

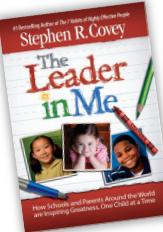
The Leader in Me®

What it is, How it is Delivered, and the Promising Results it is Seeing

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The Leader in Me is a process for school-wide transformation that is designed to enhance students' life skills and workforce readiness. The process also directly impacts staff effectiveness and engagement, and creates a safe and vibrant learning environment. Indirectly, families, communities, and workplaces also benefit.

In short, *The Leader in Me* process involves: 1) FranklinCovey training the entire school staff in basic leadership principles, including Dr. Stephen R. Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. 2) The staff then takes the *7 Habits* and other leadership principles to students by embedding the principles into classroom lessons, hall displays, and school-wide activities and systems. Furthermore, students and staff are given opportunities to apply the principles by taking on leadership roles. 3) Students take the principles home and into the community. The process has led to several promising outcomes, including those described in the table below and on pages 6-10:

FranklinCovey	School Staff	Students	Family & Community
			
FranklinCovey teaches <i>The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People</i> and other leadership principles to school staff.	The school staff integrates the <i>7 Habits</i> and other leadership principles into classrooms, common areas, and school-wide activities, while applying the principles personally.	Students learn and apply the <i>7 Habits</i> , which include skills for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking responsibility• Goal setting• Time management• Relationship building• Conflict management• Listening and speaking• Working in teams• Problem solving• Respecting diversity• Making healthy choices <p>(Note: Schools may choose also to use a variety of methods to teach the <i>7 Habits</i> to parents.)</p>	Students take the habits into the home, community, and workforce.
Promising Outcomes include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff engagement• Shared leadership• Professional development• Common Language• Staff collaboration• Safe place to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-confidence• 21st century life and workforce skills• Decreased discipline problems & bullying• Academic progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent satisfaction with school• More effective homes and parents• Safer communities• Prepared workforce

The 7 Habits and Developing 21st Century Mindsets

So what are the 7 Habits and why are they relevant?

The 7 Habits were identified by Stephen Covey following a careful review of 200 years of “success” literature. He first taught the habits to university students before publishing *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* in 1989. Since that time, the habits have been taken to all levels and types of organizations across the world. More than 30 million copies of Dr. Covey’s book and 3 million copies of Sean Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* book have been sold, many in school settings.

To be most effective in the 21st century, students need to become proficient in core subjects such as reading, writing, science, and math. But it is becoming increasingly important for them to also become proficient in basic social and life skills. In short, they need to have the mindsets, skill-sets, and tool-sets to: 1) take care of themselves, to become independent, 2) to interact well with others, to become interdependent, and 3) to continually improve and stay current over time. The 7 Habits and *The Leader in Me* connect directly to these issues in the following ways:

	<i>The 7 Habits</i>	Mindsets	Skill-sets	Tool-sets
Taking Care of Self (Becoming Independent)	1: Be Proactive 2: Begin with the End in Mind 3: Put First Things First	<i>I am responsible for my actions and attitudes.</i> <i>I have a plan.</i> <i>I do the most important priorities first.</i>	Initiative Goal-setting Planning Time Management Organization	Leadership Notebook
Working Well with Others (Becoming Interdependent)	4: Think Win-Win 5: Seek First to Understand, then to be Understood 6: Synergize	<i>I find ways everyone can win.</i> <i>I listen before I talk.</i> <i>Working together is better.</i>	Conflict Management Listening Public Speaking Teamwork Valuing Diversity Creative Problem Solving	Quality Decision Tools
Staying Fit & Renewed (Sustaining Growth)	7: Sharpen the Saw	<i>I live a balanced life.</i>	Healthy Choices Emotional Wellness Lifelong learning Purposeful Living	

