

TalkingPoints Impact Report

2017



talkingpoints

From our Founder & CEO

Dear TalkingPoints supporters,

Research shows when parents and teachers work closely together, students do better in school. In fact, this partnership is twice as effective at predicting a student's life outcomes as the parent's income level. This means that parent's involvement can actually level the playing field for children in poverty and get them on the road to success.

I witnessed this while growing up as a first generation immigrant student, as with the majority of our team here at TalkingPoints. My mom was involved in my education -- she could help me at home with my homework -- when there was a reading packet sent home, she knew what that meant, and when there was a permission slip to be handed in, she signed them and returned them to make sure I could go on a field trip. Sadly the trajectory of many of my friends is not the same - many of them struggled through school and dropped out. The difference between my friends who were failing and myself was not intelligence or effort, but how engaged my mother was in my education.

A parent is a child's first teacher. Even when children go to school, they spend 70% of their time outside school, so no wonder the power of parents' influence on their child's success.

Sadly, a story like this is way too common and will become increasingly so in the US. Currently 1 in 4 children are born to immigrant families, and by 2030, there will be 20 million children who will not speak English at home. Compared to their peers, these students perform 40% less in standardized tests, and much fewer end up graduating high school. If we don't address this problem, we'll be leaving nearly half of the children in this country behind.

TalkingPoints helps all parents engage in their children's education, no matter what education they have, what language they speak, how rich they are, or where they are from. We do this through helping parents in low-income, diverse communities communicate with their students' teachers using cheap, accessible, yet powerful technology.



We accomplished a lot, and also learned a lot in 2017. We worked with WestEd to measure our impact, which showed that 100% of non-English families were more engaged in their children's education through TalkingPoints. We also conducted our first impact survey with overwhelmingly positive feedback in how TalkingPoints changed mindsets and behaviors. We released a mobile application for teachers so that TalkingPoints is even more accessible for them. To facilitate culturally relevant and easy-to-understand translations, we introduced an internal translation system using machine learning, natural language processing and a wide human translator community.

2017 was also the year when our reach grew significantly. In the first 2 years since launch, TalkingPoints had facilitated 1 million interactions between parents and teachers, and in the last 4 months of 2017, we had tripled that to 3 million. One teacher wrote us out of the blue that "I feel like a better teacher now - my students are happier and more successful. It makes the world of a difference. I am SO grateful". We also saw a father of a Yemeni refugee student able to speak to her ELL teacher about the limited education she had received while being at a refugee camp and how he can help her at home now that they were safe in the US. We have more than 100,000 stories like this to share, some of which are laid out in this report.

Our learnings in 2017 will take us forward in 2018. By relentlessly interacting with our families, educators and partners, we learned that TalkingPoints is instrumental to creating a safe, warm environment in which children can learn. But we also learned that simply lowering language and technological barriers was not enough -- parents and teachers wanted more support from us. To this end, our 2018-20 strategy involves expanding our product to be able to develop educators' capacity in building relationships with low-income parents and to coach parents on the 'how'.

This is no easy task, and we recognize that. But we also know that we can do this with your help. You have given us the financial and emotional support to fuel our work to empower parents and students who are marginalized and underserved. Thank you for helping us get where we are today, and I'm so excited for what 2018 will bring for TalkingPoints.

Sincerely,
Heejae



VISION

Every child deserves to have the support needed to learn, grow and succeed.
Every parent should be empowered to be partners in their children's education.
Every school should have the support to successfully engage with their families.



MISSION

TalkingPoints' mission is to drive student success in low-income, diverse areas through building strong partnerships across parents, schools, and communities.



Our Opportunity

10 million kids in the US are being left behind in terms of education outcomes

There are 10 million low-income, diverse, immigrant and often non-English speaking students in US (this will grow to 20 million by 2030), yet they are the most marginalized, performing **40% lower than their peers**. Currently, 1 in 4 children are born into immigrant families and by 2040, they will be the majority.



