

PARENT LEADERSHIP IN STATE GOVERNMENT

October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017



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2017 Annual Report

Overview of Training Feedback and Satisfaction

Throughout the training days, participants were asked to report on their positive and negative thoughts (indicated by thumbs up and thumbs down icons in the reflection packet) after each section. Feedback and comments from participants were reviewed by project staff and trainers, and are used to guide updates and revisions to the curriculum.

Overall, the following conclusions can be drawn from evaluation of the PPC trainings:

- Recruitment of more inexperienced participants changed the results in a positive direction compared to last years.
- Individuals report engaging in more leadership activities as a result of the training.
- There is a need to supply parents with additional tools and resources following the trainings.
- There is evidence of skill growth during the two training days.
- There is large variability in individual reactions to specific curriculum sections.
- There are also significant differences in reactions to the *Keys to Cultivating Diverse Relationships* section across training locations.

Each of these conclusions are addressed in more detail in the following sections.

Parent Leadership in State Government

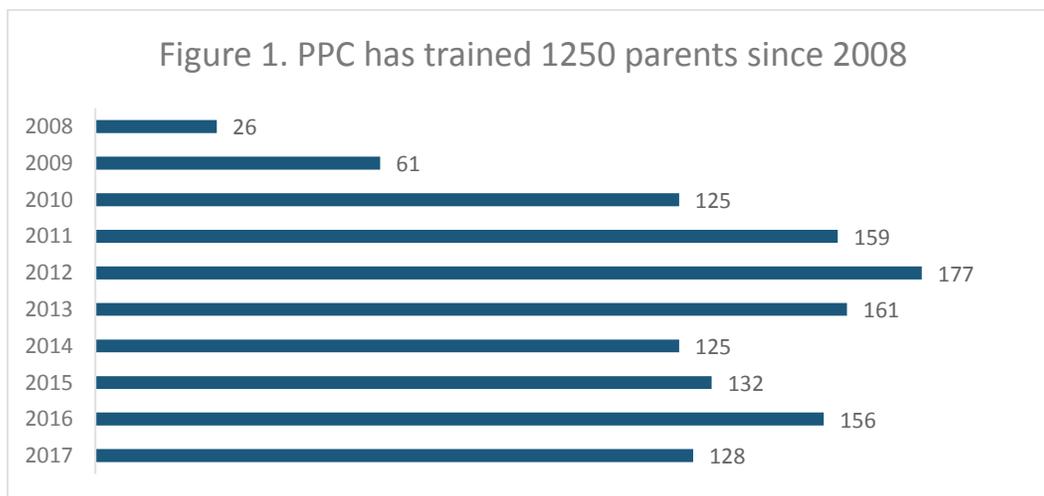
The Parent Leadership in State Government (PLISG) initiative is a collaboration of the Michigan Departments of Health and Human Services and Education through an interagency agreement. The project provides leadership training for Michigan parents using the *Parents Partnering for Change* (PPC) curriculum. The curriculum was developed by the PLISG project and is based on expected competencies for skilled parent leadership. The mission of PLISG is to identify, recruit, train, mobilize, deploy and support parents to provide consumer voice and input to local, state, and federal program planning and policy development. Programs and services that are designed with the input of families' better meet family needs, make services more effective, increase fiscal responsiveness and lead to better outcomes.

Leadership Competencies

The following leadership competencies and their underlying learning objectives form the basis of the PPC curriculum:

1. Participants will have an understanding of their own leadership direction.
 - a. *Self-discovery*: understanding their own motivation, and communication and leadership styles.
2. Participants will have the ability to be an effective partner and exhibit leadership when working alongside professionals.
 - a. *Effective communication*: understanding different types of communication and managing conflict
 - b. *Board membership*: understanding how a board or council works; effective meetings; and networking with professionals
 - c. *Leadership readiness*: how to be effective and prepared for parent leadership
 - d. *Outreach*: Collaborating with professionals and involving parents as leaders
3. Participants will understand and have the ability to advance cultural competence.
 - a. *Cultural competence*: understanding cultural competence and respecting others' culture and values.

As of September 2017, 1250 parents have taken the *Parents Partnering for Change* training (see Figure 1).



Parents Partnering for Change 2016 Training Summary

Six *Parents Partnering for Change* trainings were offered in 2017 which were attended by a total of 128 parents (see Table 1). Four were provided by PLISG and two were provided by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC).

