

# Enriching Children through a Culturally Specific Summer Learning Program

*2019 Evaluation of Hmong Karen Youth Pride*

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**OCTOBER 2019**

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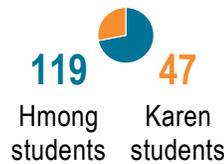
## 2019 Evaluation of Hmong Karen Youth Pride

# Enriching Children through a Culturally Specific Summer Learning Program

In 2019, Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (SPPN) worked with Hmong American Partnership (HAP) and Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) to offer a summer learning program called Hmong Karen Youth Pride (HKYP). The six-week program included a literacy curriculum and cultural enrichment activities. The literacy curriculum was taught by SPPS teachers using the district's Hmong dual language program curriculum. The enrichment activities were taught by HAP's academic support workers and were designed to educate and inspire cultural pride in Hmong and Karen students.

### Summer 2019 students

**166**  
kindergarten  
through fourth  
grade students



**49%**  
lived in SPPN area  
or went to an SPPN  
school

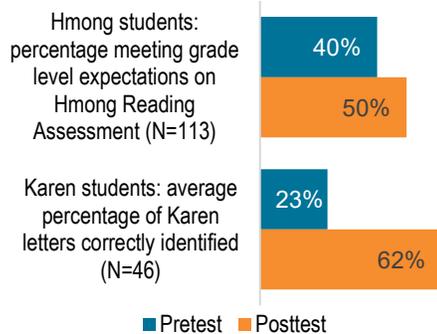
**25 days**  
average  
attendance

### Key findings

Wilder Research conducted an outcome evaluation of HKYP. The evaluators examined student reading assessments and conducted a student survey and parent focus groups.

#### ► LITERACY SKILLS

Students maintained or increased skills in Hmong or Karen



*Since [my girls] started on the first day [in this program], I have noticed that they grew a lot. They've come to know certain basic Hmong words and not only the language, but the cultural piece as well.*

*They learned how to write their own names in Karen from the program.*

#### ► OWN CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

Students maintained or increased their knowledge about their own culture

*She is learning the Hmong culture.*

*[My] children are learning the history of the first president Saw Ba U Gyi, Karen culture, traditional clothing, stories, and singing in Karen language.*

#### ► POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Students built positive relationships with adults and peers in the program

*She's making new friends, Hmong friends, and she likes it.*

#### ► SHARING EXPERIENCES

Students talked to their parents or family members about their Hmong or Karen culture or history

*He's improving a lot [in Hmong language] and the family is trying to speak more in Hmong than in English.*

*[My] daughter came home and talked about the challenges Karen people have to go through, from refugee camp to USA. [This made me] open up and share my story with her, and [tell her] how blessed and safe we are to be here.*



## Issues to consider

HKYP evaluation results indicate that students and parents had positive experiences and students benefitted from the program. Results also pointed out some potential areas for improvement. These include:

- Increase reading instruction and activities
- Continue integrating school year and summer reading curriculum, instruction, and assessments; use assessment results to improve students' reading in both settings
- Provide parents information on how to support their children's learning at home
- Communicate attendance guidelines to parents
- Recruit more SPPN students
- Invite more community members as volunteers or guest speakers
- Find ways to improve transportation, improve the classroom facility, and get more classroom supplies



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OCTOBER 2019

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# Introduction

Minnesota has a persistent and substantial student achievement gap based on race and family income. There are also substantial achievement gaps between native English speakers and English learners (Minnesota Compass, n.d.).

Research evidence suggests that summer contributes to achievement and opportunity gaps. Researchers who conducted a meta-analysis of summer learning programs found that all students lost mathematics and reading knowledge over the summer (Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996). They also found that the losses were larger for lower-income students, particularly in reading. Another study pointed to the opportunity gap between higher and lower income students; it found a lower percentage of low-income students attending day camp in the summer, compared to their higher-income counterparts (McCombs, Augustine, Unlu, Ziol-Guest, Naftel, Gomez, & Todd, 2019).

In Saint Paul, a group of organizations has been working together since 2010 to promote student achievement and social and emotional development. They serve students and families living in the Promise Neighborhood, a 250-block area in the Summit-University and Frogtown neighborhoods of Saint Paul. The Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (SPPN) initiative includes community-based organizations, nonprofits, city and county agencies, elementary schools, and the Saint Paul school district. One of the SPPN efforts is summer learning programs.

This report describes a summer learning program in SPPN called Hmong Karen Youth Pride and presents the evaluation findings for 2019. The program was offered in collaboration with Hmong American Partnership (HAP) and Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS). It serves Hmong and Karen students.

