fellows also invested in additional training. Over 44 percent of those surveyed continued contact with CIPL, 31 percent enrolled in higher education classes, just over 20 percent attended state department training programs, and 21 percent returned to school for undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

According to the Fellows surveyed, this emboldened stance was not just a logical consequence of their prior involvement in their local schools. Rather, they attributed their newfound activism entirely to CIPL. Fellows readily recognized that what they were doing was qualitatively different from what they expected themselves to do. To them, CIPL training was the singular causal factor in making them a substantial force in local, regional, and state educational arenas.

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Knowledge is power, or so the saying goes. In the case of graduates from the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL), the more appropriate phrasing of the idea is “knowledge is empowering.” This simple statement summarizes the overall conclusion of a study of the long-term effects of CIPL training on its decade of graduates, from 1997-2006. The evaluation was interested in finding out whether parents’ participation in the program spurred a continuing interest in educational advocacy and involvement well beyond the initial spurt of activity they evidenced during and just after training, as a previous evaluation has documented (Corbett & Wilson, 2000).

Using qualitative and quantitative methods, this follow-up evaluation discovered that:

- Fellows (the name by which CIPL graduates are known) changed their perspective on educational involvement from being concerned primarily about their own children to promoting the best interests of all children,
- Fellows sustained their post-training involvement, and, in fact, broadened its scope beyond their children’s schools,
- Fellows not only became more actively involved, but also became more influential,
- Fellows were empowered to act based on their new levels of knowledge; this activity stemmed directly from the confidence and competence parents said they felt in addressing educational issues,
- Fellows derived this confidence and competence from CIPL training.

Indeed, time and again, Institute participants marveled at their gumption in treading where few other Kentucky parents had gone before within their local – and state – educational systems and at how they found themselves taking charge in a variety of situations, in schools and out. To a person, Fellows attributed their proactive endeavors to what they had learned in their training. Understanding how to read test data, deciphering educational jargon, unpacking the maze of educational regulations and procedures, becoming familiar with “CIA” issues (curriculum, instruction, and assessment), and knowing their rights as parents all prompted parents to become engaged meaningfully in local and state educational activities in ways they had never considered within their reach before. They adeptly found ways to maneuver around wary educators and evidenced a profound sense of obligation to use their training constructively.

This report first discusses how and why the research was done. The substantive sections of the document discuss the extent to which Fellows sustained their educational involvement after training, their explanations for this involvement, other aspects of participants’ lives touched by their training, and Fellows’ assessments of CIPL’s overall impact.

## Research Questions and Data Collection Strategies

In 2000, with funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts, a report entitled “*I Didn’t Know I Could Do That!: Parents Learning to be Leaders Through the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership*” documented CIPL impacts with the 1998 and 1999 Fellow cohorts ([http://www.cipl.org/Articles/Publications/cipl\\_didnt\\_know.pdf](http://www.cipl.org/Articles/Publications/cipl_didnt_know.pdf)). That study examined primarily what participants did and accomplished during training and discussed three intertwined effects. The most obvious effect was Fellows’ growth in knowledge and understanding about Kentucky education. Second, this increased knowledge led to an enhanced confidence that they were worthy participants in school improvement. Finally, CIPL also gave participants an increased desire and willingness to act on behalf of students. But that research only focused on the immediate impact. Of more importance is the question of whether the impact on Fellows could be sustained. Thus, this new round of research focused attention on whether parents maintained an involvement in educational matters after their training was completed. The emphasis shifted from documenting Fellows’ desire and willingness to act to actions actually taken in the years following training.

At the time of the original study in 2000 two cohorts of Fellows had been trained, comprised of approximately 400 parents. To date, about 1400 Kentucky parents have participated. Through funding from the Hasbro Foundation the staff at CIPL worked with a team of outside researchers to develop a comprehensive design for assessing the impact of CIPL. That design called for researching the effects of the Program not only on Fellows, but also on schools and districts, on education policy across the state, and on student achievement. The first phase was to focus on Fellows. Thus, the goal of this investigation was to reach as many of the population of trained parents as possible and learn more about their actions to improve education, what contributed to that engagement, and the impact those actions have had. The question that guided the research was: **How has participation in the CIPL program affected the subsequent life-trajectories of the CIPL Fellows?**

The evaluation intended to reach the entire universe of graduates. At the time of the evaluation 1200 were reasonably reachable. Cost and logistics dictated that this contact be via surveys. However, to inform survey development, the study actually began with in-depth interviews with a targeted sample of still “active” Fellows. The focus of the interviews was what had happened with Fellows and their education-related endeavors after their training. Telephone interviews covered the following topics:

- Fellows’ subsequent involvement in education (i.e., extent to which Fellows become leaders, actors and practitioners in efforts to improve schooling):
- How frequently these activities took place before and after CIPL training, as well as the impact on the settings in which the activities took place,
- The role CIPL played in promoting such involvement,
- The circumstances that facilitated and/or hindered their involvement, and

- How much the former Fellows attribute their subsequent participation in education activities to their CIPL experience.

CIPL program staff identified a pool of around 100 Fellows to be contacted for the interviews. These former participants were known to have applied their training to activities in their communities and beyond, were representative of the geographic diversity across the state, and contained graduates from the entire decade that CIPL had been in place. The obvious bias toward “activist” parents was intentional, as it provided a promising source of data about the full array of experiences Fellows likely would have engaged in after their graduation. Phone and email attempts to contact these participants yielded a sample of 60 Fellows who completed confidential interviews with the two report authors.

The interview results then served as the content for a survey that included over 100 questions about such issues as Fellows’ interaction with CIPL and other participants after completing the program, the fate of the projects they created during training, the impact of CIPL training on their knowledge about and post-CIPL involvement in educational issues, and their success in promoting CIPL’s five program goals through their actions. A copy of the complete survey can be found in Appendix A. Surveys were mailed to 1200 CIPL graduates in the early fall of 2007 and best estimates were that at least 1000 of the addresses proved to still be accurate (keeping in mind that some Fellows had been trained ten years ago). Fellows had the option of completing paper surveys or accessing the instrument on-line (about 30 percent took advantage of the latter option). Follow-up phone and email contact continued for two months to boost participation. Three hundred and eighty-nine parents responded, resulting in a return rate of nearly 40 percent of the reachable population.

This survey sample was almost certainly biased toward “active” parents. Still, telephone follow-up reminders usually produced the response that “busy lives” was the more likely explanation for non-response. Almost no one refused to participate because of dissatisfaction with the program. Other factors may have also contributed to a possible response bias. Three obvious ones that could be empirically tested included geographic location, year of enrollment, and gender. However, statistical analyses comparing the ratios of responders to non-responders across location, year of enrollment, and gender produced nearly identical proportions.

Data from both the interviews and the surveys are interwoven into the substantive section of this report. The latter gives the reader a sense of the breadth of activities and perspectives while the former helps portray the meanings participants attached to the actions and attitudes.

### **Parents Sustaining an Involvement in Education, Post Training**

On the surveys parents identified their involvement in ten different activities that the prior interviews suggested were likely endeavors. These ranged from school-based activities (e.g., PTA activities) to advocating for parents (e.g., creating school community

partnerships) to engagement in activities that reached beyond individual schools (e.g., regional committees). Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of Fellows’ involvement prior to, during, and after training.