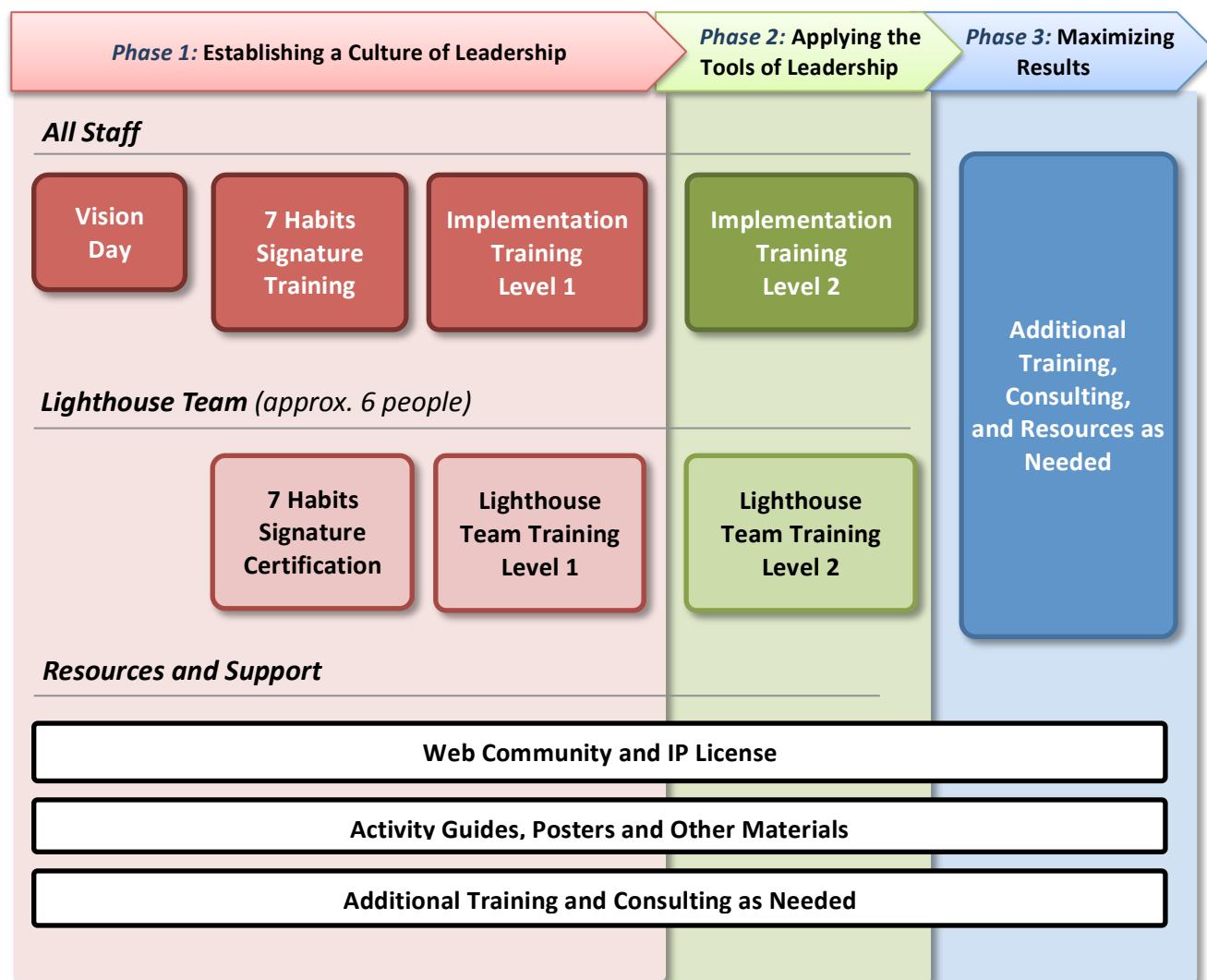
Educators, businesses, and parents alike are increasingly seeing these types of mindsets, skill-sets, and tool-sets as being a vital part of any student’s future employability and their capacity to deal with life and navigate the current 21st century global economy. That said, many educators are struggling to find the time, means, and methods to deliver them to students. The last thing they want is “one more thing” on their already full plates. *The Leader in Me* is showing evidence of being a creative and viable option in this quest. And the side benefit is that teachers are simultaneously becoming more effective themselves by applying the 7 Habits in their classrooms and personal lives.

The following synopses describe how this is happening and how it is being delivered.

FranklinCovey—Bringing it to the Staff

Transforming a school's culture occurs over time, not overnight. As with most transformations, *The Leader in Me* takes two to three years to become firmly embedded. However, most schools see tangible evidence of positive results within the first week or two of implementation. In fact, educators are often surprised by how quickly progress is observed and felt.

The process for bringing *The Leader in Me* to the staff was created by educators for educators. It is launched in three phases: 1) establishing a culture of leadership, 2) applying the tools of leadership, and 3) maximizing results. Some schools have chosen to implement the three phases one year at a time, while others have accelerated the process. The key is that the school clearly establishes a proper level of readiness before beginning each phase.



Phase 1: Establishing a Culture of Leadership. This phase is the major focus of the first year, and contains multiple training components and support resources:

1. *Vision Day* with all staff. Vision Day sets the “big picture” and secures buy-in. *The Leader in Me* works best when all staff members agree to implementation. Parents, district administrators, and community members may also be invited to participate in Vision Day. A significant objective is to help the staff to envision their ideal school. No two schools will implement exactly alike. Vision Day lasts from four to six hours, and can be augmented by having a book study around *The Leader in Me* prior to the day.

2. *The 7 Habits*. Here the entire staff learns to apply the *7 Habits* to their personal effectiveness. It is the same world-class training that has received very high marks in education, government, and corporate circles for more than two decades. Principals insist that the time spent as a staff internalizing the habits is one of the greatest steps in transforming the school culture. It gives everyone a common language that becomes the core of the culture. This training generally lasts two and a half days.
3. *Implementation Training, Level 1* with all staff. At this point, the focus turns to taking the *7 Habits* to students. Staff members learn how to teach the habits and other leadership principles to students, how to assign leadership roles, and how to create an environment of leadership. This is a one-day training.
4. *Lighthouse Team Training, Level 1*. Comprised of approximately six members, the Lighthouse Team has responsibility for ensuring smooth implementation of *The Leader in Me* across the school, including mentoring teachers, organizing school activities, decorating common areas, overseeing morning announcements, sending newsletters to parents, training new staff, and the like. This training takes one day.
5. *The 7 Habits Certification*. Most any school experiences some staff turnover from year to year. Therefore, FranklinCovey certifies a select set of staff members to train future arriving teachers or staff in *The 7 Habits*. Certification happens over 1-2 days.
6. *Resources and Support*. In addition to the training, staff members are provided resources, such as books, Activity Guides, posters, and Web resources. Additional coaching is provided as needed. These resources are available throughout all phases. (*See samples of resources illustrated below.*)