Table 1. Parents Partnering for Change 2017 Trainings

Training Dates	Location	Number of Parents Trained
April 18-19	Berrien Springs	24
May 22-23	Cadillac	22
June 6-7	Bad Axe	17
June 27-28	Mount Pleasant	26
August 15-16	Houghton	19
September 27-28	Lansing	20
Total		128

The PLISG Advisory Board chose the training locations based on a number of considerations. Offering trainings in the Upper Peninsula and the Thumb regions was priority for Board members, given the lack of trainings for parents that typically occur in these areas. Preference was given to rural residents (as opposed to urban areas which were targeted last year). Board members wanted at least one training in the Upper Peninsula and one in the ‘Thumb’ area. Parents were recruited through a variety of methods; however, acceptance into a training was given to residents within 60 miles of where the training was being held first. In this way, the project was able to target specific geographic areas, and reduce the cost of trainings overall, as it was not necessary to provide overnight accommodations for participants. The PPC trainings continue to be very popular. Project staff did not encounter any difficulty recruiting parents, and in most cases, maintained a waiting list.

Parents attending the 2017 trainings reported having an average of 2 children (with an average age of 8 years). The majority of participants were female (90.1%) and reported a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds (83.8% White; 13.8% Black; 3.8% American Indian; .8% Asian or Pacific Islander; 6.8% Hispanic).¹ As part of the registration process, participants self-reported any state services they were, or had ever, received. (See Table 2).

¹ Participants have the option of selecting more than one race category.

Table 2. Participant-Reported Services

Service	# Participants*
<i>Department of Health and Human Services Total</i>	<i>Percentages (%)</i>
Adoption Services	7.7
Cash Assistance	16.2
Child and Adolescent Health Centers	4.6
Child Development Care Subsidy	6.9
Children's Protective Services	16.2
Children's Special Health Care Services	10.8
Children's Waiver Program	3.1
Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances Waiver	1.5
Community Mental Health Services Programs	21.5
Domestic Violence Shelter/Counseling Services	6.2
Early Hearing Detection and Intervention	3.1
Emergency Relief: Home, Utilities and Burial	9.2
Families First	7.7
Family Preservation	0.8
Family Reunification Program	1.5
Family Support Subsidy Program	2.3
Food Assistance Programs	55.4
Foster Care Services	6.9
Healthy Kids	29.2
Healthy Kids Dental	36.9
Homeless Services/ Shelters	2.3
Home Visiting Services	20.8
Infant Mental Health	5.4
Lead Case Management Services	0.8
Local Public Health Services	9.2
MI Child	52.3
Migrant Services	0.8
Nurse Family Partnership	1.5
Parents as Teachers	17.7
Respite Care	8.5
Strong Families/Safe Children	2.3
TEFRA Waiver	0.8
WIC	73.8
<i>Department of Education Total</i>	
Early Childhood Special Education	17.7
Early Head Start	30.0
Early On	31.5
Great Start Readiness Program	26.9
Head Start	33.1
School Nutrition Programs	21.5
SNAP Supplemental Nutrition Assistance	19.2
Special Education Programs and Services	22.3

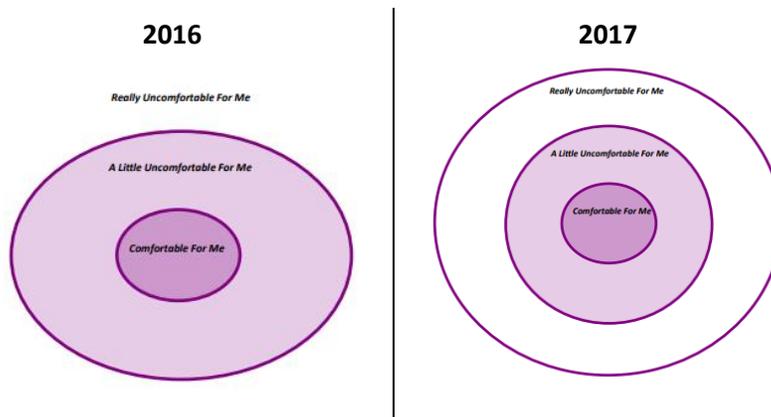
**Based on 128 participants with training day reflection packet data. Participants did not report receiving services for the Children's Waiver Program. This MDHHS service was excluded from the table.*

Evaluation

In the winter of 2017 the evaluation tools for the PPC training were reviewed and updated based on participants' feedback and comments from the 2016 trainings. Major changes to evaluation tools included:

- Shortening the length of the pre-assessment
 - Items related to leadership experience were removed and the list of boards, committees and councils was modified.
- Amendments to the Training Day Reflection Packet
 - An additional circle was added to the comfort zone item, 'Really Uncomfortable for Me' since many participants did not use this section of the rating scale last year (see Figure 2 below)

Figure 2. The addition of an outside ring provided more variability in participants' responses.