**Table 1: Percent of Fellow Involvement in Educational Activities Prior to, During, and After CIPL Training**

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Have not done this</i>	<i>Started doing before CIPL</i>	<i>Started doing during CIPL</i>	<i>Started doing post CIPL</i>	<i>Lower income perseverance (23%overall)</i>
<b><i>(a) School-based</i></b>					
1. PTA member	7%	78	8	7	31
2. PTA officer	31	49	10	10	24
3. SBDM member	43	33	6	18	21
<b><i>(b) Advocacy</i></b>					
4. Create partnerships	22	32	22	24	26
5. Recruit parents	10	34	30	27	23
6. Reach out to parents who are under-involved	18	30	24	28	24
<b><i>(c) Wider constituency involvement</i></b>					
7. School board member	92	2	2	4	19
8. District cmts	55	19	2	25	18
9. Regional cmts	78	4	1	17	21
10. Prichard cmts	75	3	6	16	22

Notably, parents shifted from school-based to community- and educational system-based efforts. Prior to training, for example, Fellows tended to limit themselves to PTA membership and school-based decision-making (SBDM) councils whereas after training increasing numbers of parents branched out into advocacy – like promoting increased parental and other agency involvement in education – and into becoming a part of policy and advisory groups with broader constituencies.

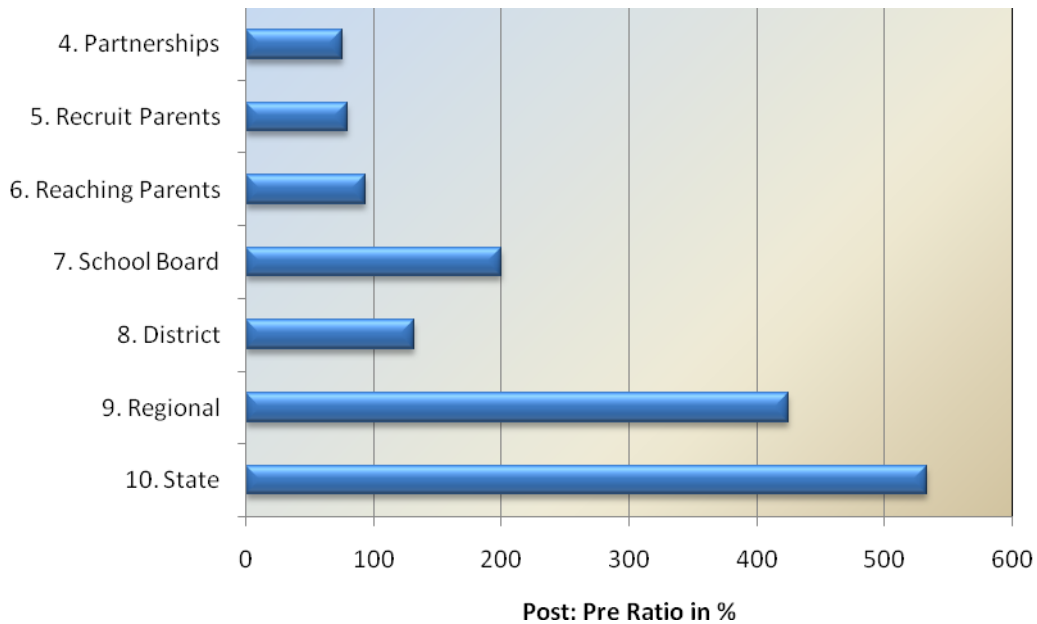
One explanation for this strong perseverance on the part of CIPL parents is that all the growth may be accounted for by increased involvement from just a subset of the sample -- the more well-educated Fellows. To be sure, CIPL participants are more highly



educated than the general adult population in Kentucky (approximately two-thirds of the responding Fellows have a college degree). But when the less well-educated Fellows were compared to their more highly educated peers across these activities, they were just as likely to stay involved after their formal CIPL commitment. This is reflected in the figures in the far right column of Table 1. Twenty-three percent of the surveyed Fellows had only a high school diploma or had taken a few post-secondary courses. If they did not participate at the same level after training, then one would expect to see the percentages dip significantly below that 23 percent figure for each of the activities reported in Table 1. To the contrary, the ratios remained very near that 23 percent figure. In other words, less well educated CIPL parents were as likely to remain as active advocates for student learning as their more well-educated counterparts.

Figure 1 provides a simple graphic representation of Fellows actions for some activities that require them to move outside the confines of their own school (i.e., PTA and SBDM activities, numbers 1-3). Since the focus is on what happened to Fellows after the training, the graphic represents the proportion of Fellows engaged in these activities after training relative to before training (i.e., the columns with no shading in Table 1). With respect to advocating for other organizations (creating partnerships) and parents (recruiting parents and reaching out to under-involved parents) the proportions after training almost matched those from before training. When reviewing the engagement levels in arenas beyond the school the proportions after CIPL training exceeded those before. Indeed, in two cases (regional and state committee work) the proportions were more than four times greater than the numbers before training.

**Figure 1: Advocacy Activity and Broader Constituency Involvement Post/Pre CIPL**



At the district level, participation post-CIPL included such appointments as curriculum task forces, district PTA boards, text book selection committees, long range and strategic planning committees, countywide visioning boards, superintendent search committees, and regional advisory councils, to name a few. There was also a noticeable dose of new involvement at the state level with the Commissioner's Parent Advisory Council and various other state boards (e.g., a SBDM state organization board, special education regulations committee, and state PTA Board) filling their volunteer time. In the past two years, the Commissioner's Parent Advisory Council was charged with producing a report on parent involvement and a rubric for assessing family and community involvement at the school level as it relates to student achievement. Half of that committee, including the two co-chairs, included CIPL graduates.

It is striking that at a point in time when their own children were likely nearing the end of their public school matriculation, some parents heightened their educational involvement. This development is in keeping with one of the messages CIPL staff tried to repeat often and that was that Fellows should take actions that benefit all students, not just their own. As Table 1 reflects, a sizeable portion of CIPL graduates did indeed become advocates for improved education generally.

A good number of fellows indicated that they were inclined to be activists, at least locally, prior to training, as evidenced in their PTA involvement. Indeed that quality spurred many to agree to take part in the training in the first place. CIPL, however, provided some direction to that energy, as this parent explained:

*People taking part in CIPL already have the personality to do this. CIPL trained us to be constructive instead of just being noisy.*

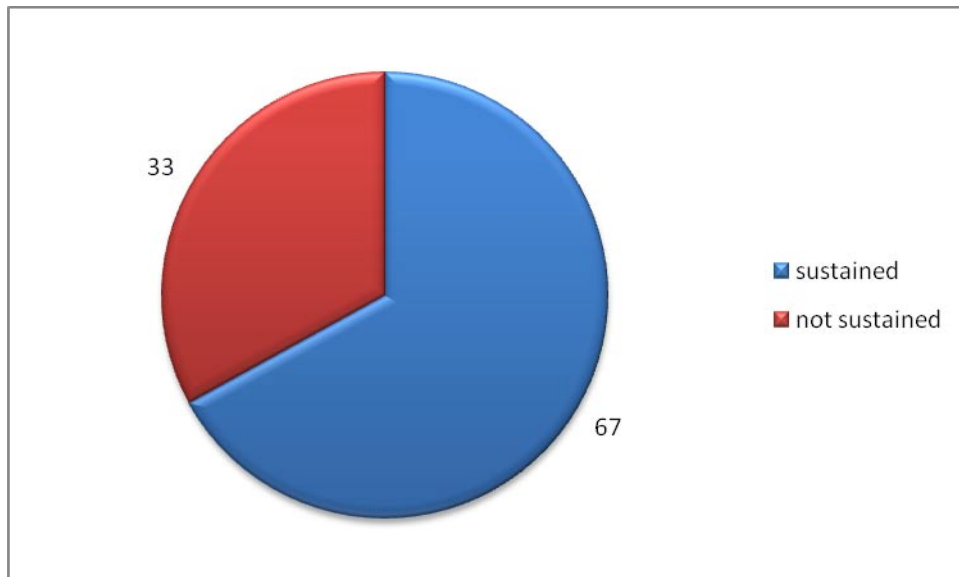
So it is not surprising that fellows continued to be involved people after their CIPL graduations. What was surprising was this wide variety of formal roles and activities they took on, at the school, community, and state levels, six examples of which are described in more detail below: (1) the degree to which Fellows' projects expanded beyond their initial implementation, (2) Fellows' participation in further CIPL classes, (3) their membership on school-based decision making councils (SBDM), (4) their service on district-level groups, (5) involvement on regional or state-level bodies, and, finally, (6) their continued promotion of CIPL goals.