Phase 2: Applying the Tools of Leadership. This phase happens typically prior to the start of year two. It entails:

1. *Implementation Training, Level 2*. This training involves all staff and includes a brief, engaging review of *The 7 Habits*, an introduction to *Leadership Notebooks*, insights on how to set and manage goals, and coverage of other leadership tools, such as graphic organizers. It involves one day of training.
2. *Lighthouse Team Training, Level 2*. For the Lighthouse Team only, this training helps the team identify and track school-level goals, and emphasizes things like how to involve parents and community, how to design a Leadership Day, and so forth.

Phase 3: Maximizing Results. This phase is highly customized. Training for the entire staff and for the Lighthouse Team is designed following an assessment of current needs and goals.



The School Staff—Bringing it to the Students

The Leader in Me had its start in 1999 at A.B. Combs Elementary in Raleigh, North Carolina. When *The Leader in Me* book was released at the end of 2008, eight schools had implemented the process. In the short time since, more than 430 schools have implemented *The Leader in Me* across the U.S. and other parts of the world.

There appear to be at least six keys to the staff successfully taking the *7 Habits* and other leadership principles to students:

- 1) **Shared Leadership.** *The Leader in Me* is a principle-centered approach, not a principal-centered approach. While the principal plays a vital role, a key to success is that leadership is shared by all staff. A lighthouse team is formed to oversee implementation across the school. All teachers are respected as teacher-leaders. Teachers also share responsibility and collaborate across grade-level teams. Additionally, cafeteria staff members assume leadership roles for nutrition, administrative staff take the lead in being the first point of contact for guests entering the school, custodians become role models and leaders of order and cleanliness, and so forth. Simply put, all staff members share some aspect of leadership responsibility.
- 2) **Ubiquitous Strategy.** Teachers have been often heard to say, “This is not one more thing, it is a better way of doing what we were already doing.” A major reason for this is that *The Leader in Me* is not an added curriculum that comes in a box. While teachers may do direct teaches of the *7 Habits* early on, the primary means of teaching the habits is to integrate the concepts into existing lesson plans and activities. A history lesson, for example, might ask how a particular historical character was proactive. Most any literature lesson or book can be applied to one or more of the habits. Students can “synergize” to solve a math problem. In short, all subjects—core and specialty—can be tailored to embed leadership principles.
- 3) **Student Leadership.** *The Leader in Me* does more than teach students about leadership, it gives them opportunities to be leaders. In other words, students are not just taught what it means to be responsible; they are given chances to be responsible. Assigned leadership roles come in the classroom and in the school. In class, each student is assigned to be a leader, such as a leader of the class library, a leader of technology, a class greeter, a leader of cleanliness, and the like. At the school level, students are given responsibilities to lead school activities, plan service projects, be members of student councils, speak in front of groups, be leaders of music or dance, and so forth. Often the best leadership responsibilities are impromptu. The key is that the staff views students as individuals with unique, valuable talents—not as test scores.
- 4) **Supportive Environment.** The environment surrounding the staff and students needs to support and reinforce the leadership theme. This includes the school’s appearance, from being clean to being inspiring. Many *Leader in Me* schools have created inviting entry ways, letting all who enter know that they are a leadership-themed school. From quotes on walls, to inspirational student art, to educational hallway displays, the grounds and walls speak of leadership and tell students they matter. Furthermore, the school environment is one of accountability, with displays highlighting goals. Data showing progress is tracked at school, classroom, and student levels. The environment also supports continuous development of all staff. The *7 Habits* are the common language that is heard.
- 5) **Parent and Community Involvement.** Though schools are not dependent upon external help for *The Leader in Me* to be successful, parents and leaders from the community can be of great support. Some contribute financially, but most contribute by being role models and visiting leaders. The PTA can be a great support, particularly in helping to guide the students as they carry out leadership roles for school-wide activities. Numerous Chambers of Commerce, for example, have become involved in volunteering as leaders to answer student questions about what it means to be a leader, and what it takes to do well in the world of work.
- 6) **Modeling/Caring.** The *7 Habits* and other leadership principles are first taught to staff members. They teach far more by how they behave—their *habits*—than by what they say. By practicing the habits, trust and relationships are built between staff and students. Students feel connected which is important because it is estimated that “supportive relationships with teachers can cut the [student] dropout rate in half.” (*Understanding Resilience, Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 2007.)

The Students—Bringing it Home and into the Community

The focus of *The Leader in Me* is clearly on the students. However, families, communities, and employers are also seeing and anticipating indirect benefits.

Many of the schools that have implemented *The Leader in Me* have been sponsored by businesses. The prime reason for businesses becoming involved is that they believe the mindsets, skill-sets, and tool-sets the students are learning will produce a better future workforce. Communities have also gotten behind *The Leader in Me* schools in hopes of creating a safer community, a more prepared workforce, and a desirable workforce to attract new business and residential growth.