## Program description

Hmong Karen Youth Pride (HKYP) offered literacy instruction and cultural enrichment activities. The program was offered for six weeks in 2019, from June 17 through July 26, and was organized around a weekly topic. These topics were:

- Me, My Family & Friends
- Life as a Refugee Then & Life in America Now
- Family Traditions, Family Values, Culture & Foods
- Paj Ntaub (Embroidery/Cross Stitch, Hmong Storycloth) & Games
- Paj Huam (Poetry), Music, Dance & Fire Safety
- Storytelling & Clothing

Students followed a regular program schedule from Monday through Thursday. Fridays were reserved for field trips or special guests. The daily program schedule was as follows:

7:50–8:10	Students arrive and eat breakfast
8:10–8:40	Morning meeting
8:40–11:30	Literacy instruction
11:30–12:40	Lunch and recess
12:40–3:15	Cultural enrichment

During the enrichment time, students learned Hmong or Karen games, songs, stories, and crafts, and had a cooking class for one day. Students and their families had the opportunity to get out into the community on the field trips every Friday, including visiting with Senator Fong Hawj at the Minnesota Capitol and going to the Hmongtown Marketplace and organic farm (see Figure A1 in the Appendix for the list of field trips and events). Community members also came to the students; for example, Center for Hmong Arts & Talent (CHAT) staff did a presentation and engaged students in Hmong arts.

## Staffing

One unique aspect of the HKYP program was the staffing structure. There were three different types of staff members who supported the students:

- Licensed teachers were hired by SPPS to teach the literacy curriculum. During the school year, these teachers teach at Jackson Elementary School, a Hmong dual language program and a SPPN partner school.
- Navigators were hired by HAP to provide family wraparound support to participants in the program.
- Academic support workers (ASWs) were hired by HAP to support literacy tutoring and deliver cultural enrichment activities to students.

## Partner roles

According to the SPPN program manager, in addition to hiring the teachers to work in the program, SPPS was in charge of promoting and enrolling students in the HKYP summer program. SPPS used the following criteria to prioritize enrollment into the program. Its first priority enrollment was for students living in or attending the Promise Neighborhood schools, including Jackson, Maxfield, Benjamin Mays, and St. Paul City elementary schools. The second priority was for students attending other SPPS schools. If spaces were still available, then other non-SPPS students could enroll.

Since HKYP's inception in 2015, SPPS has been providing building space for the program. It was located at Maxfield Elementary in the first year and moved to Jackson Elementary the following year. HKYP staff and teachers felt that the cultural and language resources and artifacts available at Jackson Elementary enriched the program.

SPPN and SPPS saw HAP's role as leading the development and management of the program and ensuring that the curriculum and cultural enrichment activities were aligned. HAP also oversaw the academic support workers (ASWs) who supported teachers in HKYP classrooms.

SPPS and HAP stated that SPPN's role was to cultivate and coordinate the work of all the partners to deliver HKYP. They saw SPPN as a central link between SPPS and HAP and a core partner in providing funding and leading the strategic vision and mission of HKYP.

# Evaluation

HKYP participated in an evaluation conducted by Wilder Research. The evaluation focused on the extent to which the program goals were achieved. These goals included:

- Students will maintain or increase their Hmong or Karen literacy skills
- Students will maintain or increase their knowledge about their own culture
- Students will talk to their parents or family members about their Hmong or Karen culture or history
- Students will build positive relationships with adults and peers in the program

## Method

The evaluator assessed the outcomes of the program using a student survey, parent focus groups, and reading assessments. In addition, as part of program improvement efforts, the SPPN program manager talked to the teachers, ASWs, HKYP program manager, and SPPS about the successes and challenges they encountered during program implementation.

### *Student survey*

A survey was administered to third- and fourth-grade students in the program. After a brief explanation of the survey, program staff read the questions and students provided their answers on paper-and-pencil survey forms. Students placed completed surveys in an envelope that was sent to Wilder Research. Students' parents or guardians were informed about the survey by letter and could have their child excluded from the survey by contacting HKYP.

### *Parent focus groups*

Wilder Research conducted two parent focus groups, one in Hmong and one in Karen. Eight parents participated in each group. The HKYP program staff identified and invited the parents to the focus groups. At the end of the focus groups, parents were given a gift card to thank them for their participation.

### *Student reading assessments*

HKYP teachers assessed individual students at the beginning and end of the program (pretest-posttest). They used two different assessments.

The Hmong Reading Assessment (HRA) was administered to the Hmong students. The HRA was developed to test Hmong language reading fluency and comprehension for

students attending the SPPS Hmong dual language programs. It was first implemented in the 2018-19 school year.

A Karen Sight Words Assessment, developed by HKYP staff using English sight words and the Karen alphabet, was administered to Karen students. Sight word instruction can improve students' confidence in reading and overall reading abilities. It is beneficial when it is combined with other literacy instruction (Hayes, 2016). The Karen Sight Words Assessment is not currently used in Saint Paul Public Schools.