### **Project Expansion**

An important indicator of Fellows' commitment to education was the extent to which their CIPL projects continued beyond the year in which they were part of the program. The logic here is simple. The intention was that parents would engage schools and other parents during the year of their training in a project that would impact student learning. That was a sizeable challenge with resistant school administrators and district procedures often throwing up roadblocks. Nevertheless, about 70 percent of the surveyed Fellows said their plans actually came to fruition. There was no formal expectation that these would continue beyond that first year, but the value added to the schools and the

enthusiasm for helping all students become more successful meant that nearly two-thirds of those implemented projects appeared to have become ongoing in the buildings.

**Figure 2: Pie Chart Ratio of Sustained and non-Sustained Projects**



These project activities, which ranged from making schools more welcoming places to supplementing reading instruction, had considerable visibility when they were implemented. For example, a Fellow reported that an effort to help parents and students successfully make the transition from elementary to middle school became adopted by all the middle schools in a district. Another parent created a group of reading volunteers that grew from 25 participants in the first year to 125 by the fourth year. A third Fellow developed a mobile physical science lab for use in all classrooms in a school and the project's success resulted in the Fellow's taking the activity around the state and eventually creating a small side business. The projects got the Fellows' feet wet, so to speak, in advocacy and activism. The survey results show that they did not stop there. Rather than just doing something meaningful to support student achievement in their own children's schools they broadened out into district, regional, and statewide endeavors.

### **Continuing Education**

Parents followed up their initial training with further participation in CIPL and other education-related programs. One-third of the Fellows took part in the PT3 ("Parents and Teachers Talking Together") process they first learned as Fellows. The activity seeks to establish dialogue between parents and teachers focused on how both parties can relate to one another better and combine forces to enhance student achievement. Eleven percent participated in CIPL's Parents and Teachers as Arts Partners, which involves parents helping schools incorporate the arts into core content instruction and creating projects that instigate school/community partnerships in promoting "best practices" in arts integration. Outside of their continued contact with

CIPL, thirty-one percent of the surveyed Fellows enrolled in higher education classes, just over one-fifth attended state department training programs, and 21 percent returned to school for undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The effect of CIPL on that involvement varied, with nearly two-thirds of the Fellows reporting that CIPL had a modest to strong influence on their PT3 involvement and just over a quarter indicating that CIPL participation had a modest or strong influence on their decision to return for a university degree. Several Fellows took the messages from CIPL back to their communities and sold the value of parent training to their local boards. As a result, whole systems have contracted with CIPL to fund training for subsequent cohorts.

### **School Decision-Making Through SBDM Involvement**

Kentucky mandated school-based decision-making councils in all schools. While the regulations spelled out in detail the makeup and responsibilities of these groups, few educators and parents knew these well. Thus, the councils' role in school affairs was splotchy to say the least – except where CIPL Fellows were involved. Two examples of how Fellows were able to influence the decision process of their local councils illustrate this point. One parent was able to redirect programmatic thinking at a local high school:

*I learned through the SBDM that the local board was going to consider possible AP course cuts at the high school. I knew that parent input would be an important part of the decision so we got lots of parents to come and convinced the district to abandon their cuts.*

Another Fellow described his/her frustration with seeing the local council make decisions that supported the chair's personal preferences:

*CIPL told us to stand up for what we believe in. I had watched the chair of our local SBDM always swing the vote of several members and get his way, not necessarily what was best for students. I got elected to the council and began to demand that decisions be made in the best interests of students. At first they didn't listen, but now they do. I wouldn't have been on the board if not for CIPL – absolutely not. It is amazing how CIPL has made a difference for me. It empowered me and provided me with information and strategies.*

### **District Engagement**

A significant group of Fellows (29% of the survey respondents) carried their involvement in local educational policy-setting to the school board level and district committees. The proportion of Fellows participating in district committees more than doubled (see Figure 1) and probably represent ratios that far exceed engagement of parents across the larger American population. Listed below are some examples of ways in which parents said they had been able to increase their say in the future of education, even without formally running for election as a member of the school board.

*I moderated community discussions about school funding for the district. We were able to get extra publicity in the newspaper.*

*I serve on an African American Achievement Task Force for [the local school system]. We have met monthly over the past two and half years and have looked at achievement gap strategies and made recommendations to the board. CIPL provided me with information and resources I could bring to the table.*

*I helped write a district grant with one of the principals. We were one of the first districts in the state to get a best practices grant for reading. I had teachers come to me for help and CIPL was the seed that made that happen . . . I wouldn't have been comfortable without that training. . . . Since I hadn't finished college I used to feel intimidated by teachers. I had always been told they were the professionals.*

## **Regional and State Involvement**

Nearly one-eighth of Fellows' actions ended up having regional or statewide implications. In absolute terms those numbers may not look impressive but when one looks at pre/post comparisons (as in Figure 1) the changes are quite dramatic -- four to five times as many Fellows getting actively involved at this level. In addition to the aforementioned Commissioner's Parent Advisory Committee where 18 CIPL graduates joined with a like number of other parents to draft a comprehensive performance assessment tool for schools to assess parental involvement across six objectives, parents also played important policy and advisory roles across the state. Several examples, as described by CIPL Fellows, are worth highlighting.

*I was asked to serve on the Vision 2015 process (a regional initiative looking to find a "call for action" to spur areas for growth and improvement). I was involved in the education sector – a wide-ranging group focused on how to increase the number of graduates. I chaired one of five sections of the education plan. We produced a report in 2006. I would not have been able to do that without CIPL. I knew how to push all the hot spots.*

*Through CIPL I was able to attend a state conference on gifted education. That gave me the knowledge so I could help others get their children identified. While I haven't influenced changes in district policy, I have been able to get them to follow their policy more closely – particularly with the idea that a parent recommendation can start the process.*

*I was one of three parents appointed by the Commissioner of Education to serve on an interagency task force on dual credits (high school/college). . . . I was also invited to serve on a committee of seven (I was the only parent) that drafted a white paper on gifted education. We took it to the legislature and lobbied for additional funding.*

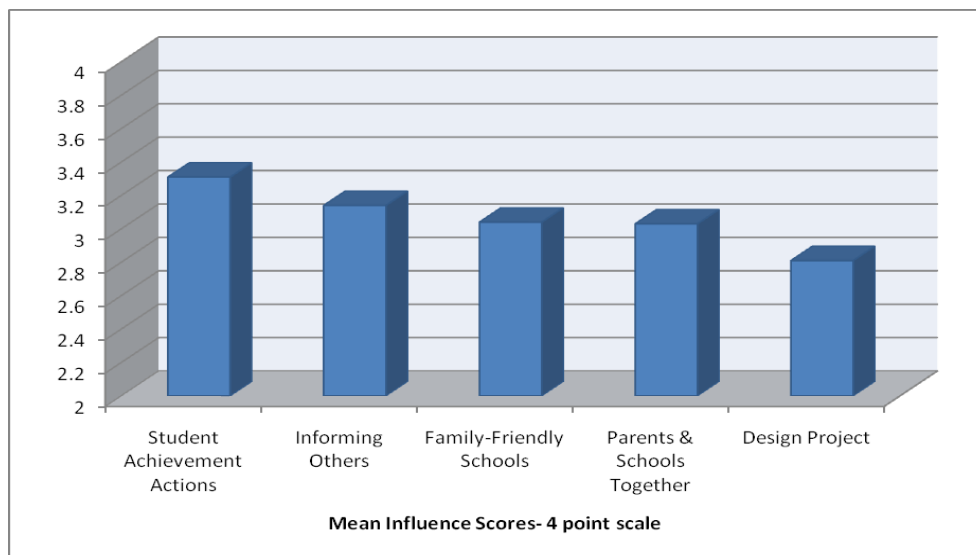
*I now work with parents across the state to help move children with a disability into a system that will deal with the disability. I am helping parents release their stories. . . . I am working on a bill for the state legislature that will recognize due process services for students with special needs.*

### **Fellow Influence as Reflected in CIPL Goals**

Thus, CIPL proved to be more than a factor in increasing parental **involvement** in the state because the above activities make clear that Fellows also became **influential** forces. It is probably safe to say that no educators with whom Fellows came into contact envisioned a form of parental engagement in education that encompassed what a noticeably large portion of the Fellows actually did. Certainly, school people got a taste of the potential of having knowledgeable and empowered parents via the projects the Fellows started during their training. So parents made contributions to the educational experiences of adults and students in particular schools, but as the other activities described above point out, parents also assumed positions from which they shaped the actions of educators more widely.