- The 5-point Likert scale items in the Training Day Reflection Packet were replaced (see attachments) with 10-point Likert scales items. This allowed us to get more variability in participants' responses during the course of the two day training.
- Implementation Changes
 - Shortened the amount of time between completing the training and receiving the follow-up survey from 3 months to 2 months.
 - Added an incentive for participants that completed the post-training Follow-up survey to increase post-training follow-up survey completion. Participants were entered into a drawing to win the Paul Schmitz book "Everyone Leads". This was an increase in response rate from 28% in 2016 to 37% in 2017. ²

The evaluation changes listed above will also be discussed in relation to their impact on the results in the following sections.

² The response rate would have been higher this year if the final training had happened earlier. This would have prevented the follow-up questionnaire being forwarded during the holiday season.

In order to assess the impact of the PPC Trainings, evaluators utilize three main sources of participant information, summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Data Sources for PPC Training Evaluation

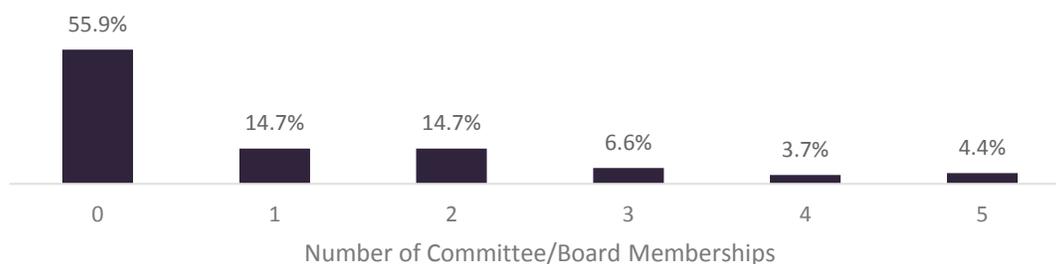
Data Element	Pre-training Assessment N=136	Training Day Reflection Packet N=126	Post-training Follow-up N=50³
State Services Received	✓		
Demographics	✓		
Leadership Experiences	✓		✓
Leadership-related Skills	✓	✓	✓
Training Feedback and Satisfaction		✓	
Alumni Support Mechanisms (Facebook, Parent Mentor)			✓

Boards, Councils and Committees Experiences

In the pre-assessment, parents were asked about their leadership experiences to date. Reports of prior leadership varied with 56% reporting no prior experience on boards or committees. This is a significantly larger percentage of inexperienced participants compared to last years' 33%.

As previously mentioned, two of the changes made to the pre-assessment were to (1) change the format of the question on boards, councils and committee membership experience from multiple choice to open ended and (2) to only focus on current memberships. This change led to obtaining rich data surrounding not only the type of membership experiences but also the quantity (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. More than half of participants reported having no previous membership experience before the training



Specifically, with the transition to an open ended format, the response-types changed to regional- specific organizations instead of state wide programs. Some key examples include local school associations (e.g., PTA), community-based organizations, networks, and collaboratives (e.g., Oakland County Cohort). Regardless of the type of membership reported, more than half of the participants had no board or committee membership coming into the training.

³ Successfully increased the number of participants completing the follow-up survey compared to previous years with the addition of an incentive.

Participants were asked about these same leadership experiences again several months later in the post-training follow-up, and some changes in leadership activity were reported. We know from past evaluations that participants who come to the PPC trainings with no previous leadership experience tend to benefit more from the training than the more experienced participants. Therefore, the changes in leadership experience are discussed based on experience levels reported before the training.⁴

“To have had this opportunity to grow as a person and confidently say I am a leader. I can bring about change anywhere!”

A large number (94%) of the experienced participants reported still being a member of an organization. Fifty-two percent of them reported

new leadership activities since the training. In addition, 26% reported a change in their role within the organization with which they are involved.