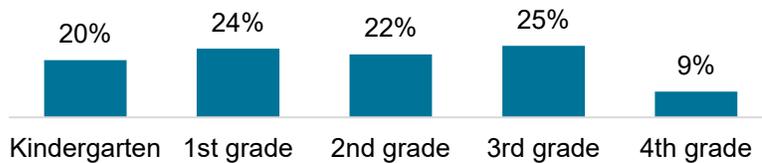
# Findings

## Participant characteristics and attendance

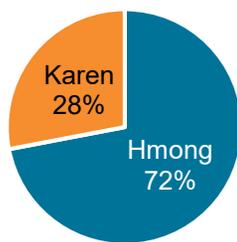
A total of 166 kindergarten through fourth grade students participated in the 2019 HKYP program. Twenty to 25% of the students were each in kindergarten through third grade and 9% of the students were in fourth grade (Figure 1). Seventy-two percent of the students were Hmong and 28% were Karen (Figure 2). Most of the students were from low-income families: 80% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (Figure 3). Overall, 83% received English Learner (EL) services (Figure 4). About half of the students (49%) lived in the SPPN area or went to one of the SPPN schools.

Most students (89%) attended more than 20 of the 29 programming days. On average, students attended 25 days.

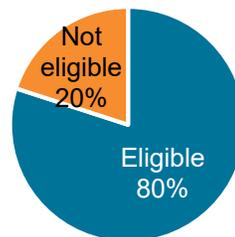
### 1. Grade level in 2018-2019 school year



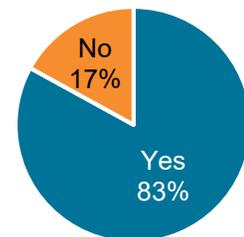
### 2. Race/ethnicity



### 3. Free or reduced-price lunch eligibility



### 4. English Learner (EL) status

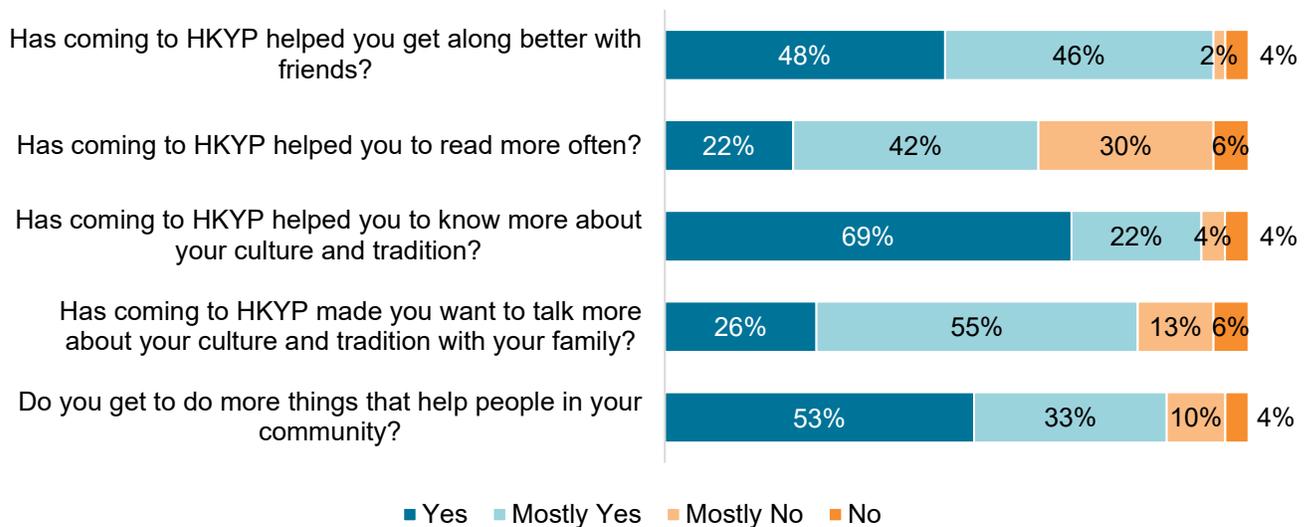


# Student outcomes

## Student survey

Students in grades 3 and 4 were asked to complete a survey. Of the 56 third- and fourth-grade students participating in the program, 50 students completed the survey (89% response rate). In the survey, students were asked a series of questions about changes in their knowledge and behaviors as a result of their participation in HKYP. Most students in the survey reported that their participation in the program helped them to get along better with friends, helped them know more about their culture and tradition, and made them want to talk about culture and tradition more with their family (Figure 5). Most students also reported that they get to do more things that help people in their community. Fewer students reported that they read more often, although two-thirds still said "yes" or "mostly yes."