For their part, Fellows definitely felt that their behavior had furthered CIPL’s goals. The survey asked Fellows to estimate the “degree of influence you personally have had in your community”, using the five CIPL program goals as the point of reference. The five goals and the mean degree of self-reported influence reported by the Fellows are presented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Fellows’ Rating of Their Community Impact as Expressed in the Five CIPL Goals**



Fellows indicated that they had positively promoted all five goals, with between 65 percent and 86 percent of respondents maintaining either “modest” or “strong”

influence on each particular one. Parents indicated their influence on aspects of student achievement as the strongest. But even the two lowest rated goals -- which were designing and implementing projects and bringing parents and schools together -- had healthy means well above the mid-point of the possible range (2.50 on a scale from 1 to 4).

### **Factors Contributing to Increased Involvement and Influence**

As noted in the previous section, like many Kentucky parents, Fellows were inclined to volunteer to help out in their children's schools prior to their training. However, subsequent to their training, instead of stepping back from the local schools to allow parents with younger children to lead PTAs and join SBDM councils, Fellows broadened their educational advocacy. The surveys and interviews offer a range of explanations for why they were able to exert more influence. This section highlights the most important factors. But it all started with a relatively simple answer to explain why they had become integral participants at all levels of Kentucky's educational system, and that was, "what we learned in our CIPL training."

The path from training to broadened advocacy seemed relatively straightforward, at least according to Fellows. The equation was: Detailed knowledge about Kentucky education plus refined skills in approaching educators (and other parents) emboldened Fellows to venture into activities, meetings, and groups that they would not have participated in prior to CIPL and solidified their commitment to actions they were already taking. In the process, parents indicated, they gained the confidence, comfort, and courage to break through the boundaries of traditional views of parental involvement.

### **Using Enhanced Knowledge**

Awareness of how schools and districts operate was the apparent starting point for action for many Fellows, as these comments reflect:

*I don't know who nominated me to participate in CIPL but I would like to know so I could thank them. It brought my awareness to a whole new level. I have volunteered before but CIPL was altogether different. How was it different? I learned all the different nuances to school systems. This prompted me to become a more active participant in promoting student achievement. That became a part of my everyday conversation – at church, at the grocery store. What I learned changed every aspect of how I look at things. I interpret things differently and it's a part of my everyday life now.*

*In preparing for my kids own education I had toured schools and sat in on classes. But I didn't know what questions to ask. With CIPL I learned about the big machine of education and how to maneuver through it. I learned to focus on the "partnership." CIPL allowed me to see the whole picture and that I have a right to be part of it. You don't need a PhD to be passionate and advocate for something.*

*CIPL took me to a higher level of understanding. I now have a better awareness of the dynamics of the school system.*

Parents often portrayed themselves as outsiders and believed that educators viewed them as largely ignorant of the intricacies of the profession. This potent combination of perceptions relegated parents to the margins of school life. But their CIPL training helped ease some of their apprehension about having more substantive conversations.

*I learned more at CIPL than in all my years of formal schooling. It opened doors to the education lingo and I was able to see what was expected of teachers. It was the best training, bar none. It broke down barriers between parents and teachers.*

*A lot of teachers have the attitude that “I’m the professional.” CIPL gave me the education so I could talk to the teachers and learn what the issues were. . . . Now I am much more confident. I can talk with teachers comfortably. I understand their vernacular. I’m better able to evaluate what they are telling me. I now like to be a parent voice for teachers and the issues they face. I had pre-conceived ideas that became busted myths.*

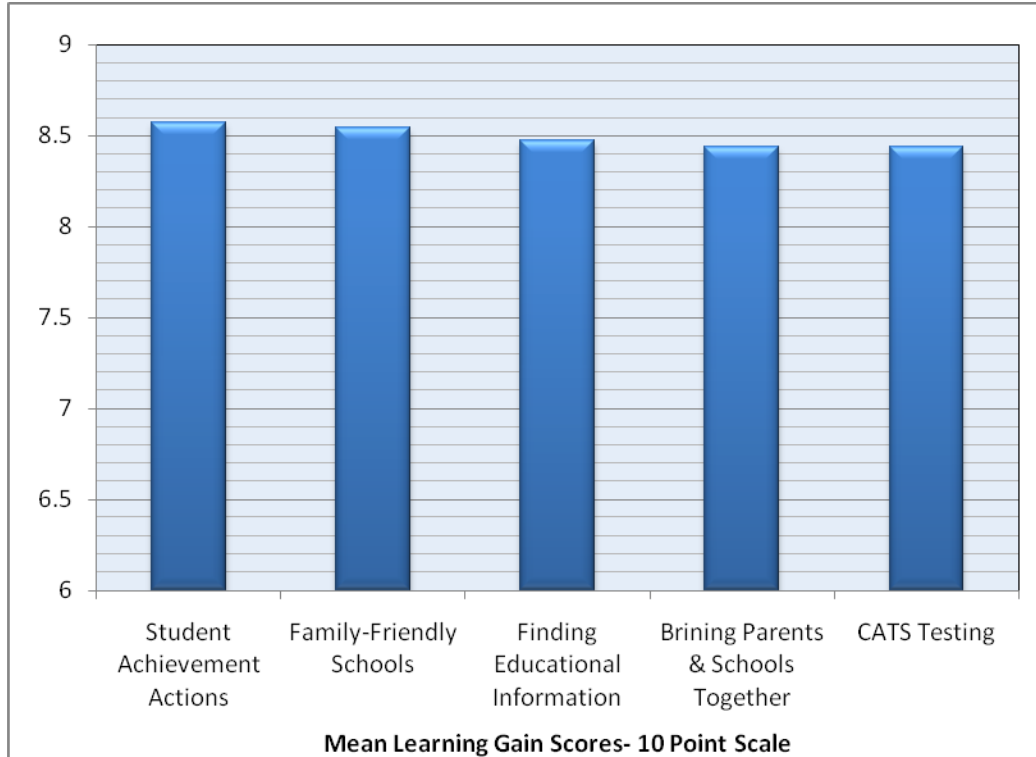
Of course, educators did not always reciprocate with welcoming arms:

*After learning the way things should be done as opposed to the way they are done at my school, I am very disheartened. Our principal doesn’t like parents stirring the pot and prefers that we all stay home and mind our own business unless he/she needs something specific done or money to fund a project.*

The survey results offered some additional insights into Fellows’ enhanced knowledge base. Generally speaking, they were not very discriminating about this knowledge increase; in fact, they were nearly universally positive about how the CIPL training had increased their understanding across a range of 15 issues (see questions 29-43 in Appendix A). On a ten-point scale (with 1 being no increase and 10 being very high increase), they assessed their gain in learning with an average score of about 8. The highest mean was 8.57 and the lowest was 7.54. Phrased a little differently, less than 5 percent of the Fellows rated their training below a 5 in terms of teaching them about previously unfamiliar issues whereas more than 75 percent rated CIPL training above a 6 in terms of enhancing their understanding of educational issues. They were most positive about five knowledge areas, as depicted in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Top Five Fellows' Behaviors In Relation to Degree of Knowledge Increase**



### **Developing Strategies to Work with Educators**

This knowledge of educational system “nuances,” in turn, helped Fellows devise strategies for gaining whatever information or responses they wanted to get from educators. Some of the more common strategies included the ideas of having a hook or a passion, using data, and using specific training in learning styles and Parents and Teachers Talking Together (PT3).