Regardless of experience, the small percentage of participants who were not members of an organization reported not having enough time to commit to an organization or were not able to find groups in their area that needed parent members. This parallels many comments made by participants in their reflection packets. Participants overwhelmingly reported not knowing the first steps in finding an organization to join, but that they would be able to use the information learned from the training at home when interacting with their family members. This suggests the need to supply parents with additional tools and resources following the trainings to ensure long-term success.

58% of the inexperienced participants reported joining an organization since the training and attributed this gain in leadership activities with becoming more confident with being heard as a parent leader because of the training.

Leadership-related Skills

Participants rated their comfort with the core leadership skills addressed in each section of the training at all three time points. Five areas showed significant improvement immediately after the trainings: *What Does it Mean to be a Parent Leader?*, *Keys to Cultivating Diverse Relationships*, *Come on Board*, *What’s My Style?*, and *Effective Meetings*.⁵ Comfort ratings remained the same for *Discovering What Matters to You*, and *How to Effectively Handle Conflict*.⁶

These findings remained relatively consistent several months after the training.⁷ The follow-up survey revealed significant improvements in four of the five categories. *Keys to Cultivating Diverse*

⁴ 31 of the 50 participants who completed the follow-up survey had previous leadership experience.

⁵ Repeated measures ANOVAs significantly improved: *What Does it Mean to be a Parent Leader?* $F(1,121)=15.04, p<.0001$; *Keys to Cultivating Diverse Relationships* $F(1,118)=8.75, p=.004$; *Come on Board* $F(1,119)=41.42, p<.0001$; *What’s My Style?* $F(1,117)=6.45, p=.01$; *Effective Meetings* $F(1,118)=33.77, p<.0001$.

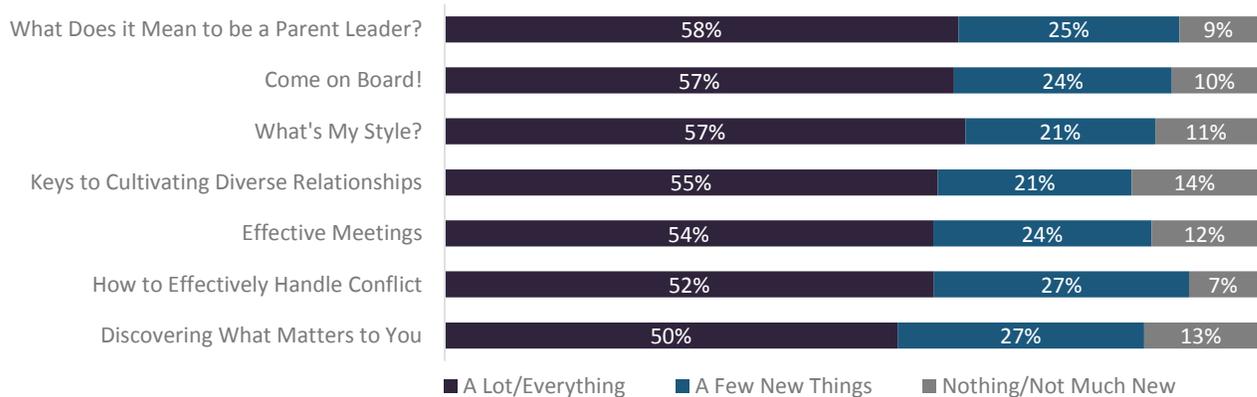
⁶ Repeated measures ANOVAs remained the same: all p values $>.10$.

⁷ This is based on 48 participants’ responses who were able to share their conflict on Day 2.

Relationships no longer showed improvement in comfort months following the training.⁸ Alternatively, there was a significant shift in improvement for *How to Effectively Handle Conflict*.⁹ These shifts in improvement are echoed by participants' feedback in terms of being able to use the information after the trainings. An overwhelming number of participants listed conflict resolution as an example of something they would use after the trainings; however no one listed cultivating diverse relationships as a tool they would employ after the trainings.