### 5. Students' outcomes (N=47-50)



Note. Youth were asked to rate survey items as: No, Mostly No, Mostly Yes, Yes.

## Reading assessments

### Hmong Reading Assessment (HRA)

HKYP teachers assessed 113 of the 119 Hmong students in the program. Students received a letter score (“letter level”) at pretest and posttest. Results show that most of the students (82%) made an improvement from pretest to posttest, including 78% making one letter level of improvement and 4% making two letter levels of improvement. The remaining students (18%) maintained their letter level from pretest to posttest. Looking at the subset of students who attended SPPN schools, results show that 75% of the students made one letter of improvement, 8% made two letters of improvement, and 17% maintained their letter levels from pretest to posttest.

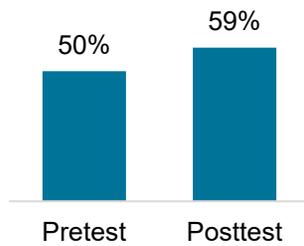
SPPS provides a guide for HRA letter scores based on students’ grade levels (e.g., A level for beginning kindergarten, D/E for beginning first grade, J/K for beginning of second grade, etc.). Figure 6 shows the percentage of students meeting the letter level expectations in each grade level. Overall, 40% of the students met their grade level expectation at pretest and 50% of the students met it at posttest. Results by grade level varied. The proportion of students who went from not meeting grade level expectation at pretest to meeting it at posttest was larger for kindergarten students than the other grade levels. At kindergarten, reading one Hmong word correctly would be considered meeting their grade level expectation. The level of difficulty increases as students go up in their grade levels, making it harder for students in the upper grade levels to meet their grade level expectation.

### 6. HRA results by grade level

	Number	Percentage meeting grade level expectation	
		Pretest	Posttest
Kindergarten	24	58%	96%
1	31	45%	48%
2	25	20%	20%
3	25	36%	40%
4	8	37%	37%
Total students	113	40%	50%

Looking at SPPN students, 26 of 52 students (50%) met their grade level expectation at pretest and 31 students (59%) met it at posttest (Figure 7). Similar to the overall group, a higher percentage of SPPN kindergarten students compared to the other grade levels made the improvement from not meeting the grade level expectation at pretest to meeting it at posttest.

**7. SPPN students: percentage meeting grade level expectation on HRA (N=52)**



**Karen Sight Word Assessment**

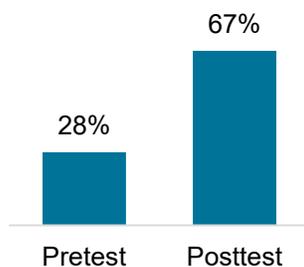
Reading assessment data are available for 46 of the 47 Karen students in the program. Teachers assessed the students' abilities to correctly identify 50 or more Karen words. Results show that 44 of the 46 students did not correctly identify 50 or more words at the end of the program. Two students who correctly identified fewer than 50 Karen words at pretest were able to correctly identify 50 or more Karen words at posttest.

Teachers also assessed students' abilities to identify consonants, vowels, and tones in the Karen alphabet. Results show that, on average, students could correctly name 9 letters at pretest (23%) and 24 letters at posttest out of 39 Karen letters (62%). Results for SPPN students showed a similar pattern. On average, they could name 11 out of 39 letters at pretest (28%) and 26 letters (67%) at posttest (Figure 8).

Students who attended the program more frequently were more likely to make improvement in naming correct letters. The correlations are statistically significant for the overall group of students ( $p < .01$ ) and for SPPN students ( $p < .05$ ).

The Karen Sight Word Assessment is not currently used in SPPS and there are no set grade level expectations.

**8. SPPN students: average percentage of Karen letters correctly identified (N=46)**



Note. There are 39 Karen letters.

## Parent focus groups

During the focus groups, parents were asked about the student benefits of participating in the program. Parents described that the students improved in the Hmong or Karen language, made new friends, learned more about their culture, and more often shared language and cultural experiences with parents and other family members.