*I had an interest in helping people, but I never had a “thing.” Then CIPL started telling me how to get around the roadblocks. The more I learned, I couldn’t back off when told “no, that can’t happen here.”*

*How to look at data was an important new skill to me. I learned that data-driven decisions applied to kids. CIPL kept me grounded in things I needed to look at.*

*I learned a lot about how to plan workshops and target audiences. I use learning styles content in workshops with parents [does it statewide as part of her job] even today [10 years after the training].*

*I started using the Parents and Teachers Talking Together (PT3) process with our local council. We did it for three years in a row. They have now adopted it as part of their consolidated plan.*

One such generic technique, a Fellow pointed out as an example, was “how to ask questions that didn’t have a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer.” Another said the adversarial approach was probably not going to work as well as becoming “a friend to your principal because you have to take little bitty tiny steps consistently to bring about change, sometimes before it’s noticed.”

In interviews, Fellows recounted stories where it was necessary to employ such strategies to overcome resistance to their augmented participation in educational affairs. The sources of obstacles were several: unwelcoming educators, local politics, opaque jargon and procedures, and wariness of encountering parents who did not conform to “typical” views of what involvement means. Overall, the participants developed what might be termed “informed stubbornness” in the face of educators’ reluctance to accept parents into discussions of matters that had been previously “internal” conversations:

*CIPL gave me the courage to go on regardless of what happened, to just keep plugging away. I wasn’t just a crazy individual. It was appropriate for me to play this role. It was my responsibility to do this. I found that teachers became willing to meet me halfway.*

And then the thought occurred to a good number of Fellows:

*CIPL gave some knowledge that became translated into the realization “Hey, I can do this job better than some folks already doing it!”*

Consequently, they delved wholeheartedly into shaping the role of their SBDM councils and helping educators disaggregate achievement data and enabling PTAs to become more inclusive and the like. They became tremendously empowered to act, and thereby boosted their presence from merely being “involved” to exercising “influence” in their settings. This latter point is important, but perhaps subtle to convey. The thoughts of a couple of Fellows help illustrate the point.

*I have always been active in supporting the schools, but I was looking to be a more effective advocate. . . . With the ability to better understand the regulations, I become a better advocate.*

*My role as a parent has changed. I now comprehend things better [after CIPL]. Before when I didn’t understand something I would just say “huh?” Now when parents don’t understand things, I try and help them. For example, there was lots of misunderstanding about the writing portfolio and I could break things down for parents.*

This activity did not go unnoticed by people outside the schools where the initial influence had taken place. So, superintendents sought out some Fellows to serve on important district committees; Prichard Committee members nominated Fellows to state level advisory groups; and voters elected several to school boards – as three examples.

## **Thinking About Education More Globally (Both Broader and Deeper)**

A significant portion of what Fellows termed as “awareness” was the extent to which they began to understand that their prior involvement in schools had yielded only superficial glimpses into salient school organizational issues. They also learned to look beyond the picture of what was happening within their own school and evaluate education in a larger context.

*I had volunteered before training, but I learned I only knew the surface of things. There was a depth I hadn't touched. So I dug deeper and then that triggers questions to ask people. CIPL points out to you what you thought you knew but didn't really know.*

*CIPL helped me see the broader picture than just locally. We have great schools in [the community], but it is important to not become localized and lose sight of what is out there.*

*CIPL helped me with the bigger thinking process. It reminded me that improvement is a process. I learned an important lesson from CIPL – that it is not an “us” versus “them” game. It's us working together. I learned that we need to help the community better understand the decisions we need to make.*

## **Developing a Moral Imperative**

Not only did Fellows describe an increased knowledge level and confidence in what they were doing, but also a moral imperative for being an integral part of the schooling endeavor, as two parents explained:

*I learned I can make a difference and have a responsibility to try. I now feel like I have a right to be there [at meetings where educational improvement is discussed].*

*CIPL made me extremely proud of Kentucky and the people who make all the wonderful things happen in public school improvement - CIPL, Prichard Committee, KDE, KASC, and others. It drives me to talk about it and advocate for it all the time with anyone who is willing to entertain a discussion about education. The success of CIPL and my positive experience in it help convince me that I MUST discuss education improvement and I MUST act on it. It is right. It is good. It is needed. It must happen now.*

## **Advocating For All Students, Not Just Their Own**

Significantly, nearly every interviewed Fellow readily acknowledged that the scope of their involvement shifted from “my own kids” to “all kids.” CIPL convinced

them that using such a perspective to guide their actions would ultimately have the greatest benefit for everyone.

The message conveyed by CIPL staff about parents needing to reach out beyond their own children to all children, clearly resonated with not just the interviewed Fellows, but also those who responded to the survey. For instance, the survey asked parents to report (a) how strongly they felt about a range of beliefs related to parent involvement, and (b) how much of an impact CIPL has had on their views about those beliefs. One such question was the statement: “I feel I have the leadership skills to advocate for all children, not just my own, in a variety of forums.” There are two important points that stand out in the results from this question.

- First, this was one of the more highly rated beliefs in terms of Fellows’ support for the statement. Indeed, it was the sixth highest across 22 engagement issues addressed by the survey with a mean of 3.67 on a four-point scale.
- Second, survey respondents indicated that their CIPL training had a very strong impact on their views, with Fellows rating this third highest (mean=3.51) across the same 22 issues.

The Fellows illustrated these important points about their advocacy position for “all students” through their interview and survey comments:

*This is just an old country boy speaking, but CIPL taught me about education and to do what’s best for all children.*

*CIPL helped to create a passion for being active in helping to provide quality public education and proficient educational outcomes for all students - all races, socioeconomic backgrounds, disabilities, cultures, and genders.*

*Through CIPL I became an advocate for all students. I now ask the question: Does it work for everyone? I look at it more on a community level. Everyone deserves a good education.*

*I have learned to look at kids from where they are at rather than all ducks lined up in a row. CIPL gives you that perspective.*

This urgency to make sure educational opportunities benefit all students was a significant philosophical shift in the minds of Fellows, and they strove to make sure that local policies reflected their principles:

*Through CIPL I learned that our school policy of allowing parents to choose teachers was not equitable since only the affluent parents made choices. So the wealthy got the best teachers and minority kids got the less experienced teachers. I helped develop a policy [for student assignment] that was based on “best fit” for students rather than parent choices.*

## Valuing the Network

Of course, developing such a perspective – and acting on it – has not been the norm for parents in any community. Thus, Fellows greatly appreciated being in situations where they either worked with other CIPL graduates (“It’s good to have a group from a school because it keeps your energy up”) or still maintained email contact with their former CIPL community support coordinators and other Fellows (“My community coordinator has become my coach for life”). Such networking, even if it was “not visible to the naked eye” as one Fellow described circumstances, reassured Fellows that they were not acting alone, that others appreciated their efforts, and that progress could be – and was being – made in a variety of situations. Fellows in more isolated sections of the state lamented the absence of occasional contact with CIPL participants. The value of having a network, be it other Fellows or the support of CIPL staff, is reflected in these comments:

*There’s a continuing network to the extent that you want it. The network keeps the thought of education fairly fresh at the forefront where I wouldn’t do it on my own since I have a busy life. I appreciate that.*

*The best thing about the whole experience is the networking. Though we learn a lot through CIPL, what it really does is give you the resources available and who to go to. So the biggest thing that has helped me is the networking. Though I am confident, it is good to know the people who know the answers. This is what makes CIPL great.*

*I constantly run into our group [of Fellows]. That is a connection that never would have happened without CIPL.*

The survey results also provided additional insights about networking activities. Fellows indicated how often they interacted with other Fellows since completing the program. On a four-point scale from never (1) to often (4), the scores ranged from a low of 1.61 (for networking with Fellows across the state) to 2.28 (for networking with Fellows from the same school). So the closer the geographic connection the more the interaction, but none of those interactions was very frequent. Fellows reported significantly more frequent connections (a mean of 2.68) with their community support coordinator (a regional coach who guided them through the training and project), but even greater interaction (mean of 3.58) with The Prichard Committee via newsletters and emails about important educational reform issues. Interestingly, parents who reported no interaction with a coordinator after completing the program were four times as likely to report little or no interaction with other local Fellows; on the other hand, when Fellows reported having the opportunity to have sustained contact with a coordinator after completing their program, they were nearly three times as likely to report high degrees of engagement with peer Fellows. Thus, the community support coordinator, where available, seemed to act as an important linchpin for networking.

