

SPOTLIGHT

Gimme an S! Gimme an E! Gimme an L!

Teamwork, trust, empathy: These skills are just as critical for developing young athletes as learning to dribble and shoot. Through the Youth Sports Partnership (YSP), Metro Parks Tacoma, YMCA, and Boys and Girls Clubs have joined TPS to ensure that all students round out their athletic skills with a little SEL (social-emotional learning).

The partnership brings on-site after-school youth sports to all TPS elementary schools. Coaches – mostly volunteers – are being trained in the SEL principles TPS staff use during the school day. They also mentor high-school intern coaches, developing the older students' own SEL skills so they can use and model them for the younger athletes.

Participation in YSP soccer, basketball, flag football, baseball, and volleyball increased 78% in the first year. Metro Parks implements the sports program in 26 schools, YMCA in six and Boys and Girls Clubs in three. TPS provides facilities, buys equipment, and supports other logistics.

“The goal is not necessarily to win,” explains Mary Tuttle, Metro Parks Programs Manager. “The traditional sports model gravitates primarily toward competition, but we’re focusing on good sportsmanship, cooperation, collaboration and the understanding that individual choices affect the whole team. We don’t show scores until fourth grade because the emphasis is for kids to build character as they learn the fundamentals of each sport.”



COMMUNITY INDICATORS

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

AIMING HIGHER GOAL: Increase positive behavior and student engagement and decrease behavioral challenges.

KEY FINDINGS

Tacoma’s SEL Movement Gaining Momentum

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children, adolescents, and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Inspired by Tacoma’s Whole Child Initiative (TWCI), Tacoma was chosen as one of just eight communities in a highly competitive national selection process by the Wallace Foundation. The community-wide efforts, coordinated by TPS and the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation, are scheduled to launch in September 2018 in six TPS pilot elementary schools and their associated expanded learning opportunity providers.

What follows this selection is a five-year study and investment in social and emotional learning around the central question: “If urban schools and their afterschool partners work together to improve and align experiences and climate to foster children’s social emotional learning, will students benefit?”

The vision for the initiative is that Tacoma students will experience connected SEL environments throughout the day to support the whole child. TPS educators and staff are working with expanded learning opportunity providers to align systems, raise awareness, craft curriculum, and identify measurements of success that – by the time this report is published next year – should give us a baseline for this indicator.



DIG DEEPER:
Visit GraduateTacoma.org/Data to dig deeper into the data!

SAFE & HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

AIMING HIGHER GOAL: Increase safe, healthy, and nurturing environments for students in the community.

KEY FINDINGS

Bringing Student Needs to Homelessness Conversation

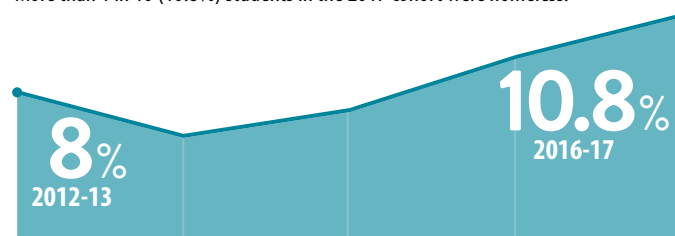
This indicator is also one for which the partnership has yet to identify a measure with reliable data for tracking. In the meantime, Tacoma has declared homelessness a public health emergency, with an estimated 250 families with children experiencing homelessness daily. Lack of affordable housing, poverty, and unemployment are the chief causes of homelessness for adults and their families here. The majority of homeless youth report the cause as either being kicked out of their homes or leaving them as a result of abuse. Shelter options for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness in Tacoma are extremely limited and the need continues to increase (*see below*).

At TPS, the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act ensures that students experiencing homelessness receive educational stability, supplies, food, tutoring, and transportation.

We know that homelessness and its considerable residual effects can lead to academic and social-emotional issues that can become significant barriers to graduation and future success. Graduate Tacoma networks must work to understand the crisis and continue to elevate youth in the larger conversations about homelessness in Tacoma.

HOMELESSNESS RATES BY 4-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL COHORT

More than 1 in 10 (10.8%) students in the 2017 cohort were homeless.



Data Source: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)