Even more than family income, student success depends on partnership between their biggest allies: parents, teachers and communities

If every parent is fully involved in their students' education, all students can succeed at school - academic research shows that parent engagement predicts a student's academic success **2X as much as** the family's socioeconomic status, **driving attendance, homework assignment rates, and student engagement among other leading indicators**. A study by Westat and Policy Studies Associates for the U.S. Department of Education has shown strong parent engagement leads to improved student outcomes, with low-performing students benefiting the most.

Our Opportunity

But this partnership is often fraught with many barriers in low-income, diverse communities for both parents and teachers

Unfortunately, parent engagement in low-income, immigrant communities is shown to be **half the rate** of higher-income, white, English speaking families. These families are also much less likely to have high school diplomas, and therefore less equipped to support their children at home. They lack access to technology needed to receive information from the schools. For teachers, lack of training on best practices for parent engagement and time are the biggest barriers to engaging with families on a regular basis.



Here are the top barriers to parent engagement in low-income, diverse communities.

FOR TEACHERS

Limited training

on how to work with parents as partners

Mindsets about parents

That they do not care

FOR PARENTS

Limited parent education

on how to help their child's learning

Limited tech access

50% of families do not have at-home wifi

Mindsets of themselves

That they cannot make a difference



Language and cultural differences

40% of parents do not speak English

Lack of time

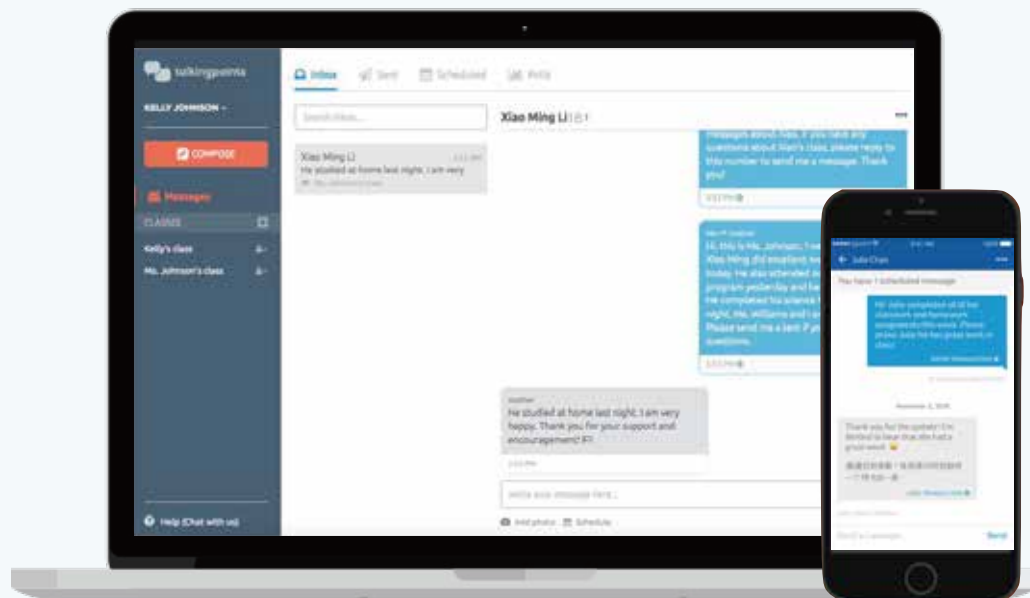
It's creating a vicious cycle of underachievement, which will lead to a less diverse workforce for the next generation -- if not addressed, the US will be leaving half of its students behind.

What TalkingPoints does



TalkingPoints makes it easy for any parent to be engaged in their children's education in low-income, diverse, immigrant communities.

We help parents and teachers communicate with each other without any language, education or tech barriers.



We do this through a multilingual parent engagement platform with **two-way** translated messages and educational content

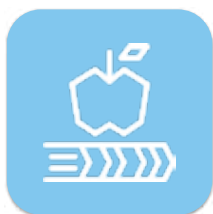
Our Program Model



Connect parents with their children's teachers and with each other, anywhere, anytime on any device



Develop the capacity of educators to effectively partner with parents



Educate parents on how best to support their children's learning at home



"Hi All- I just want to send a note to THANK YOU. This service has made such a huge difference in my life. I feel like (and hopefully am) a better teacher now that I can effectively communicate with the families of my students. My students are happier and more successful because they know I am in communication with their guardians. It makes the world of a difference. I am SO grateful."