## CIPL Influence on Other Aspects of Fellows' Lives

The earlier sections made a strong case for the contribution that CIPL has had in Fellows' influence within the education community across Kentucky. But CIPL impact reached beyond just parent engagement in schools. Indeed, nearly two-thirds of Fellows said they have been involved in other activities not related to schools that were influenced by their CIPL training. It was not unusual in our interviews for Fellows to wax philosophically about the large impact the training had on them, making the point that not only did it impact their lives outside of school but it also made them more productive change agents in their schools. This is how two parents portrayed the "life benefits" of CIPL:

*CIPL has impacted my job, my home, and my community. It has molded who I am. I was raised in the rural Southeastern part of the state. I thought my future was a job in a factory, marriage, and raising a family. But I have become an advocate [for students.] It is what I have been commissioned to do. The principals always have called me to get things done. But before CIPL they'd have called me to work a booth at a carnival. But now my focus is on student achievement.*

*I feel that CIPL was a large part of making me realize the value that I can provide in all areas of community involvement. Also CIPL helped me understand how to envision how I could become an effective advocate in any area. It increased my self-confidence and gave me the ability to step out and take charge in a positive way. I have become involved in local city planning, local civic organizations, state level school board duties, and benefited in my career from learning how to feel more confident in my communications and efforts.*

In more concrete terms, parents talked in the interviews about a host of interesting scenarios where they took on new responsibilities they never dreamed they would have the skills or confidence to carry out, especially within the contexts of local volunteer and service organizations – from churches to youth groups to community associations and agencies. In most cases they could provide very specific ways in which CIPL had directly enhanced those roles:

*I have been asked to serve on the county ethics commission. One reason was my involvement in CIPL. I learned mediation, teamwork, and not being an adversary.*

*I volunteer in a local non-profit that provides for those survivors of rape/sexual assault and economic hardships. CIPL has taught me how to have a voice for the voiceless in our society.*

*In my church I was asked to lead [a fund raising effort] for cancer. From CIPL I learned to be a real leader, not just accept a title. I helped our group set a goal of \$5000 and we met our goal.*

For some, CIPL also had an impact on their careers. It inspired Fellows to go back to school and earn a degree, but it also encouraged in others a more thoughtful approach to their existing jobs.

*I plan on entering an MAT program this fall. CIPL taught me that there is more than one way to skin a cat . . . It made me realize there are different ways to help students . . . I am now putting my money where my mouth is. I am actually going to try and practice good teaching rather than just talking about it.*

*CIPL had a very, very strong impact on my career choice. I wanted to be a teacher so I went back to college full time for two and half years. I now teach writing every day and have the best rapport in my school with parents.*

*I now work at [name], a nonprofit, education, job training program for young adults. Each and every day I find that the experience I learned during and after my CIPL training brings a higher level of interaction with our program participants and with the community at large. Our participants are generally the young people who gave up on the school system. My CIPL training has helped me bring positive experiences to them!*

*Prior to CIPL I never considered this kind of job. It really shaped me. I have more civic pride, a better community awareness, and am more active. I have now moved on to become community development coordinator for the county where I place a large emphasis on education.*

This last Fellow went on to offer an example of how that emphasis on education worked in practice. She helped design “Super Start Saturdays” in late summer to assist students and their families in preparing for the coming school year. Through cooperation with several businesses and community groups, the initiative provided supplies for the students and information for the parents. The event over the past couple of years has drawn upwards of 800 participants.

The bottom line was that Fellows walked away from their experiences not only with new skills and confidence to help students across the state become more productive learners, but they also were able to transfer those skills and “can-do” attitudes about being productive change agents to a variety of settings.

### **Overall CIPL Impact**

The concluding question on the survey provided Fellows with an opportunity to reflect on the value of their CIPL training in their lives. Unlike most survey work, where open-ended questions usually attract responses from only a small fraction of respondents, nearly 60 percent of Fellows took time to write down their thoughts, and none described it as being a waste of time. Rather, the overwhelming consensus was appreciation of CIPL’s constructive impact. The following examples are illustrative of the nature of feedback provided by Fellows:

*After completing CIPL, I felt more confident talking with other parents and school officials/teachers about education issues. It's been almost a decade since CIPL, so it's difficult to remember. I think after having the honor of being selected as a CIPL participant, I felt and continue to feel an obligation to continue to support our public schools and to try to increase others' participation. I have felt that my leadership skills are better used serving parents through PTA/PTO/PTSO and booster organizations leadership roles. So many parents lack the confidence or are unwilling to make the time to serve and I hope that I have set an example.*

*CIPL made me realize that parent involvement is the way to help all kids and schools succeed. I was always so impressed with the dedication and passion CIPL's staff brought to the program. Their positive attitudes and "can do" attitude really helped me to remain positive and think that maybe parents and teachers could make a difference.*

*Through CIPL I learned that my background and training lead me to approach problem-solving differently than the majority of people, especially those involved in education. This insight has enabled me to work more effectively with various groups because I now understand different people have different learning and decision-making styles. Because I am very data oriented, CIPL showed me where to get the facts, figures, and numbers that I need to understand a problem and how to share that data with people who are not "numbers people".*

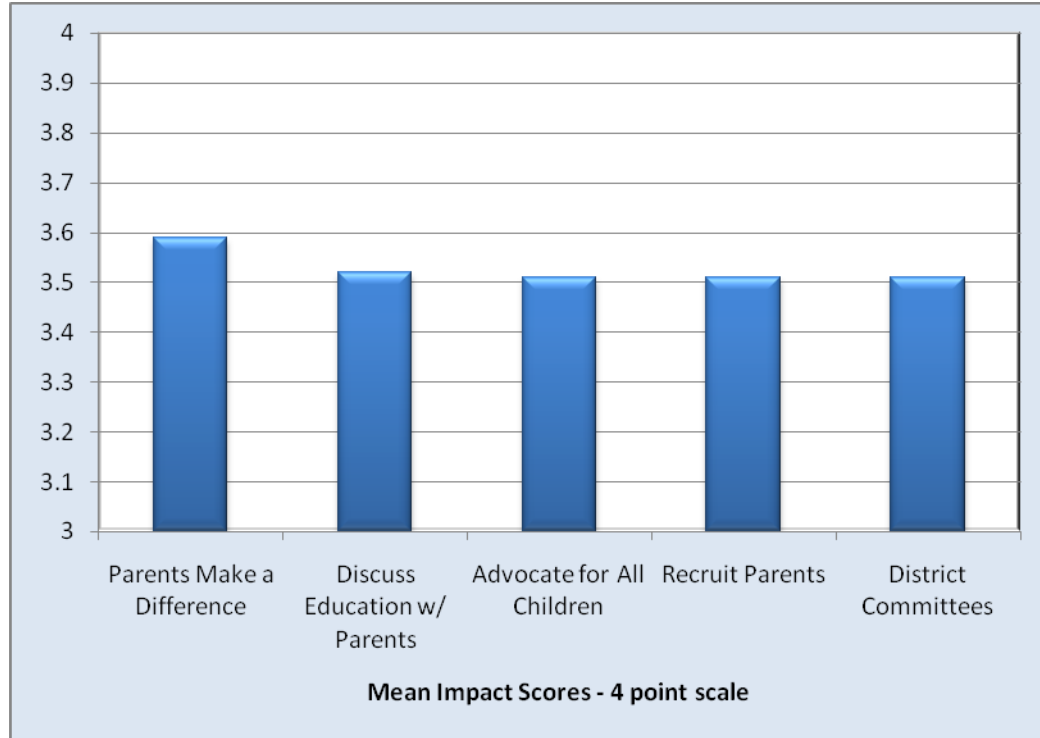
## **Impact on Educational Beliefs**

While “baseline” data on Fellows’ beliefs prior to their involvement in CIPL is irretrievable, the various testimonials are suggestive that their beliefs have become strengthened through their CIPL involvement. As noted earlier, the survey asked parents to reflect on the impact that CIPL had on some 22 different beliefs (see questions 44-65 in Appendix A). These 22 derived from our interviews with the sample of Fellows. They were asked to report on the impact of their CIPL experience using a four-point scale from no impact to strong amount of impact. The five areas where Fellows said their CIPL experience had the greatest impact were:

- I feel that parents can make a positive difference in their children’s schools.
- I feel confident and competent to discuss educational issues with other parents.
- I feel that I have the leadership skills to advocate for all children, not just my own in a variety of forums.
- I feel that I have the leadership skills to convince other parents to become more involved in their children’s schools.
- I feel confident and competent to participate in school and/or district committees.



**Figure 5: Degree of CIPL Experience Impact**



### **Empowerment**

These findings return to the larger theme of empowerment. That is, what really transpired among the parents is that they demonstrated to themselves and to others that “parental involvement in education” could take on new meanings. Rather than raising money or volunteering in a classroom, parents could -- with training -- proactively design activities that meaningfully welcomed parents into schools that had traditionally been rather “cold” places to enter, help carry out activities for students that allowed them to be successful learners in ways that traditional instruction had not tapped, and create policies that ensured all students benefited rather than just a lucky few. In a word, the training helped “empower” a new generation of parent leaders in education, with an agenda that focused on improved learning for all students rather than just enhanced learning for their own.

### **Relationship of Fellows’ Actions to Student Achievement**

From the very first training sessions a decade ago to today, the consistent message has been that Fellows have been expected to explain how their activities, especially the projects, would improve student achievement. Although only a handful of Fellows we have spoken with had data that actually demonstrated their project had measurably altered students’ academic performance, they all continually acknowledged that establishing a connection between what they did and benefits for students was the

ultimate goal of the Institute. Thus, in justifying their activities, they would spell out the logical path from an activity to student success – for example, making parents feel more welcome in the school would better inform them about what their children were doing and thus enable them to more effectively target their help, or implementing a mentoring program for troubled students might motivate them to work harder and this harder work would promote success. Essentially the emphasis on student achievement symbolically disciplined Fellows’ thinking about their activities.

This stance of connecting Fellows’ actions to student achievement represented an extremely significant development for the Institute in that it steered parents away from their traditional role of being passive responders to school requests and pushed them toward being active advocates for improved academics for all students. Making a logical connection between their actions and academics, it seems to us, is a vital component of the program because it lends rigor and discipline to the Fellows’ planning and quite noticeably sets them apart from the other parents.

But there should also be an important caution in this approach. We see no way to accurately quantify the strength of this connection. Indeed, there is considerable debate among educational researchers about how to demonstrate an empirical relationship between a comprehensive school reform initiative and student achievement. To tease out the influence of a specific Fellow’s activity on students would far exceed the technological ability of even the most sophisticated methodological models.

### **Conclusion: Four Key Messages Regarding Sustained CIPL Impact**

Four important messages stand out amongst all the numbers and words produced from survey responses and conversation with Fellows. First, CIPL Fellows acknowledged that their perspectives about education changed during their training. Their concerns shifted from bettering their own kids’ situations to promoting higher quality schooling for all parents’ children. At the same time, they grasped the intricacies of rules, regulations, and policies that educators’ often blamed for their inaction in certain arenas and proposed avenues of constructive remedies in their local schools. Perhaps most significantly they viewed themselves differently. Once they might have thrown up their hands at a particular problem and rationalized “What can I do? After all, I’m only a parent.” But after their CIPL experiences, they developed a kind of informed stubbornness which fortified in them a resilience to pursue all means of resolving some issue. And in those schools and districts where educators gladly welcomed Fellows’ attention, CIPL graduates became equal partners in a host of improvement-related endeavors.

Second, the interviews and survey results underscore the fact that Fellows put these perspectives to work after their graduation. Certainly they maintained their school-based activities, although they understandably began to bow out of some of these as their children aged. But instead of leaving education to a newer generation of parents, CIPL Fellows showed signs of expanding their involvement. Indeed, they branched out into

encouraging more parents to participate in PTAs, SBDM councils, and the like; they sought to put other community groups and agencies in touch with school people to increase the resources available to educational programs; they ran for elected positions such as school board; and they became integral members of a variety of decision-making and advisory bodies. Put simply, post-training, Fellows exerted influence over educational decisions and programs rather than merely being involved participants.

Third, they became empowered to act. This empowerment's foundation was primarily knowledge – knowledge of the regulations that governed school operation, of ways to analyze achievement data, of strategies for getting teachers and parents to talk productively and courteously to each other, etc. The foundation also supported a willingness to act. Via guided activities like the projects, the PT3s, and simply introducing themselves to officials, parents realized that they had the wherewithal to put their training to use. Often, they found, their knowledge and skills were on a par with that of the professionals, which startled them at first but then served as a source of pride and a stimulus to continue pushing for improvement on a host of fronts. This empowerment meant that not only did they immerse themselves in local school activities, but they grew to accept responsibility for influencing policy and practice throughout their districts and regions, as well as across the state.

Finally, this emboldened stance was not a logical consequence of the parents' prior predilection to be involved in their local schools. Not at all, according to Fellows. Rather, they attributed their newfound activism entirely to CIPL. No figures exist to compare their post-training activities to that of non-CIPL parents. So no one can statistically assert that the Fellows 80 to 90 percent engagement in recruiting parents to become involved in schools set them distinctly apart from any other group of Kentucky parents or that their 25 percent representation on advisory committees was out of proportion with their neighbors. But Fellows needed no such comparisons to recognize that what they were doing was qualitatively different from what they expected themselves to do. To them, CIPL training was the singular causal factor in making them a substantial force in local, regional, and state educational arenas.



# CIPL Fellow Survey

Fall 2007

### MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

Use pencil or blue or black ink (not red).  
Please do not photocopy this form.

Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL) and The Prichard Committee are always seeking ways to improve the CIPL program. To do so requires funding from outside organizations. Those organizations want to know about what happened to Fellows, as a result of their CIPL experiences. Thus, CIPL has teamed with an outside evaluation team to survey all the Fellows from the first class in 1997 to the most recent one. **It is important that we hear from as many of you as possible.** We would like to ask that you mail your completed survey back in the enclosed envelope so that we can anonymously and confidentially process the information. For those who prefer, the same survey can be completed online: [www.cipl.org/survey.html](http://www.cipl.org/survey.html).

We would like to begin with some background information that will help identify patterns in the survey responses. We don't think the information pries too much, but if it does, please feel free to leave the items blank. Please mark Yes or No for the following statements.

- 1. I currently have children enrolled in Kentucky public schools.
- 2. My CIPL training class included parents from my children's school.
- 3. My CIPL training class included parents with children in other schools in our district.
- 4. Other parents from my children's school participated in CIPL classes, but were not in my class.
- 5. Other parents from other schools in my school district participated in CIPL classes, but were not in my class.

6. My highest level of education is (mark one):

- high school diploma or GED equivalent
- some college or technical training
- two-year associate degree or technical certificate
- four-year undergraduate degree from college or university
- some post-graduate training
- professional post-graduate degree (MA, PhD, etc.)