More commonly, parents are enjoying benefits. Many parents report instances of their children bringing the habits home. One father recently wrote to a school, “The other night my third grade son got up from the dinner table and said he wanted to ‘be proactive and get the dishes done’ so he could go out and play. I responded, ‘You don’t even know what be proactive means.’ He then proceeded to sit me down and give me a lesson on what it means to be proactive that exceeded anything I had ever heard at the office.” That is one of thousands of instances of parents reporting improvements in children’s behaviors at home.

Furthermore, several schools have taken the habits directly to the parents. While some schools use newsletters or evening activities to expose parents to the language of the habits, others have set up full-scale *7 Habits* training courses for parents on evenings or weekends. In such a way, parents learn to apply the habits for their own benefit.

Promising Results—Is it Working?

So the big question is: Is all of this having any impact on schools, staff, students, or homes and communities? While most of the schools engaged in *The Leader in Me* are in the early (first-year) phase of implementation, initial results are promising and consistent, including:

Student Self-confidence	The most frequent result identified by parents and staff is the visible increase in student self-confidence. Students gain confidence from learning new skills, from being given leadership responsibilities, and from frequently being recognized as having unique talents. As Muriel Summers, principal of A.B. Combs Elementary relates it: “You will hear us compliment the children all the time. We have eight hundred students and it is important that we connect with each of them every day. We let children know we believe in them. That is part of our core value system.”
Decline in Discipline Problems	<p>One of the most noticeable impacts from the standpoint of teachers is the dramatic drop in discipline problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At English Estates Elementary in Fern Park, Florida, discipline referrals dropped from 225 to 74 in just over a year after implementing <i>The Leader in Me</i>.• At Dewey Elementary in Quincy, Illinois, discipline referrals dropped 75% after its first year of implementation, and referrals for completion of work declined 68%.• Joseph Welsh Elementary in Red Deer, Alberta, Canada reported a 67% drop in discipline referrals its first year of doing <i>The Leader in Me</i>.• A First Nation (Native American) school in Nova Scotia, during the first six months of <i>The Leader in Me</i> reported zero suspensions, whereas for the same period the previous year they had experienced 20 suspensions.• Susan M. Baile studied behavior at schools in California, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. In a 1998 study, she reported a high school principal’s comments after teaching the <i>7 Habits</i>: “Our behavior has improved drastically. The first year this administration took over, we reduced violence in our building 88 percent. We had up to 65 kids the year before who were suspended for fighting, and we dropped our numbers down from 65 to 8 or 10 kids.”

Student Achievement

The question that often gets asked is: What impact does *The Leader in Me* have on student achievement? While the link is indirect, several schools have reported achievement gains:

- A.B. Combs Elementary piloted *The Leader in Me* in 1999 using one teacher per grade level. That year, the percentage of students passing end-of-grade tests jumped from 84 to 87 percent, largely due to the improved scores of pilot students. Year two, the entire school embraced the process and the percentage of passing students rose to 94 percent. A.B. Combs has since maintained elevated scores for a steady decade, peaking at 97 percent. Scores dropped when the state test changed, but the drop was far less than the district average.
- English Estates Elementary was a Title 1 “School in Need of Improvement” when it began *The Leader in Me*. It had a dwindling student population, due mostly to disgruntled parents shifting children to local charter schools. Following its first year of *The Leader in Me*, the school was awarded “The Most Academically Improved School” in its district, with test scores up as much as 35 percentile points in some subject areas. The state of Florida, which gives schools an A, B, C, D or F rating, moved English Estates to an “A” rating, and the school met AYP for the first time in years.
- John C. Fremont Elementary started *The Leader in Me* mid-year in 2009. One year later, impressive academic gains could be spotted, including:

(CRT) Proficiency Results	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009	2010
	Scores	% Change	Scores	% Change	Scores	% Change
2nd Grade: Language Arts	65.2%	0.6%	75.0%	9.8%	76.0%	1.0%
	Math	65.3% 9.8%	79.4% 14.1%		80.0% 0.6%	
3rd Grade: Language Arts	56.7%	-3.9%	64.3%	7.6%	78.2%	13.9%
	Math	64.2% 3.6%	67.1% 3.0%		75.9% 8.8%	
4th Grade: Language Arts	53.0%	-1.7%	49.3%	-3.7%	78.2%	28.9%
	Math	63.4% 8.7%	31.0% -32.4%		59.4% 28.4%	
	Science	32.9% -15.1%	21.1% -11.8%		61.6% 40.5%	
5th Grade: Language Arts	61.5%	3.8%	66.2%	4.7%	70.9%	4.7%
	Math	60.0% -8.0%	58.4% -1.6%		59.6% 1.2%	
	Science	44.6% -9.0%	48.7% 4.1%		62.2% 13.5%	
6th Grade: Language Arts	68.5%	1.4%	74.7%	6.2%	80.2%	5.4%
	Math	71.2% 12.0%	50.7% -20.6%		64.7% 14.0%	
	Science	53.4% 4.6%	56.8% 3.3%		71.8% 15.0%	

