

SPOTLIGHT

Partners Tackling the Summer Slide

Struggling Middle School students got a boost this summer through programs like the YMCA's Summer Learning and Enrichment Academies. At Baker Middle School, TPS teachers joined YMCA program staff to focus on service learning. Each morning, students strengthened language arts skills by researching, writing, and presenting ideas for service projects. They honed their math skills through projects such as designing and building planter boxes filled with flowers to share with their community. Weekly field trips – as well as fitness, arts, and leadership activities – complemented the curriculum.

When the five-week program ended, 69% of students showed growth in reading skills, with half of those improving more than a grade level. In math, 60% improved, and 65% of those improving showed more than a year's growth. This summer, the program will include some transitioning 5th graders.

The YMCA also partnered with First Creek and Stewart Middle Schools in similar programs with similar results, serving some 350 students in all. So much for the summer slide!



MIDDLE SCHOOL

SIXTH GRADE ACHIEVEMENT

KEY FINDINGS

Sixth Graders Keep It Up, Close Poverty Gap

Sixth graders continue to do well in terms of passing all or all but one class. Other good news for this indicator is that the gaps in achievement between White students and their Native American and Hispanic peers have closed since 2010-2011.

Data-Driven Takeaways:

- The poverty gap – which was as wide as 21 points in 2012-13 – has been cut nearly in half since our baseline year. Today, there is just an 8-point difference between students living in poverty and those not in poverty.
- Though the achievement rate for 2016-17 is down two points* from the prior year, 89% of sixth graders are passing all or all but one class, which is 12 points higher than the baseline in 2010-2011.
- The ethnic and racial gaps in achievement for this indicator have shrunk dramatically since 2011-2012, when some groups of students lagged a full 46 points behind. This year, gaps range from three to 12 points between White students and Students of Color, with Hispanic students having narrowed the gap to just three points.
- TPS' Jump Start program has been a step in the right direction for 6th graders, acclimating them to their new schools and connecting them with other students and teachers during this transitional time.

GET INVOLVED!

- **Connect** students to expanded learning activities offered by dozens of community-based organizations in Tacoma.
- **Stress** the importance of school attendance with families and students. Chronic absence begins to climb between elementary and middle school, from 18% to 29%.
- **Download and Share** Graduate Tacoma's new middle school College Planning Ahead Toolkit, which is available at GraduateTacoma.org, beneath the video.

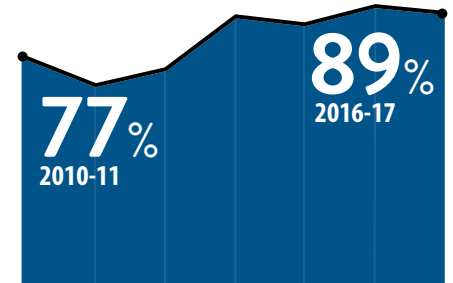
GAP CHANGE: Represents the ▲ increase or ▼ decrease in the achievement gap between 1) Students of Color and White students and 2) between students in poverty and those not in poverty, baseline to current.



DATA TRENDS

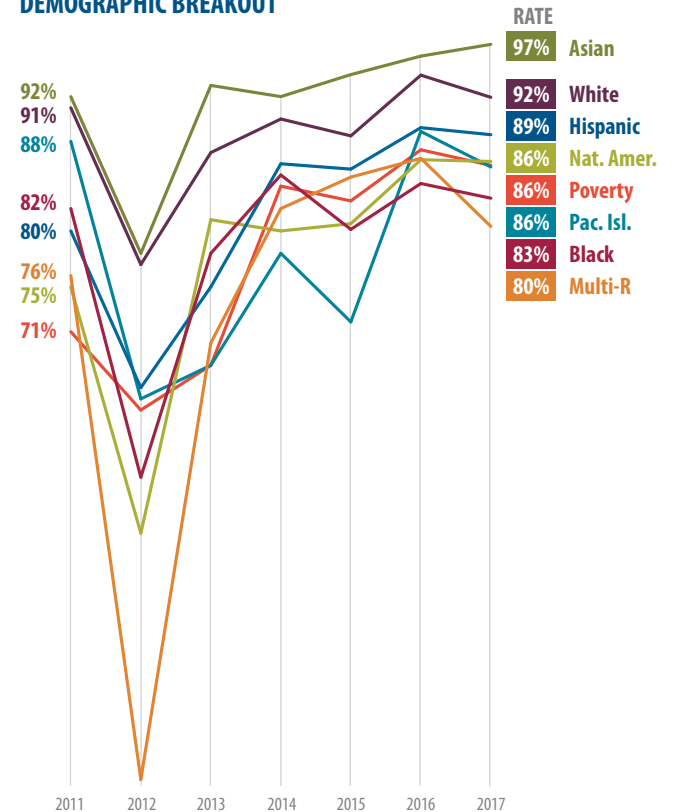
BASELINE TO CURRENT

Passing all or all but one class



AIMING HIGHER GOAL: Increase the percentage of sixth graders who pass all or all but one of their classes.

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKOUT



*Improved coding methodology has led to more accurate historic rates.

Data Source: TPS