Overall, these findings are a substantial improvement compared to last year's trainings where only two significant improvements emerged: *Come on Board* and *Effective Meetings*. These variations in the findings are reinforced by participant feedback for these sections. For example, many of the participants reported feeling empowered with a new found confidence with their leadership-related skills because much of the content of each section was new. Notably, for each section more than half of participants reported the information as new for all six sections. This trend only emerged for three of the six sections last year (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Training participants learned the most in the section *What Does it Mean to be a Parent Leader?*



The difference in the results between this year and last year are related to two factors: (1) 56% of participants this year had no previous leadership experience compared to last year's 33%, and (2) The transition from 5-point to 10-point Likert scale items yielded more variability in participants' responses.

As indicated earlier, we know from past evaluations that participants who come to the PPC trainings with more leadership experience tend to be more critical of the training. Therefore, participants' changes in comfort levels may depend on their past leadership experiences. To assess these differences, participants were divided into two groups, *experienced* ($n = 96$) and *inexperienced* ($n = 40$) based on previous committee and board membership. Experienced participants' comfort ratings showed fewer changes overall (either positively or negatively) compared to inexperienced participants.¹⁰ Therefore, the magnitude of the change in comfort ratings were significantly different between the groups for

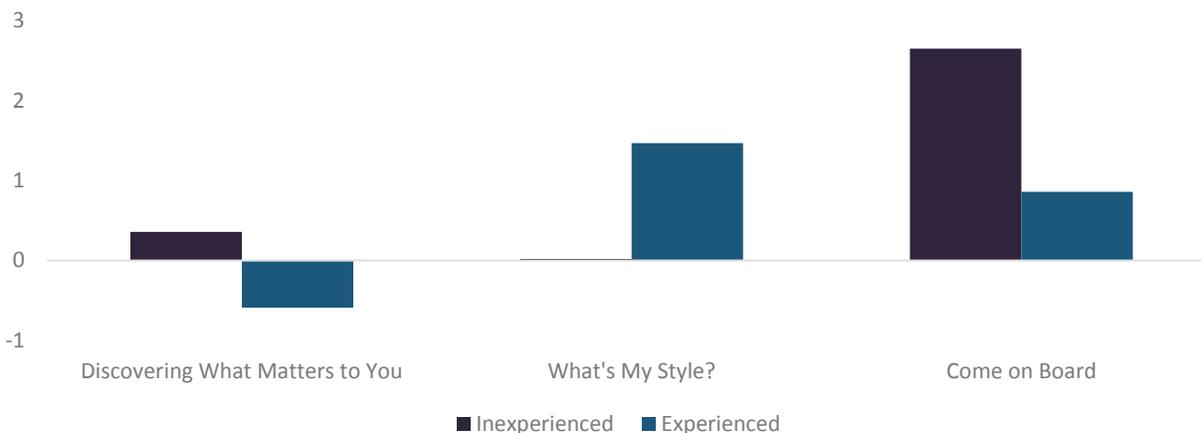
⁸ Inconsistent findings: *Keys to Cultivating Diverse Relationships* $F(1,48)=5.17, p=.03$; *How to Effectively Handle Conflict* $F(1,48)=12.29, p=.001$.

⁹ Repeated measures ANOVAs: *Come on Board*: $F(1,55)=3.95, p=.05$; *Effective Meetings*: $F(1,54)=5.85, p=.02$; others $p > .14$.

¹⁰ Note that not all participants responded to this set of questions at both pretest and in the training day reflection packet.

What's My Style?, *Discovering What Matters to You*, and *Come on Board* (see Figure 5).¹¹

Figure 5. Inexperienced participants' comfort ratings showed larger changes (both positive and negative) compared to experienced participants



This shows that although the two groups of participants changed in comfort level, the degree of impact varied due to the amount of experience prior to the trainings. Specifically, when looking at changes in comfort for *Discovering What Matters to You*, only the experienced group decreased in comfort after the training. This may be due to the inexperienced participants not feeling comfortable interacting with people whose perspectives and values are different from their own. Both the *What's My Style?* and the *Come on Board* sections showed positive changes in comfort, but very little improvement was seen with the inexperienced participants towards feeling comfortable working with people that are different from them (the primary objective of the *What's My Style?* section). Many of the experienced participants reported being familiar with the topics and tasks in these training sections.

It is important to note that experience was not the only factor driving the results. There were site differences in relation to the impact of *Keys to Cultivating Diverse Relationships*. Only one location, ECIC Home Visiting Training in Lansing, showed a significant increase in comfort with working with individuals whose culture and backgrounds are different from their own. This suggests that the more variations in terms of race, gender and previous leadership experience of the participants attending the training is key for the success of this section, as the Lansing site had the most diverse group when compared to the other locations.¹² The quote below reveals how hard it is to discuss diversity when everyone comes from similar backgrounds.