- Parents and teachers at Dewey Elementary in Quincy, Illinois, were delighted to see the following rise in Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) scores for reading and math:

	Before teaching <i>7 Habits</i> (8 year average)	First year after teaching <i>7 Habits</i> (2007)	Second year after teaching <i>7 Habits</i> (2008)
Reading	64.5%	89%	89.7%
Math	79.25%	98%	92%

An import note is that the level of implementation clearly impacts levels of improvement, including achievement scores. At Adams County, Illinois, for example, a significant difference was observed between schools that “fully” implemented *The Leader in Me* versus schools that “moderately” implemented the process. Examples include:

1. **Reading Performance:** Full implementers had 70% of students meeting or exceeding state standards before the *7 Habits* process. After implementation, 85% of students met or exceeded state standards, a 15% improvement (significant at the 0.05 level). In contrast, moderate implementers yielded mild but statistically insignificant changes.
2. **Math Performance:** Full implementers had 84% of students meet or exceed state standards in the years prior to the *7 Habits* compared to 92% after the *7 Habits*. By contrast, change in moderate implementers was again mild but not statistically significant.

Student Satisfaction

Using a modified My Class Index (MCI) developed at Seattle Pacific University, students in Adams County, Illinois rated their classrooms relative to factors such as difficulty of schoolwork and levels of conflict. Schools fully implementing the process saw the following statistically significant improvements:

1. Students' satisfaction with school rose significantly;
2. Students reported more cohesiveness in the classroom and less friction;
3. Students said school was not as difficult as before the *7 Habits*.

Teacher (Staff) Satisfaction

Students are not the only ones benefitting. Teacher and staff satisfaction is on the rise:

- It is not uncommon to hear comments such as, “I have been teaching for 30 years and this is the best thing I have ever done.” Teachers express relief in having less quarrels and less acts of disrespect, which allows them to focus more on academics.
- Some of the schools have won awards (including A.B. Combs being named the #1 Magnet School in America), and principals and teachers have likewise been honored. But the rewards that teachers and administrators value most are the stories of students whose lives have changed as a result of being taught practical skills and thought patterns that will last a lifetime
- Schollie Research and Consulting, which administers surveys to five hundred of Canada's schools, found the following responses from staff at Joseph Welsh Elementary after the first year of *The Leader in Me* (*TLIM*):

Survey Item	Disagree	Agree
<i>Teachers: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People assist me in teaching students the principles needed in their daily lives.</i>		100 %
<i>All Staff: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People have had a positive impact upon this school.</i>		100 %
<i>All Staff: I would like to see The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People continue at this school.</i>		100 %

Survey Item	Prior to TLIM	After 1 Yr. of TLIM
Staff who agree that students are taught the attitudes and behaviors that will make them successful when they finish school.	77.8 %	100 %

Teacher Development

Along with being more satisfied, teachers are receiving relevant professional training:

- Christie Dickens, Assistant District Superintendent in Adams County, Illinois, points out, “Our focus from the beginning was on looking at how the habits could help the children. But early on we noticed that some of the real changes that were occurring were not with the students, or with their parents, but with our staff. We saw talents coming out of them that we had never seen before. And when they share the positive influences it is having on their interactions with each other, and on their personal lives and families, those are the moments I enjoy the most.”
- Many teachers comment on how much the *7 Habits* have helped them to be more organized personally and in the classroom, to connect better with students, and to stay focused on what matters most. A common statement from teachers following *7 Habits* training is, “This is the best professional development training I have received as an educator.”

Parent Satisfaction & Engagement

Parents are virtually unanimous in their support and approval of the process:

- One of the objectives Dewey Elementary had in implementing *The Leader in Me* was to increase parent involvement, and that did happen. The number of parents attending PTA meetings more than doubled, as did parent attendance at monthly Parent-Child activity sessions.
- In Alberta, Canada, Joseph Welsh Elementary reports that parent satisfaction with what children are being taught leaped from 67% to 98% during the first year of implementation. Parents also reported:

Survey Item	Prior to TLIM	After 1 Yr. of TLIM
Parents who agree that students are taught attitudes and behaviors that will make them successful at work when they finish school.	69.4 %	92.3 %
Parents who agree that their child is encouraged at school to be involved in activities that help the community.	65 %	100 %

Survey Item	Disagree	Agree
Parents: <i>The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People</i> has had a positive impact on my child's school.	1 %	99 %
Parents: I would like to see <i>The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People</i> continue at my child's school.	3 %	97 %

- In a parent survey at Crestwood Elementary, all parents gave *The Leader in Me* a “very favorable” rating. Furthermore, the school’s parent council arranged for training in the *7 Habits for Families*, and over sixty families have taken advantage of the offering.
- At the PSKD Mandiri school (K-12) in Jakarta, Indonesia, parents report deep satisfaction with the *Leader in Me* process. Of note is that PSKD Mandiri is the only school in the world at the moment where the *Leader in Me* is implemented at all levels from kindergarten

through high school.