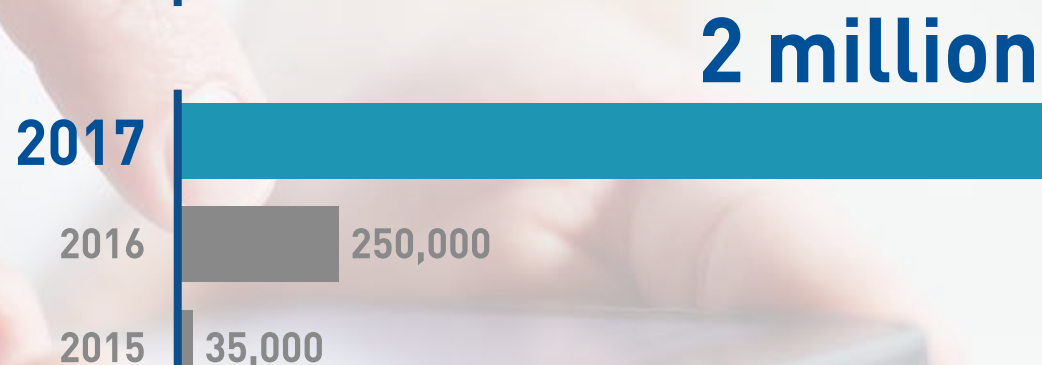
- Ms. Lawryk, 4th grade teacher

Growth

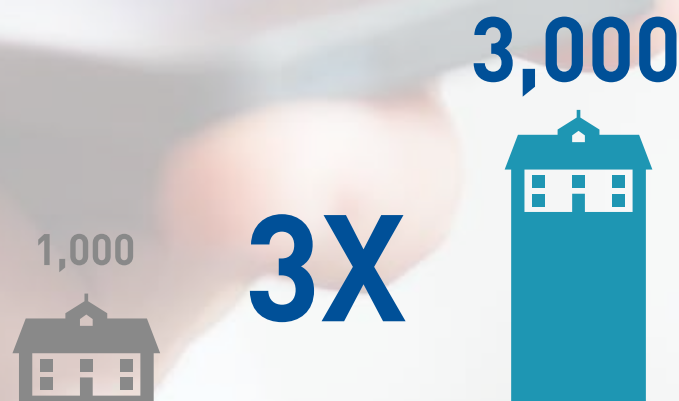
Number of students
and their families



Number of
conversations



3X Growth in number
of schools using
TalkingPoints



Our Reach

TalkingPoints works with low-income, high-need immigrant students of color and their families in US and Canada