“Our discussion in the table group was a little flat (we all had similar experiences)
- Houghton Participant

Competency Growth during the Training

Participants were asked to rate themselves after two public speaking exercises: at the beginning of Day 1 (sharing a family story) and at the end of Day 2 (sharing a conflict story). Sixty-six participants rated

¹¹ Significant differences: *What's my style*: $t(117) = 1.96, p=.05$; $t(116)=2.73, p=.007$; *Come on board*: $t(118)=3.35, p=.001$.

¹² 50% white, 65% Black, and 10% male compared to the average training makeup: 84% White, 14% Black, and 4% male

their experience using a 10-point scale to assess their public speaking skills across six categories. The self-rating scale ranged from '1' being *awful* and '10' being *amazing*. Participants reported significant improvements in comfort level across the six categories (see Table 4).¹³

Table 4. Participants significantly improved in their *sharing a story* self-ratings. ¹⁴

Rating Categories	Day 1	Day 2
Used time well	7.31	8.34
Spoke clearly	7.30	8.44
Engaged the audience	7.05	8.09
Included the important points	7.46	8.27
Had a beginning, middle, and end	7.09	8.43
Used emotion effectively	6.98	8.28

Note: Not all participants responded. Range, n=118-125.

Participants also rated their comfort level with the two public speaking exercises. With the addition of the outside ring to the comfort zone image (see Figure 2, page 5), we received a larger percentage of people that responded with feeling really uncomfortable (34%) compared to last year (4%). It is important to note that this change is also attributable to the large percentage of inexperienced participants that attended the training this year.

Applying Training Knowledge and Skills to Future Leadership

At the end of training Day 2, participants provided up to three examples of how they planned to use training learning and skills in their future leadership endeavors. Participants were given their own examples in the tailored post-training follow-up and were asked to report: 1) if they had used that example and 2) why or why not. Of the 50 respondents to the post-training follow-up, 24% reported acting on at least one plan to use leadership. Only 7% reported not implementing any of their plans.¹⁵ When participants reported not acting on their plans, they most often cited insufficient time since the training to pursue their goals.

24% of participants **acted on at least one plan** they made **to apply their leadership skills** in the months after training

Alumni Outreach and Support

PLISG staff at MPHI work to support PPC alumni by assisting them in continuing to develop their leadership skills, and in connecting them with leadership opportunities in Michigan. Following each training, participants receive an email inviting them to join the PLISG Facebook page and a participant contact list, for those parents who want to connect with each other. Information about leadership opportunities, trainings, resources and other items of interest are regularly posted to the Facebook page. The Facebook page likes increased this past year from 600 to over 700. Total reach for some Facebook posts (how many people saw the post) reached over 2,000 unique people.

¹³ All significant *p*-values < 0001.

¹⁴ Not all participants had an opportunity to share a conflict story on Day 2 and presentations were given in front of smaller groups

¹⁵ 5 participants did not list any examples of future leadership use on the Training Day Reflection Packet.

Another way PLISG staff support PPC alumni is by hosting Lunchtime Alumni Support Calls using Adobe Connect technology. In April an Alumni support call was created for all alumni called “Becoming a Pro at Problem Solving” hosted by Theresa Marvin. In addition to this Alumni Support Call the format was changed inviting recent trainees to call in and discuss “what to do with your leadership skills”. These were help approximately 5 weeks after they attended trainings. ,

“I think I will have more information to use for all situations. I would recommend this training to others.”

Advisory Board Activities

In 2017, the PLISG Advisory Board held four board meetings, and appointed two subcommittees. Activities and outcomes are outlined below:

- Organized and facilitated Advisory Board meetings on January 19th, April 26th, August 3rd, and October 26th.
- Facilitated two ad-hoc subcommittee meetings to update PPC curriculum.
- Finalized Memorandum of Understanding between MPHI and ECIC.
- Organized and facilitated an Advisory Board Subcommittee for new parent at-large member recruitment. Began Advisory Board recruitment effort and accepting applications for parent at-large members beginning September 13, 2017. 20 applications were received and reviewed
- Recruited and transitioned to two new co-chairs as organizational and parent representatives.
- Organized and facilitated an Advisory Board Subcommittee meeting for the expansion of the PLISG model and training to other states and organizations.