- According to the annual climate survey at English Estates, parents' approval of the school rose to 98% after its first year of implementation.
- In Guatemala, where the *7 Habits* are required by national law to be taught to all students (both public and private schools) in their final year of high school, 95% of parents surveyed reported attitude changes in their teenagers after they took the *7 Habits* course. Specifically, parents reported that their children were "closer to the family, more realistic, and more active and responsible." 88% of parents reported that their children had a clearer vision of their future after the course, and 89% of parents stated that their families were influenced by what their teenagers were learning about the *7 Habits* in school. (Note: 5,000 parents of students were surveyed from all 23 states in the Republic of Guatemala.)

Business Community Engaged

Seeing the skills that are being taught and recognizing the importance of having those skills in the coming workforce, several business have begun sponsoring schools to be trained in *The Leader in Me* process. A few examples include:

- After visiting A.B. Combs, Andrew and Peggy Cherng, founders of Panda Express, sponsored more than 20 schools, including nine near their headquarters in California.
- In Decatur, Alabama, a local CEO after visiting A.B. Combs decided to sponsor a school in Decatur. That school saw so much progress that the Chamber of Commerce is now sponsoring all 12 schools in the district. Numerous other Chambers of Commerce across the U.S. are now following suit.
- In Quincy, Illinois, the local United Way had been studying for months how it could best contribute to the community, and after reviewing several options and watching the success of Dewey Elementary, it determined to fund taking the *7 Habits* to all 8,000 plus students in the county.
- Across the United States, local Chambers of Commerce have involved their membership in sponsoring over 50 schools.

Improved School Culture

According to staff and teachers, one of the biggest influences the *7 Habits* have had on their school is what it has done for the school's culture. It spans beyond individual classrooms and creates a safe-and-friendly learning environment throughout the school. The *7 Habits*, in particular, provide a "common language" that everyone shares, including parents.

Though mostly anecdotal, these preliminary findings are offering tangible, promising hope to schools of all sizes and types. More substantive research is currently under way with the Johns Hopkins University, University of Rochester, and the University of Northern Iowa to provide more academically rigorous insights into what is so positive and relevant about *The Leader in Me*.

The key is to continue searching for the most appropriate ways to provide students with practical, lasting mindsets, skill-sets, and tool-sets that will propel them into being most effective independently and interdependently, and in ways that will sustain that effectiveness over time.

Praise for The Leader in Me®

What Parents Are Saying

My children are being educated to open the door to their future rather than waiting for the door to open.
~Jennifer Collins, Parent, Stuard Elementary, Aledo, Texas

My son was very shy when he first came to A.B. Combs Elementary. But they identified his strong areas and gave him opportunities to use them. It turns out he is quite bright, and this school gave him the opportunity to blossom.
~Paul Zevgolist, Parent, A.B. Combs Elementary, Raleigh, North Carolina

I didn't know the *7 Habits* until my kids started teaching me. My second-grade daughter used to sit in the corner and read. She was quite introverted. The *7 Habits* have helped her to be social. They help all the students to not be afraid to try something new. ~Christi Woodward, Parent, Dewey Elementary, Quincy, Illinois

The *7 Habits* have been not only a positive influence in my children's lives but in my own life. Once I was trying to tell my son, "You're not listening, you're not being proactive." But then he said to me, "Mom, you are not listening to me. You are being reactive." And I had a huge paradigm shift, a moment of, "Oh my goodness, it is me." So it is a two-way street. It has been really good for us, really good. ~Megan May, Parent, Crestwood Elementary, Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada

The confidence and self-esteem that students have acquired through the *7 Habits* is phenomenal. ~Jennifer Wood, PTA, Chestnut Grove Elementary, Decatur, Alabama

My son is in third grade. One time we were at a day care center and a little girl was having trouble with her shoes. Some of the kids started picking on her, but my son stood up and said, "You guys are not being leaders. We need to think win-win. Let's help her." He helped her put her shoes on and then they went outside and played. I thought, "Wow, is that my kid?" It is so amazing how he learns these things from school and then uses them outside of school. The leadership program provides the foundation. ~Joetta Moore, Parent, English Estates Elementary, Fern Park, Florida

When our five-year-old son started coming home and using catchphrases like "win-win" and "begin with the end in mind," it hit home with me. So I decided to take the training, and now we're putting it into place 24/7 as a family. It seems to help in my son's daily routines, my daily routines, my wife's daily routines, our family's daily routines.
~Dean Harrison, Parent, Crestwood Elementary, Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada

What Business and Community Leaders Are Saying

The Leader in Me is focused on building the future leader. Starting from elementary school, students are allowed to be leaders, and truly come to believe they can be leaders in the future. So when I tell my friends about the schools we are sponsoring, I tell them we are supporting the future. In this way, we are able to pay back to a community that has really been so kind to us. ~Peggy Cherng, Cofounder, Panda Express and Panda Cares, Rosemead, California

When I went to school we stuck only to academics. So when I see children learning about ethics, involvement in the community, and leadership, I find it very impressive, very worthwhile. ~Kathleen Cresswell, Member, Rotary International, Florida

The best thing about *The Leader in Me* is that it is not just for the elite kids or the troubled kids. It is for every single student. It does not matter what their economic background is or what their social history is, it is for everybody.
~Peggy Crim, United Way Board Member, City Treasurer, Quincy, Illinois

