

SPOTLIGHT

Parent Advisory Council Invested in Student Success

With 24 kids between them, members of Graduate Tacoma's Parent Advisory Council (PAC) lead busy lives, and have a vested interest in the work they're doing on behalf of Tacoma students. Six of the nine PAC members have some connection to teaching, whether they're current teachers, hold Bachelor's or Master's Degrees in education, or act as their children's soccer coaches, so they know how critical parent engagement is from an educator's perspective. All of them are dedicated to fostering the success of every child in Tacoma Public Schools.

The Council meets monthly, rolling up its collective sleeves to engage families through school activity nights, represent Tacoma families in conversations throughout the community, spread awareness of the importance of family engagement, and create a culture in Tacoma where families feel empowered to collaborate with educators and youth service providers. This Council is Graduate Tacoma's link to the third leg of the stool that supports Tacoma student success: Parents, Educators, Community.



2017-18 PAC Members: Rannell Alsteen, Skyline, Truman • Lacey Barker, Early Learning Center, Whitman, Stewart • Sheree Cooks, Sheridan • Aaron Essman, Pt. Defiance, SAMI • Arielle Flesher, Wainwright, Wilson • Sarah Kane, Fawcett • Tiffany Lemmon, Mason • Rebecca Padilla, Sheridan, First Creek • Surtida Shelton, Geiger • Parent and Family Engagement Coordinator: Jenai Fields

COMMUNITY INDICATORS

PARENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

KEY FINDINGS

Engaged Families at the Heart of Student Success

A community of supporting adults sharing responsibility in fostering the success of every child.

As their children's first teachers, families who are engaged in their children's lives contribute to and strengthen the efforts by schools and programs offered by community organizations to help students realize their potential.

Creating a fertile environment in which that collaborative relationship between families and their children's educators can flourish is a main focus of Graduate Tacoma's Parent Advisory Council (PAC).

Established in spring of 2016, the PAC is made up of ten parent leaders from across the city, including some from schools with a majority of students coming from families living in poverty. Their charge is to advance a cultural shift in how Tacoma families, schools, and the



community view engagement. That requires dedication, communication, and a consistent focus on reaching families where they are. Working with the TPS Community Partnership Office, the PAC provides the district with recommendations for enhancing its family engagement practices.

After having adopted a definition of parent and family engagement last year (*see above, in blue*), the PAC has set its sights on helping to coordinate and promote events such as family STEAM and reading nights in schools. Using feedback gathered from district families, they also have proposed

recommendations for the district's Parent Involvement Policy to the TPS Community Partnership Office. If adopted, the recommendations would identify measurable outcomes in parent and family engagement, helping both TPS and the community track improvements. As yet, there are no measurable outcomes for this community indicator.