How often have the following interactions taken place since completing the CIPL Program?

- 7. I am in contact with CIPL Fellows from my children's school.
- 8. I am in contact with CIPL Fellows from other schools in my district.
- 9. I am in contact with CIPL Fellows from elsewhere in my region.
- 10. I am in contact with CIPL Fellows from elsewhere in the state.
- 11. A CIPL Community Support Coordinator sends me information about parent involvement in the state and my region, activities of other Fellows, and/or items that the Coordinator thinks will be of interest to Fellows.
- 12. The Prichard Committee sends me information about educational reform issues.
- 13. Other regional or national parent engagement organizations send me information.

	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often
7. I am in contact with CIPL Fellows from my children's school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I am in contact with CIPL Fellows from other schools in my district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I am in contact with CIPL Fellows from elsewhere in my region.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I am in contact with CIPL Fellows from elsewhere in the state.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. A CIPL Community Support Coordinator sends me information about parent involvement in the state and my region, activities of other Fellows, and/or items that the Coordinator thinks will be of interest to Fellows.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. The Prichard Committee sends me information about educational reform issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Other regional or national parent engagement organizations send me information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

We also want to learn more about your CIPL Project.

- 14. Did you complete a project as part of your CIPL training?

*If you answered Yes to Question 14, please answer questions 15-28. If you answered No, we would still like to know about the impact of CIPL. Please go to question 29.*

Please indicate the extent of involvement of the following people in carrying out your project. (Please select one choice for each question.)

- 15. My Community Support Coordinator (CSC)
- 16. Principal in my children's school
- 17. Teachers in my children's school
- 18. Other parents in my children's school
- 19. Students (if applicable, otherwise leave blank)
- 20. Other CIPL Fellows (if applicable, otherwise leave blank)

CIPL Project Involvement			
Not at all	Aware of it	Helped plan it	Helped implement it
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How would you rate the level of support from the following people as you carried out your project. (Please select one choice for each question.)

CIPL Project Support				
Not at all	Weak Support	Modest Support	Strong Support	
21. My Community Support Coordinator (CSC)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Principal in my children's school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Teachers in my children's school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Other parents in my children's school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Students (if applicable, otherwise leave blank)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Other CIPL Fellows (if applicable, otherwise leave blank)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. Did your project continue to be carried out after the first time? (Mark one.)

- No, it only took place the year I introduced it.
- Yes, it continued for at least another year but no longer is in place.
- Yes, it is still in place currently.

28. Did your project expand beyond your initial expectations?

- Yes If Yes, mark all that apply:
- No
- My project expanded to include more participants in my school.
- My project has expanded to other schools in the district.
- My project has expanded to other nearby districts.
- My project has expanded to districts around the state.

It is important for us to learn more about how much your CIPL training increased your knowledge about educational issues. In this next section, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, please indicate how much your CIPL training increased your knowledge about the following issues:

- 29. Knowledge about key educational policies
- 30. Knowledge about state regulations governing school operations
- 31. Knowledge about state regulations governing SBDM councils
- 32. Knowledge about how to find additional education information
- 33. Knowledge about best instructional practices
- 34. Knowledge about school district/school procedures and management
- 35. Knowledge about my district's curriculum and assessment system
- 36. Knowledge about effective school leadership
- 37. Knowledge about teachers' working conditions and the factors that affect why they do what they do in the classroom
- 38. Knowledge about how to bring parents and schools together
- 39. Knowledge about creating family-friendly schools
- 40. Knowledge about taking action myself to improve student achievement
- 41. Knowledge about Kentucky's standards-based education system
- 42. Knowledge about Kentucky's Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS)
- 43. Knowledge about designing and implementing projects created to improve student achievement

Knowledge Increase										
Lowest > > > > > > > > > Highest										
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 10	
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 10	
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 10	
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 10	
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 10	
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 10	
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 10	
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 10	
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 10	
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 10	
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 10	
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 10	

Please indicate (A) how strongly you currently agree or disagree with the following statements; and (B) tell us how much of an impact your CIPL experience has had on your answers in column A.

A. Agreement				B. Impact of CIPL Experience			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not at all	Weak amount	Modest amount	Strong amount

**i. I feel that. . .**

44. parents can make a positive difference in their children's schools.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45. parents can influence district policies and procedures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
46. parents can have an impact on state policies and regulations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**ii. I feel confident and competent to. . .**

47. discuss educational issues with teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
48. discuss educational issues with administrators.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
49. discuss educational issues with other parents and community members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
50. discuss educational issues with district officials.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
51. discuss educational issues with state officials.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
52. participate on school and/or district committees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
53. assume a leadership position on school and/or district committees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
54. serve as an SBDM member.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
55. be a member of the local school board.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
56. participate in regional or state-level events, committees, or councils.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**iii. I feel that I have the leadership skills to. . .**

57. convince other parents to become more involved in their children's schools.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
58. effectively reach out to historically under-involved parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
59. make decisions as part of an SBDM council.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
60. serve as a parent organization official.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
61. be an effective school board member.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
62. play a significant role in district, regional, and/or state committees or advisory groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
63. advocate for all children, not just my own, in a variety of forums.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
64. create parent-school-community partnerships that enhance student achievement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
65. design and implement school-wide or district-wide projects, processes or practices that improve student achievement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

We are interested in whether you have been involved in a range of education activities in relation to your CIPL training. For each activity, please indicate when you first became involved.

	Have not done this activity	First involved prior to CIPL training	First involved during CIPL training	First involved after CIPL training
66. Being a parent organization member	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
67. Being a parent organization officer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
68. Being a SBDM council member	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
69. Being a local school board member	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
70. Creating/promoting school-community partnerships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
71. Recruiting other parents to become involved in educational groups and issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
72. Reaching out to parents who have been historically under-involved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
73. Being selected for school district committee(s) Please list: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
74. Being selected for regional and/or state committees and/or advisory groups Please list: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
75. Being a part of other Prichard Committee/CIPL initiatives Please list: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

We are also interested in activities you have engaged in that range beyond education. Please respond yes or no to the following question:

76. I have also been involved in activities or groups that are not specifically tied to the public school systems in Kentucky in which my CIPL training has benefited me.

77. If you answered YES to Question 76, please list the activities or groups and briefly describe the nature of your involvement. If you answered NO to Question 76, please go to Question 78.

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We understand that some Fellows have also followed up their CIPL Fellow work with other training. Please indicate, if after CIPL, you have: (A) been involved in other formal training? And, if Yes to (A), then (B) how much did your CIPL participation influence that involvement?

- 78. Parents and Teachers Talking Together (a CIPL initiative)
- 79. Parents and Teachers as Arts Partners (a CIPL initiative)
- 80. College/university classes
- 81. College/university degree programs
- 82. State Department of Education training offerings

A Involvement in other formal training?		B Degree of CIPL influence on that involvement?			
Yes	No	None	Minor	Modest	Strong
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

It may be hard for you to gauge the influence you personally have had in your community and elsewhere, but we'd like you to try. Using the CIPL program's five academic goals, please indicate how much influence you have had on each goal.

- 83. I have been able to bring parents and schools together.
- 84. I have played a role in creating family-friendly schools.
- 85. I have taken actions that have positively affected student achievement.
- 86. I have informed others about Kentucky's standards-based education system.
- 87. I have been able to design and implement projects that target improved student achievement.

Degree of Influence			
None	Weak	Modest	Strong
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Finally, we would like to get an indication of the overall impact CIPL training has had in your life. We realize this is difficult to do via a survey, but it would help us if you would respond to these last questions. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate the impact CIPL training has had in the following areas?

- 88. Your involvement in education-related groups
- 89. Your interest in education-related issues
- 90. Your career decisions

Degree of Impact									
Least	>	>	>	>	>	>	>	>	Most
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

91. Please feel free to indicate in your own words some important ways in which CIPL might have changed your life.

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