We expect a lot of technical skills from our employees, but we also believe that successful operations require a real strong foundation of interpersonal skills. Some of our employees had taken the *7 Habits*, so when one of them heard Crestwood Elementary was teaching the habits, we saw a real win-win between what the school was trying to do and what we were trying to do at our plant. The life skills they are learning in the *7 Habits* are so critical to their future success. ~Rick Redmond, Vice President, Criterion Catalysts and Technologies, Medicine Hat, Canada

Our company sponsored the leadership program at Chestnut Grove Elementary. It was so successful the first year that we decided to hold our Decatur Morgan County Chamber of Commerce board meeting there one month. The kids came in and spoke to us. The adults were so impressed with the young children's confidence that now we are working with our local businesses to support this as a district-wide effort. Starting with kindergartners, in thirteen years, we've got the opportunity to change the mindset of an entire community. In only thirteen years! ~Donnie Lane, CEO, Enersolv, Decatur, Alabama

Our Chamber of Commerce does what is called "Business After Hours," where we showcase businesses in the area. Two years ago was something special because, instead of a business, we showcased English Estates Elementary. Over a hundred people from the business community attended. The children spoke about leadership and the *7 Habits*, and we had a tour of different classrooms. A child's eyes are like windows right into their minds, and we could see that the children had been changed by what they had been learning. ~Carlos Giraldo, Member, Chamber of Commerce, Florida

What Teachers Are Saying

When I first walked into this school, I could tell it was where I wanted to be. Students have the utmost respect for adults and each other. This is all about real life skills. I love helping kids to believe in themselves. ~Rick Weber, Third-grade Teacher, A.B. Combs Elementary, Raleigh, North Carolina

When I observe children these days, sometimes I feel they lack certain skills, like interpersonal skills or teamwork skills. Singapore is a fast-paced society, and our education system is very exam-oriented. Often when students go home, their parents are busy, their families tend to be small, and they have tons of homework. As a result, they do not have the chance to interact much with other children or to develop these skills through play. So as a teacher, I feel privileged to be at a school where I can teach skills like "think win-win" and "synergy." They help students to be more effective as students and better able to handle life's challenges. ~Mrs. Limmengkwang, Teacher, Chua Chu Kang Primary School, Singapore

What I love about teaching the *7 Habits* is that it is not something more on my plate. This is a method, a strategy. I have been teaching sixteen years, and since teaching the *7 Habits* my students have the best test scores. And people ask, "How can the habits increase test scores?" Well, when children are in a risk-free environment because they are applying the habits, they feel good about themselves and are more prone to pay attention to what is being taught. ~Dana Farris, Kindergarten Teacher, Chestnut Grove Elementary, Decatur, Alabama

The *7 Habits* greatly help with discipline and classroom management. A lot of times I do not even have to get involved when there is a disagreement between children. They know the habits and they can work through the problem-solving steps without taking my time to solve or get involved. When it does require my help, we work through the steps of asking what is most important, what is putting first things first, and what ideas can we come up with to reach an understanding. ~Emily Hardee, Fifth-grade Teacher, A.B. Combs Elementary, Raleigh, North Carolina

I have children who are autistic, speech and language impaired, and physically impaired. They like being leaders and making good choices. The *7 Habits* provide a language that I can use with them in making that happen.
~Winnifred Hunter, Pre-KVE teacher, English Estates Elementary, Fern Park, Florida

I recently received a new student along with notes from her previous school. Her previous teacher said, "She does not follow directions or get along with peers." I had to read it twice since I got the record a month after she enrolled. That was not the child I am experiencing. In this classroom she is wonderful. She is so anxious to come to school and walks in with a smile every day. Students will learn the academics, but kindness, respect, and leadership is what this school is about. It is about teaching them to be leaders and doing the right thing when no one is looking. ~Debbie Falkner, Kindergarten Teacher, A.B. Combs Elementary, Raleigh, North Carolina

As a teacher, I am in awe as I observe our student leaders step up to visitors at our school, look them in the eye and give them a strong firm handshake welcoming them to our wonderful school. Their self-confidence and self-esteem has grown tremendously. ~Waydean Waller, Reading Specialist, Nash Elementary, Texarkana, Texas

I think the *7 Habits* are the greatest thing that we can teach students. They teach them how to be a leader and how to function in society, including how to deal with people who are hard to get along with. ~Vicki Mallory, Third-grade Teacher, Dewey Elementary, Quincy, Illinois

I have taught twenty-one years and fully believe the *7 Habits* have helped the discipline of our children. When students come into the classroom, they know we expect them to follow the leadership model, and to use the *7 Habits*. Because of that, there are less interruptions and less disruptive behaviors, which means I can really focus on whatever it is I am teaching. ~Martha Bassett, Art Teacher, A.B. Combs Elementary, Raleigh, North Carolina

Teaching leadership skills and the *7 Habits* has changed me as a teacher, as a parent, and as a wife. It has helped me to organize my life better. It has helped me to prioritize and to put my attention on the things that are most important. I feel I am doing more than just teaching reading, writing, and math. Those are important subjects, but more important is that they learn that someone cares about them, that they are special and that they matter in this world. It is about more than test scores. ~Pam Almond, Kindergarten Teacher, A.B. Combs Elementary, Raleigh, North Carolina