### Improved literacy skills

*Since [my girls] started on the first day [in this program], I have noticed that they grew a lot. They've come to know certain basic Hmong words and not only the language, but the cultural piece as well.*

*They did not speak Hmong at all and now they can say a couple of words in Hmong.*

*She's learning basic Hmong [language]. She's really proud.*

*He does speak more Hmong now than ever.*

*Talk to me more in Karen language and sing Karen songs.*

*They learned how to write their own names in Karen.*

### Improved cultural knowledge and pride

*Coming here, they learn so much about the Hmong culture.*

*She is learning the Hmong culture.*

*My son knows what his Hmong name is, [but] he doesn't use his Hmong name at school, so for him to use it here, I can see that he values that name.*

*[My] children are learning the history of the first president Saw Ba U Gyi, Karen culture, traditional clothing, stories, and singing in Karen language.*

### Shared cultural experiences with parents and family members

*My son enjoys the field trips every Friday. He wants to have the family to go with him.*

*He's improving a lot [in Hmong language] and the family is trying to speak more in Hmong than in English.*

*[My] daughter came home and talked about the challenges Karen people have to go through, from refugee camp to USA. [This made me] open up and share my story with her, and [tell her] how blessed and safe we are to be here.*

*After learning [at HKYP] about Karen traditional clothing and culture, she reminded me that she needs to wear Karen dress tomorrow.*

*My child came home and shared about the traditional Karen clothing, the meaning of the colors and the different Karen holidays.*

*My child started to use Karen language when talking with family and siblings.*

*I went to the Hmongtown Market[place] to learn with my kids about the different types of vegetables and fruits and how to use them and what they are good for. We looked at Hmong and Karen traditional clothing.*

### Built positive relationships

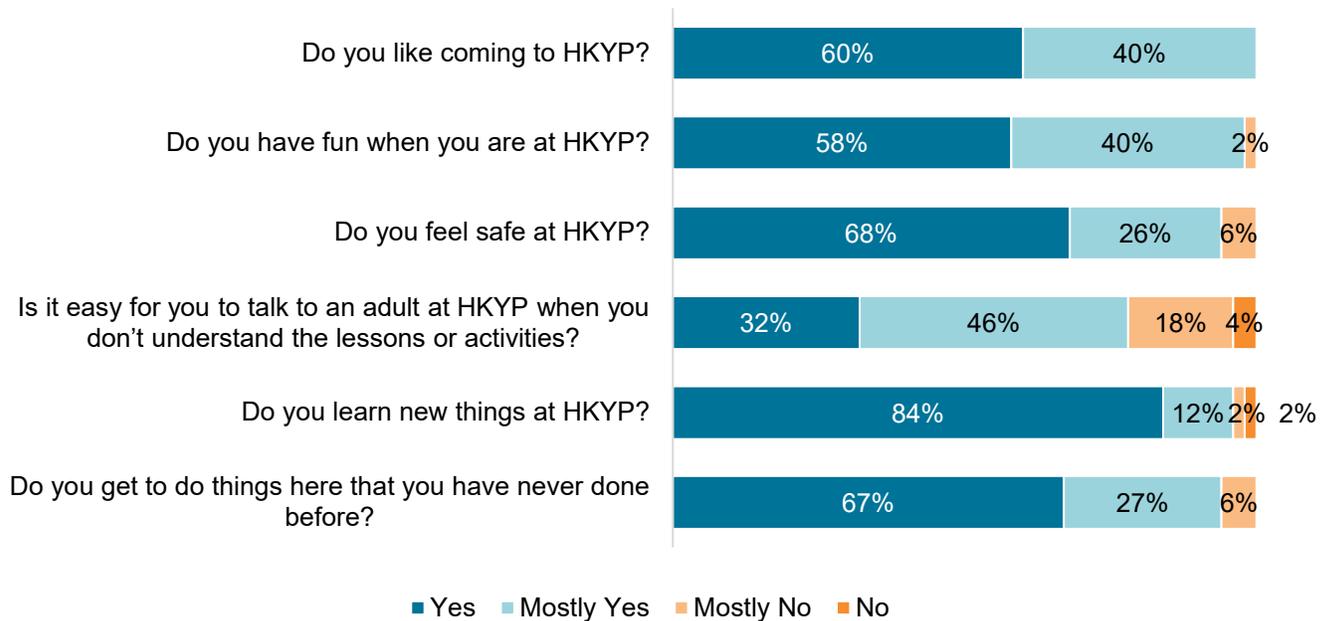
*She's making new friends, Hmong friends and she likes it.*

# Program experiences

## Student survey

The student survey also asked about their experience in the program. Overall, the students had positive responses (Figure 9). All or nearly all students in the program reported they like coming to HKYP, have fun, feel safe, learn new things, and get to do things that they have never done before. Seventy-eight percent of students felt that it is easy to talk to an adult at the program when they do not understand the lessons or activities, but the other 22% felt that it is not easy.

### 9. Students' program experiences (N=48-50)



Note. Youth were asked to rate survey items as: No, Mostly No, Mostly Yes, Yes.

Youth were asked in an open-ended question to name some of the things they learned at the program. Most youth responded that they learned more words and alphabet.

Youth were also asked an open-ended question about their favorite things to do in the program. Youth commented that they liked going on field trips, playing games, and spending time with friends. A few Hmong students also mentioned doing math and reading as their favorite things to do in the program. When asked for suggestions for additional activities that they could do at HKYP, most youth responded that they would like to do more cooking, singing, performing, playing games, and spending time outside.