Low-Income

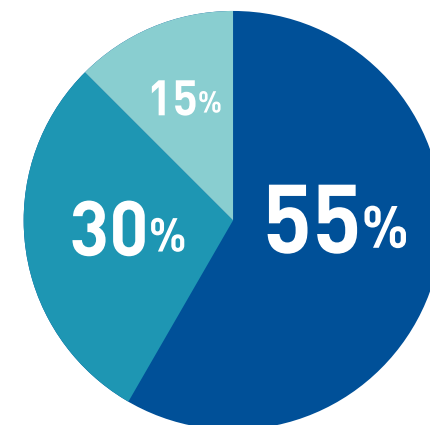


Non-English Speaking



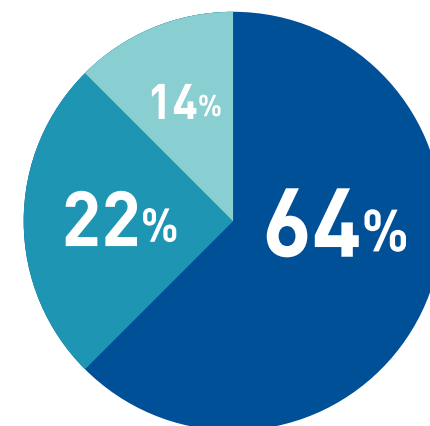
Breakdown of Roles

- General Ed Teacher
- ELL Teacher
- School Administrator



School Levels

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School



Our Impact

WestEd Study Results

**TalkingPoints is changing behaviors
at home, at school and in classrooms...**

100%

low-income, non-English
speaking parents
who are more engaged

87%

parents who had more
conversations about school
at home with their children



**"I feel more empowered
because I know what is
happening with my daughter's
education."**

- Parent, CA

With the support of NewSchools Venture Fund, we partnered with WestEd in the fall of 2017 to measure our impact on building strong parent-teacher partnerships and increasing parent engagement, especially for immigrant, low-income families of color. The participating schools in our study have high ELL and FRL student populations. 80% of the students were non-white and the teachers were English-only speakers. This is representative of the changing student demographics in the U.S., while teacher demographics continue to remain the same. Over 80% of public school teachers in the United States are white, middle class, and female, while there are 10 million low-income, diverse, immigrant and often non-English speaking students (this will grow to 20 million by 2030). We are excited to share the evidence demonstrating that TalkingPoints helps parents and teachers partner for student success.

Our Impact

TalkingPoints Impact Survey Results

We conducted a survey involving **3000+ parents** and **teachers** at the end of SY 2016-2017. Parents and teachers participated from **15 schools** in California and New York with **over 70% of students qualifying for the free/reduced price lunch program**. We translated the survey into parents' home languages and sent the survey questions through SMS messages. Teachers completed the survey online.

Results show TalkingPoints is...

- 1) **Developing relationships**
- 2) **Increasing parent capacity**
- 3) **Positively impacting students**



98% 

98% of teachers were able to reach parents they were not able to before, and build stronger relationships.

80% 

80% of teachers saw positive changes in their students' behaviors and performance in class.

90% 

90% of parents felt more included in the school community.

85% 

85% of families had more conversations about school with their children at home.

Our Partners



Oakland Unified School District Pilot Program

Oakland Unified School District is one of the most diverse districts in California, with 50% of students speaking a language other than English at home and over 70% being eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. With over 50 different native languages spoken, communicating with non-English speaking parents has been a big barrier to driving parent engagement and making all parents feel welcomed at school.

Strong parent engagement leads to improved student outcomes, but many parents in OUSD struggle to get involved. During the 2016-17 school year, OUSD piloted TalkingPoints in over 20 schools to support meaningful parent engagement. Schools needed a way to connect with their non-English speaking families and make them feel welcomed in the school community. TalkingPoints provided school administrators, teachers and staff the ability to communicate and engage with parents directly, regardless of their home languages, through text messages, parents' preferred method of communication. We facilitated thousands of conversations between school leaders, teachers and parents and the results show positive outcomes for all involved.

In an end-of-year school survey, 97% of parents felt more informed about what is happening at school since they started receiving text messages, 93% of parents felt more included in the school community, and 89% of parents were having more conversations about school with their child at home.

Teachers were able to communicate with families directly without having to rely on bilingual staff members or their students and reported feeling more connected to their families. As Ms. Wilson shared, "TalkingPoints has been so useful this year in getting information out to families about upcoming dates and expectations. We send home a lot of paper information that doesn't always get to parents, so TalkingPoints has helped either take the place of that paper and more extensive information is getting into the hands of families."

School administrators noticed a change in their interactions with families, especially those that were the hardest to reach. One principal shared how he had conducted two home visits to get in touch with a parent who hadn't responded to any of his phone calls or emails. He needed to speak with the parent about an important matter concerning her child. After one home visit, he tried sending a message through TalkingPoints and heard back from the parent right away! He couldn't believe the quick response and hasn't had a problem reaching this parent since then, saving him a lot of time and ultimately getting the child the support he needs.

The district decided to expand our partnership to serve triple the number of families this year based on schools' requests and positive response from parents.



OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT

expect Success

Our Teachers



Ms. Nerstheimer
ELL Teacher, RI

“TalkingPoints has been a game changer for me. I was helping learners gain English, but I knew little about their home life. When I found TalkingPoints, I was able to immediately connect with families.”



Ms. Vitale
2nd grade teacher, WI

“I think the success this year was really in keeping those lines [of communication] open with parents and the peace of mind that I have that ALL of my families are getting the same information. Also, they all have the same opportunity to communicate with me as well.”

Our Parents



“Because of TalkingPoints I am more connected to what is happening at school. Especially what they are doing in the curriculum and teaching, and how my son and other children develop.”

- Parent, CA

Teacher Spotlight



Ms. Rufenacht is an ESOL teacher in Fayette County, Georgia. She had learned about TalkingPoints from her district's ESOL department last fall and has actively used it to communicate and build partnerships with her students' parents, regardless of the languages they speak. Ms. Rufenacht shares about the positive impact TalkingPoints has had on her, her students and parents this school year.

While teaching at my current school for the past three years, I realized that my students' parents not only have to overcome a language barrier but lack convenient access to personal computers. Our school has increasingly shifted all our communication to email and online portals. With this shift, the ELL parents found themselves challenged to interact fully with their child's school.

After teaching some of my students for two full school years, I was still struggling to develop meaningful contact with their parents. I was leaving multiple voicemails, sending home printed notes, and writing emails but received little to no interaction in response. **This school year, I began sending these students' families messages via TalkingPoints and things changed. I now actively engage with these parents in their native languages via text message. This positive communication led to increased attendance at in-person conferences and events.** Meeting my students' parents in person was pivotal in turning around my students' academic achievement. As students observe the partnership between their home and school, they are working harder in the classroom and growing academically.



FAYETTE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Our 2020 goal:

to impact 3 million low-income students of color by empowering their families and teachers to become partners in their education

Our core 2018 strategies:

Connecting at scale

To strategically grow our reach to the most underserved, diverse communities by scaling the multilingual parent engagement platform, through doubling down on word of mouth growth and strategic partnerships with education institutions.

Strengthening sustainability

To grow revenue via education institutional partnerships and to expand current earned revenue model to include other sources.
(e.g., other industries, sponsorships, government funding)

Growing our community

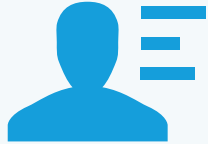
To grow the translator community to fuel the translation engine and linking parents to parents, educators to educators to learn from each other

Expanding our program model

To train, develop and educate the educators and parents to change mindsets and increase capacity for partnership through personalized content nudges using machine learning and natural language processing

Our Partners

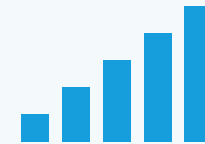
TalkingPoints for Schools and Districts provides:



Customized parent
engagement plan



Professional development
for school leaders and teachers



Data & Analytics

Results:

50+

partnerships with schools,
districts and non-profits

100%

Retention from 2016



Dave Trejo
Principal, CA

“ Parent-teacher communication is so important but so difficult. TalkingPoints has helped my staff do it well and have a coherent engagement strategy. ”

Staff & Board of Directors

TalkingPoints' team has strong ties to the mission and reflects the diversity of the community we serve.

- Our seven full-time staff members are 86% people of color, 50% grew up as immigrants in our own countries, 67% of our leadership team are women, and we speak over 8 languages.
- We're committed to this because it's a problem we experienced ourselves growing up as immigrant students or students of color. We're intentional about our recruiting to continue to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.



Team

- Heejae Lim - CEO, Founder
- Nancy Lee - VP, School Partnerships
- Lucy Richards - Software Engineer
- Aram Gugusian - Software Engineer
- Nelson Campos - Software Engineer
- Gabriel Gastil - Software Engineer
- Martin Calcagno - Software Engineer

Board of Directors

- Tyler Coats, Board Treasurer, CEO of Falcon Critical Care Transport
- Jill Kilby, Board Secretary, Director of J L Kilby Pty Ltd
- Heejae Lim, Board Chair

Thank you to our supporters who made it possible in 2017





Talking Points

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