After just one year of implementation, we have seen leadership skills emerge in both students and teachers. It is refreshing to see students taking responsibility and ownership for their learning and self discipline, and it is a joy to see children attempting to create Win-Win situations as they seek to understand others and resolve their differences. ~Marian Holder, Third-grade Teacher, Nash Elementary, Texarkana, Texas

I see a very big difference in being a social worker at Dewey, where we have the *7 Habits*, versus at other schools that do not have the habits. The biggest difference is found in the common *7 Habits* language that is used throughout the school. I can use the same words whether I am working with a kindergartner or a third grader, because the kids all know the *7 Habits*. Also, the students at Dewey tend to know how to solve many of their own problems. I might facilitate the process using the *7 Habits*, but then I can step back as they take responsibility for solving many of their own situations. ~Denise Poland, Social Worker, Dewey Elementary, Quincy, Illinois

What Principals and Other Administrators Are Saying

This is more than character education. We are not just teaching perseverance, patience, and kindness, we are teaching leadership. We are teaching children that not only can they develop leadership traits in elementary school, but that we expect them to take these skills with them when they go on to middle school and high school, and to embrace them as lifelong skills. ~Lauretta Teague, Principal, Chestnut Grove Elementary, Decatur, Alabama

As educators and parents, our ultimate goal for our children is to have them be successful in life, and to do the things we would like them to do when we are not around. Our job, therefore, is to prepare them for life, not to

guide every moment of every day of their existence. What better way to do that than through teaching timeless principles? ~*Dr. Beth Sharpe, Principal, English Estates Elementary, Fern Park, Florida*

When we looked at how the *7 Habits* might benefit students, we began by asking, "What are the characteristics we want students to have when they go to the workplace? How will the *7 Habits* build in students the character traits needed for the twenty-first century?" We concluded that students who go through the *7 Habits* will be planners, they will take responsibility for their learning, and they will choose to have a positive attitude. They will work together and they will have a vision for their future. These are traits and skills that will help them do better in school, in college, in the workplace, and will allow them to lead families when that time comes. ~*Jeanne Payne, Professional Development Coordinator, Decatur City Schools, Decatur, Alabama*

When I first came to A.B. Combs, I thought, "Can this be real or is this just a show for the day?" Spending just a little bit of time here, I realized that this is a way of life. These are people actually living their dream. The minute you walk in the door you feel something special. ~*Michael Armstrong, Magnet Coordinator, A.B. Combs Elementary, Raleigh, North Carolina.*

A lot of times people say, "We need to get back to the basics, or the three "R's"—reading, writing, and arithmetic." We look at the *7 Habits* as a fourth "R"—relationships. It is an "R" that allows us to teach kids how to relate to themselves and how they can relate to those around them. ~*Ed Nichols, Assistant Superintendent, Decatur City Schools, Decatur, Alabama*

It has been a joy to watch this leadership program flourish and grow at English Estates. The results of the school academically have been phenomenal. It has changed the whole spirit of the school and the community around it. These are lifelong skills that they get an opportunity to learn at age six that many adults do not get a chance to learn in their entire lives. ~*Barry Gainer, School Board Member, Seminole County Schools, Florida*

The *7 Habits* for students in Adams County started with Dewey Elementary and shortly thereafter at Washington Elementary, both of which are K-3 schools. Six other district schools and four county schools followed the next year. Now the preschool, parochial school, and day-care centers have also taken the training, and the intermediate schools will start this summer. We tried to put some of this off so we could do the training at a more even-keel rate over a three-year period, but the schools have been so interested that it has gone like wildfire. ~*George Meyer, retired Superintendent of Schools and Dean of the School of Education at Quincy University, Illinois*

Leadership can be such an obscure term to elementary students, but the *7 Habits* break it down into "doable" actions and concepts for students. When students are given the opportunity to practice life skills in a safe and loving environment, they eventually add those skills to their everyday skill set. ~*Robin Seay, Principal, Stuard Elementary, Aledo, Texas*

Having a very diverse population of students, there is a great need at our school to teach students positive skills that will have a profound impact on their lives. We strongly feel that we are meeting those needs by introducing these effective habits with our students. Amazing things happen each day as our students develop stronger academic skills, as well as better skills in relationships and in decision making. This is definitely one of the most exciting things I have done during my thirty-six year career in education. ~*Bertie Norton, Principal, Nash Elementary, Texarkana, Texas*

Kids need this, and the teachers and the community embrace it. It makes the kids feel good about coming to school each day, and that is a big part of what they need because there are a lot of external forces that present them with daily challenges. This is a shining star, or a light, that they can latch on to and use to help themselves and each other. It just makes sense. ~*Thomas F. Leahy, District Superintendent, Quincy Public Schools, Quincy, Illinois*

By engaging students early on in the importance of leadership, students will develop habits in their lives that will lead to success throughout their academic career. ~*James Henry Russell, Superintendent of Schools, Texarkana Independent School District, Texarkana, Texas*