## Parent focus groups

Parents described their experiences in the program positively. They liked the program for providing hands-on activities for their children, giving children the opportunity to spend time with teachers and other children from their same ethnic community, showing them positive role models from their community, promoting empathy, and giving parents and children opportunities to spend time and learn together.

### Provide experiential and hands-on activities

*I like the Science Museum because it has activities for little kids to have fun and also a guide to show you things.*

*I felt that the State Capitol was really valuable because as a parent I never took my kids over there. So, as our first time over there, they were really interested in learning everything. Now every time we pass the State Capitol, they know what it is. That was really nice.*

### Provide positive role models

*For the State Capitol, I really like it because [Minnesota senator] Fong Hawj was there and it really helped the kids see themselves as it could be one of them.*

### Instill empathy

*I like the Feed My Starving Children [field trip] because they have activities for the children to do. It's good for our children who grew up in the United States, especially my daughter. Like I told her, she took so many things for granted and for her to see things like that and to actually help out with sending food to poor children, it makes her realize that there are hungry children out in the different world. So, I really appreciate the opportunity.*

*We went to Feed My Starving Children. They taught the kids about nutrition, healthy food, helping others in the refugee [camps] or other countries who don't have a lot of food to eat. They gave each kid a duty of what they were supposed to do, and the kids were so happy and proud of their hard work.*

### Opportunity for parents and their children to spend time together

*My three kids were with me in [the Hmongtown Marketplace field trip]. We had the opportunity to communicate with Hmong vendors, the elderly, and learn about different names and different vegetables. That was valuable to me.*

*We went to Como Zoo, learning about different animal names and what they eat.*

### Being around teachers and students who look like them

*He really enjoyed coming to the program. During the regular school year, he is in another school where he hardly sees Hmong kids. So, for him to be in a class where there is a lot of students who look like him, he is really happy with that. And he enjoys Thursdays, the culture days on which he wears something that shows pride that he is Hmong and he is proud of that. I am glad to see my child is happy in the program.*

*I think this is such a great opportunity for our children to see the teachers who look like them.*

## Parent suggestions

Parents in the focus groups gave suggestions for program improvements. They suggested that the program have a kick-off event before the program starts so that they have a better understanding of the program offerings. They would like the kick-off event to be in the evening to allow working parents to attend and would like child care to be provided.

Many parents gave suggestions about field trips, including better planning and communication with parents regarding things like planning for emergencies, busing, and food. In the classrooms, parents were especially concerned about the rooms getting too hot without air conditioners, fans, or opened windows.

Finally, a few parents wished that HKYP could enroll more students.

### Offer an earlier introduction to the program

*I think it's a great idea to have a parent kick-off before the program actually starts. This year, when we had it, it seemed like the program already started and then we had the kick off. I think for me, personally, if they were to do something like that again next year, maybe we can do it before the program actually starts so parents know what they signed their children up for.*

*It should happen prior to the program starting. Have an open house before so that the kids get to tour around the school and the parents, too, get to see what the classrooms are like.*

*It's a good opportunity to have other kids [who] are not enrolled in the program to see what it's about and if they want to enroll. You get more students that way too.*

### Offer convenient schedule and child care during family events

*We're working parents, so we can't really [come to the kick-off]. We would have to request time off to come to the event.*

*One idea that Saint Paul Public Schools did really well, for the evening events, is that they always provide child care. I can't speak for everyone, but for me, I have more than one child that is still a baby. If we come, there will be no one to watch them, so we would have to take them with us. If you guys had child care, we can drop off our little kids with them and that way we can fully attend the event and our kids in the program. I think that Saint Paul Public Schools does that very well in their evening events. If you guys plan to do it in the evening, consider child care.*

### Offer more opportunities for parent involvement

*Tour the classroom, meet with the staff, and see how the kids behave in the classroom. Parents and staff can collaborate more by building relationships and creating this opportunity for younger generations so that they don't forget their language and culture.*

*More homework with examples and instructions, so parents can get involved by helping out our kids.*

*A lesson plan or a list of what the children learn each day so parents are aware.*

*It would be helpful to have the materials of what they have learned and done, so parents can continue to review and teach the children.*

## Better planning for field trips

*I think there was an event where there weren't enough buses and there was only one bus that kept going back and forth. It would be nice to have the buses ready, enough for all the students, for everyone.*

*It also has to do with safety too. If there's too many on the bus, it's a safety issue. So, have enough busing for the number of people who participate and that includes the parents who are willing to chaperone.*

*One thing that has been on my mind, I want the teachers-- or the lead of the program--to give an overview of the emergency [plan] in case a child goes missing. So that the parents know what to do when a child goes missing.*