Shared Leadership Curriculum

In 2016, The PLISG Advisory Board approved funding in the amount of \$30,000 for MPHI to develop a shared leadership training curriculum based on the leadership philosophy of Paul Schmitz, author of “Everyone Leads”. The new training, titled *Communities Leading Together*, is an intensive one-day shared leadership training for parent/professional teams to attend together. The pilot training took place in September, 2017. The training provided participants with hands-on tools and experiences to assist them in developing stronger parent/professional partnerships. Learning modules included a Redefining Leadership, Characteristics of Effective Leaders, Leading Together as Partners, Health Equity and Inclusion, and Leading Communities Together. The successes of the pilot are illustrated in Appendix A.

Challenges

Development of Parent Trainers

With the addition of three new parent trainers who joined the previous project this year and four veteran trainers already in use, the project now has eight individuals certified to deliver the PPC training. The new parent trainers came to the project with varying degrees of skill and expertise. Their facilitation skills will undoubtedly increase with experience; however, providing all of the new trainers with adequate opportunity to train and further develop their skills continues to be a challenge.

Alumni Support

Assisting alumni in finding leadership opportunities continues to be a challenge. Staff will continue to solicit assistance from Advisory Board members regarding openings on state boards and commissions, and in seeking new ways to engage parents.

This year PLISG tried a new approach to alumni calls and had a call about 5 weeks after trainings at a specified date and time. These calls did not get the results desired. With either only 1 person being the highest result, this was for Berrien Springs training who had 24 participants. While many expressed interest in the calls they expressed regret at not being able to call in because the time wasn't convenient or something came up at the last minute. With the creation of the new website this is a possible way to have information available to alumni at all times.

Recruiting

Because the trainings were held in rural areas this year, the parent mentor encountered barriers in trying to recruit participants within the 60 mile radius that is standard for PPC trainings. There were also a number of last minute cancellations and no shows for this year's trainings. While a cause for this hasn't been determined, project staff tried various methods to communicate with participants about the training this year including email, phone calls, and texting reminders to limit further empty training seats.

Staffing Changes

Project Coordinator, Jane Pilditch left the project and was replaced by Gina Gembel. During the project year it has taken extra time to onboard new staff and get a new Project Coordinator up to speed on current projects and PLISG history and procedures. New relationships also had to be developed during this transition.

Next Steps

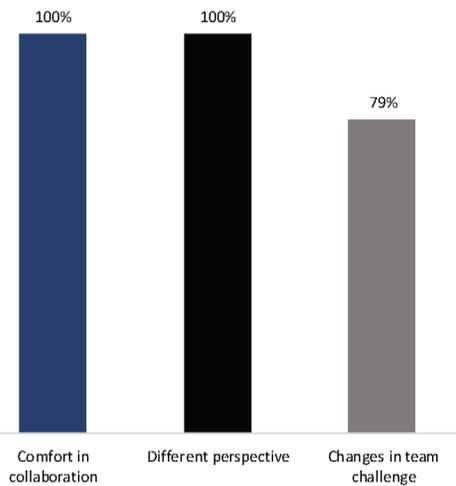
Activities being planned for the upcoming year include:

- Develop a "Guiding Principles" document to share with other states and organizations that are interested in adopting the PLISG model and possibly the PPC training.
- Develop a PLISG website.
- Professional development opportunities for parent trainers will be pursued.
- Parent Mentor will continue to individually contact each parent who requested assistance in finding a leadership opportunity through the post-evaluation. This has the potential to build meaningful one-on-one relationships.
- Project staff and trainers will make recommendations to the Board regarding possible updates and/or revisions to the PPC curriculum. This is an ongoing activity, based on participants' feedback and trainers' recommendations. Any changes to the curriculum will be reviewed with trainers prior to the start of the 2018 trainings.

7 team pairs participated

Each team created a challenge they wanted to address throughout the training

Participants reported the content had **positive** impacts on their team challenges



Content areas **‘Characteristics of Effective Leaders’** & **‘Health Equity and Inclusion’** had the largest positive impacts on team challenges



13 out of **14** people were satisfied with the training overall



This was so helpful in getting us started. And also to brainstorm ideas, resources, and barriers.

-Parent/Community Leader