*Communicate with us about what the plan is, what the activity is. As a parent or chaperone, what is my role, who are my students on that day, what am I supposed to do. Not only that, but there wasn't enough paper for my assignment. So, make sure they have enough materials for the parents. But, we were being creative and using our phones to take pictures, so we used that as a guide.*

*I haven't chaperoned any of the kids with HKYP before, but when I chaperoned for my children's school during the regular school year, chaperones had to do background checks. So, I don't know if that's something HKYP does here too.*

*I also want to piggyback on [doing background checks]. It would be great, as parents, you don't know who else is with our kids. So for that purpose, we want to be safe.*

## Involve elderly and community members

*I think, instead of going out into the community, we should invite elderly people in to the school.*

*Invite parents. Like [the parents who] know how to sing Hmong folk songs, play traditional Hmong instruments, or other things that our children have not heard before.*

## Better facility

*I don't think this building has an AC; the temperature can get up to 90 degrees.*

*Having fans in the classrooms and windows that can be opened. I think what [program] can do is have someone come in early to evaluate each of the classrooms to see which one [has fans, air conditioner, or windows] and utilize that one.*

*Yea, it's really hot.*

## More locations and bigger enrollment

*I think it would help if they accepted more students.*

*We can also have two HKYPs at the same time at two different locations so that some people don't have to go so far.*

*Expand the age to middle school.*

## More interaction with students from the other cultural group

*Hopefully, in the future, HKYP can combine Hmong and Karen students so that they can learn about each other's culture, history, and language. This will help children to build relationships with other cultures, not just their own culture.*

A few parents in the focus groups raised a question about the enrollment criteria because some non-SPPS students were accepted into the program, while SPPS students could not get into the program. One parent also asked if it would be possible to group students based on their Hmong language skills, given some students went to a Hmong dual language program and were more proficient in Hmong than students who did not.

### **Staff reflections**

At the end of the program, the SPPN manager met with three groups of HKYP programming staff separately, including teachers, academic support workers (ASWs), and program administrators (“staff”), to get their perspectives about what went well and what could be improved. The notes summarized here provide information important for program continuous improvement efforts.

Overall, HKYP staff in 2019 felt that there were improvements to the program since the previous year. They felt that there were clearer roles and responsibilities and that everyone in the program developed closer relationships and took time to learn more about the Hmong and Karen cultures. Teachers and ASWs felt that program staff and administrators were helpful and accessible during the program. They also described positive changes in the programming, which included:

- **Better curriculum and grouping of students.**

Teachers and ASWs felt that the 2019 curriculum included new activities and more in-depth cultural topics for returning students. They also felt that dividing Karen students into classrooms by grade level (K-2 and 3-4) instead of language ability helped them keep better track of students and find cultural enrichment activities appropriate for each grade level’s age and ability.

- **Better cultural enrichment activities led by ASWs.**

ASWs felt they were allowed to really own the cultural enrichment activities, so that teachers could focus on the academic component of the program. Previously, teachers led both the academic and cultural enrichment activities and ASWs would support or repeat the activity in the afternoon. ASWs were also given separate lunch and preparation times so they could prepare for the cultural enrichment activities. All staff noted that this helped ASWs be more prepared to lead students in the afternoon.

- **Improved parent communication.**

Staff felt that the parent orientation/kick-off event was well planned and, thus, well attended. During the orientation, parents could sign up to chaperone field trips and they were informed of the topics their students would be learning during the summer. ASWs also called parents before the program started to remind them that the program was starting. Staff made improvement in their communication with parents by sending

reminders about field trips--especially for the parents who had signed-up to chaperone--and sending weekly newsletters.

Staff also mentioned some challenges and provided recommendations. Teachers and ASWs shared that they needed to purchase teaching supplies for the students in their classrooms because there were not enough. Similar with the comments from parents, teachers and ASWs mentioned that there were not enough buses to transport the students for field trips. Finally, they mentioned that some students left in the last weeks of the program to start another district's summer program. They felt that it is important to communicate with parents about the expectation for their child to finish the program.

Staff also wished to provide more relevant cultural activities and field trips to Karen students that would support their classroom learning. Staff felt that currently these learning opportunities occurred only for the Hmong students. Other suggestions included: expanding community partnerships with Center for Hmong Arts & Talent and Youth Farm, bringing in more volunteers or community guest speakers, better advertising about the program to Hmong and Karen parents and teachers at different schools, and adding air conditioning or fans to the classrooms.

## Issues to consider

Evaluation results of the HKYP program in 2019 indicate that the participating students and parents had positive experiences and the students benefitted from the program. Results also pointed out some areas for potential improvement. These include:

- **Increase reading instruction and activities.** While students maintained or made improvement in reading, HRA assessment results show that many students did not perform at their grade level expectations at pretest and posttest. About one-third of the students in the survey also indicated that attending the program had not helped them in reading more often.
- **Continue integrating school year and summer reading curriculum, instruction, and assessments.** HKYP benefits from having SPPS school teachers working with the students during the summer using the same SPPS dual-language program curriculum. To ensure a smooth transition between the settings, it would be beneficial to determine how to best use the results of the reading assessments to support and improve students' reading skills in both settings.
- **Provide parents information on how to support their children's learning.** Parents in the focus groups indicated that they would like to know more about the lessons taught in the classrooms and how they can best help their children's education at

home. Program teachers might provide or suggest reading materials for the students to read at home with their parents' help as one way to increase this effort.

- **Communicate attendance expectations to parents.** Because the program was offered for a short amount of time, it is critical that students attend all programming days to experience the full benefits from the program. Teachers suggested that communicating this expectation to parents at the beginning of the program is important.
- **Recruit more SPPN students.** SPPN staff might want to work closer with SPPS to better track the number of SPPN students enrolled in the program.
- **Invite more community members to be volunteers or guest speakers.** Parents and staff suggested that Hmong and Karen community members, especially older members, could teach students about their culture and tradition.
- **Offer more Karen-focused cultural enrichment activities for Karen students**
- **More buses for field trips, more classroom supplies, and have air conditioners or fans in the classrooms.**
- **Consider the scheduling and offer child care to allow more parents to attend family activities.**

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# Appendix

## A1. Events and field trips

<b>Event and field trip</b>	<b>Date</b>
HKYP Parent Kick-Off <i>Welcoming parents to HKYP and giving information about the program and events, and encouraging parents to volunteer or chaperone for field trips.</i>	June 19
Grades K-2: Como Zoo & Park <i>Learning animal names in Hmong and Karen Language.</i>	June 21
Grades 3-4: Feed My Starving Children <i>Packing food for children in need and learning how to contribute to the community.</i>	
Grade K: Local Fire Station <i>Learning about fire safety.</i>	June 27
Grades 1-2: Science Museum <i>Exploring the museum and watching the Apollo movie in Omnitheater – students read about Apollo ahead of time.</i>	June 28
Grades 3-4: Organic Farm <i>Learning about farming and harvesting produce.</i>	
Grades K-4: State Capitol <i>Touring the State Capitol and meeting and Q&amp;A session with Senator Foug Hawj.</i>	July 5
Grades K-4: Hmongtown Marketplace <i>Touring the Marketplace and speaking to vendors in Hmong and purchasing some refreshments.</i>	July 12
Grade K: SeaQuest <i>Exploring and touring SeaQuest.</i>	July 15
Grades 1-2: Hmong Elder Center <i>Meeting and interacting with Hmong elders.</i>	July 19
Grades 3-4: Como Lake & Como Zoo <i>Fishing at Como Lake and exploring Como Zoo.</i>	
HKYP Celebration <i>Performing to parents, staff, and community members and showcasing what students learned throughout the program.</i>	July 25
HKYP Picnic – Battle Creek Water Park <i>End of summer picnic with students, staff, and parents.</i>	July 26

Source: HKYP

## A2. Participant characteristics

	Number	%
<b>Grade level in 2018-19</b>		
K	34	20%
1	40	24%
2	36	22%
3	41	25%
4	15	9%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	84	52%
Male	77	48%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
Hmong	119	72%
Karen	47	28%
<b>Lunch status</b>		
Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch	125	80%
Not eligible	31	20%
<b>English Learner (EL) status</b>		
Yes	130	83%
No	26	17%
<b>Special education status</b>		
Yes	10	6%
No	146	94%
<b>Living in or attending SPPN schools</b>		
Yes	81	49%
No	85	51%

Note. Gender, lunch, EL, and special education status were not available for some students.

## A3. Program attendance

Days attended	Number	%
Fewer than 15 days	7	4%
15-20	12	7%
21-25	48	29%
26-29	99	60%
Range	1-29 days	
Mean	25 days	

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Jouapag Lee, Sommer Green, and Susan Phillips from SPPN; Cha Her from HAP; and Mee Kong, Na Yang, Naw Bu, and Ehtalow Zar from SPPS who provided a description of the program, program records, student reading scores, information about the reading assessments, and notes from the partner and staff reflection meeting. The author is grateful to the students who participated in the survey and parents who participated in the focus groups, providing their insights about their experiences and outcomes of the program.

Wilder Research staff who contributed to the evaluation project included:

Jenny Bohlke  
Walker Bosch  
Phil Cooper  
Tabé Htoo  
Heather Loch  
Beaty Thao  
Dan Swanson

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