PUGET SOUND EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICT REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY 2020

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A LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

Welcome to the 2020 Report to the Community! This year has been met with its share of challenges — and in this report we will learn about the resilience and determination of our staff, partners and students who rose beyond circumstances toward achieving our End: success for each child and eliminate the opportunity gap by leading with racial equity.

[Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD)](https://www.psesd.org/) remains ready and equipped to partner with our transformational partners to provide crucial services for school communities. Throughout the report, you will be introduced to incredible partnerships between staff, students, educators, community partners and districts, all working in service of racially just and humanizing school systems. Achievements toward our End are sometimes seen in big broad strokes — and at other times, smaller steps. At PSESD, we are learning to see the potential in what may go unnoticed by some, taking those successes, and attempting to scale to positively impact students, families and educators who are counting on us to do so.

Since first sharing our Pathway to Change in 2018, we have consistently refined our strategies and Measures of Progress. When coupled with direct service, we’re able to use a comprehensive, data-informed approach to decision making. The new Measures of Progress are unique to that work. There are many people to thank for their tireless efforts this year:

* The entire PSESD staff, who bring their best selves to work each day and breathe life into our values
* Our Board of Directors and Transformation Team, who act as our stewards through the process of becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization
* The schools in this region, who work daily toward educating our students and serving families
* Countless community partners whose transformational relationships with collaboration, involvement, input and feedback we greatly value

Our collective work this year was never more important, as we faced the twin pandemics of ongoing systemic racism and COVID-19, which has disproportionately impacted Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color. In addition to the services described in this report, PSESD partnered with local, state and federal government, community groups and philanthropy to support pandemic response and recovery. Our work is not over; children and families across the region are depending on all of us to continue leading bravely towards elimination of these inequities.

While this report showcases a number of exciting and important efforts, there is so much more going on at PSESD than can’t fit into a single report. I encourage you to visit [psesd.org](https://www.psesd.org/) to learn more about all we offer, or to contact our staff about how we can best support your work.

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# [ABOUT PSESD](https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1598473405/psesdorg/trj8lgylwcnbvwj1002h/quickfactsAug20v3.pdf)

PSESD is one of Washington’s nine educational service districts that share a common goal: to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of educational programs through partnerships with K–12 education, early learning, higher education and public and private organizations.

The PSESD region is comprised of students, families, educators, schools and communities in King County, Pierce County and Bainbridge Island. Our thirty-five school districts, seven charter schools and two tribal compact schools, serve more than 433,000 children, which represents almost 40 percent of Washington’s K–12 school population. The majority (55 percent) of the K–12 students we serve are students of color. Additionally, we serve 5,000 early learners and nearly three hundred private schools.

## Who We Are

We partner with school systems and communities to eliminate opportunity gaps in education to help create racially just and humanizing school systems. We coordinate more than 100 programs in King and Pierce counties and Bainbridge Island, through the following groups:

## Board of Directors

In 2019, the PSESD Board of Directors adopted a new policy and procedure regarding [Transformational Relationships (ELP-3)](https://www.psesd.org/about-psesd/psesd-policies). It reinforces their commitment to work in concert with the agency for a collective focus.

A transformational relationship is one that focuses on the integration of our relationships in our work to build an antiracist community. The emphasis of our interdependent relationship is to simply love, inspire and care for the other. Identifying the full spectrum of our transformational relationships requires developing, implementing and caretaking early on as critical steps in effective public involvement.

The groups we foster transformational relationships with include: families; community members; Sovereign Nations; Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities; business operators and owners; and nonprofit, public and private agencies and organizations.

## Learning, Teaching and Family Support (LTFS)

Staff deliver a variety of high-quality, antiracist professional development and direct services for prenatal to postsecondary educators, children and families. Services are designed to interrogate, disrupt and dismantle racist systems. Customized professional development services include: consulting and coaching, peer-group networking and learning and cooperatives. Specific direct services are provided across the infant, child, youth and young adult continuum. LTFS staff are committed to whole-child–whole-family approaches that are aimed at building racially just and humanizing school systems — all in service of the success for each child, and the elimination of opportunity gaps and racial inequities. Services include:

* Equitable Systems
  + Accreditation
  + Inclusionary Practices Project
  + Puget Sound College and Career Network
  + Leadership Mentoring
  + Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) /Early Warning Systems
  + Multilingual Services
  + Native American Education Program
  + Paraeducator Program
  + PreK–Third-Grade Systems
  + Special Services
  + System and School Improvement
  + Teacher Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP)
  + Transformational Collaborative
* Social Emotional Practices
  + Dropout Prevention and Re-Engagement
  + Expanded Learning
  + Safety and Threat Assessment Services
  + Student Support
* Instruction in the Content Areas
  + English Language Arts (ELA)
  + Computer Science
  + Mathematics
  + Science
  + Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)
* Online Resources
  + DigitalEdge
  + ProQuest
  + Washington Learning Source
  + Learning Management Systems (LMS)
* Regional Competitions
  + Regional High School Art Show
  + Knowledge Bowl
* Registration and Clock Hours
  + PdEnroller
  + Clock Hours
* Schools and Early Learning Services
  + ReLife School
  + Early Learning: Head Start, Early Head Start, ECEAP Services
  + Educare of Greater Seattle
  + Heritage Head Start
  + Washington Correction Center for Women (WCCW)
  + Early Head Start Home-Based Services: Prenatal to Three Years
  + Parent Professional and Personal Development

## Equity in Education

This team works collaboratively to enhance and support racially equitable and culturally responsive approaches among staff, students, parents and communities — building capacity to lead with racial equity. PSESD created the Equity in Education department to work collaboratively with our regional partners and those that we maintain transformational relationships with to provide each and every student with equitable access to educational opportunities by enhancing and supporting racially equitable and culturally responsive approaches to education. We believe that the development of these approaches and systems will contribute to creating strong educational systems and academics for every student. Services include:

* Building Capacity for Leading with Racial Equity
* Achieving Racial Equity Through Policy and Beyond
* Creating LGBTQ+ and Gender-Inclusive Schools
* Data Coaching for Equity
* Educators of Color Leadership Community
* Equity Advisory Committee Development
* Equity Consortium
* Leadership Coaching for Equity
* Professional Development for Equity
* Racial Equity Tool Implementation
* School, Family, and Community Partnerships
* Supporting Our Immigrant and Refugee Students and Families

## Administrative and Management Services

In partnership with public, private, tribal and charter school systems, PSESD provides strategic leadership and inter-agency cooperatives to support all aspects of school, administrative, business, finance, communications, evaluation, policy, transportation and human resources functions. Services include:

* Accreditation
* Conference Centers
* Communications and Public Relations
* Fingerprinting
* Fiscal and State Reporting Services
* Government Relations
* Human Resources and Organizational Development
* Puget Sound Workers’ Compensation Trust and Unemployment Pool
* Regional Committee on School District Organization
* Strategy, Evaluation and Learning
* Superintendent and Board Member Support
* Transportation

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# OUTCOMES-FOCUSED PARTNERS IN ELIMINATING OPPORTUNITY GAPS

We partner with school systems and communities to eliminate opportunity gaps and affect meaningful change. We recognize the opportunity gaps in education that impact students are the result of inequitable practices, policies and systems in schools, and in our society. As a result, we designed our Measures of Progress around these outcomes as a way to focus and track our efforts to influence systems and student experiences.

# BECOMING AN ANTIRACIST MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATION

We are now in our sixth year of enacting our Racial Equity Policy — which aims to create a racially just and humanizing educational system, with equitable outcomes through our transformational relationships with: early learning, K–12 education, higher education, families, public and private organizations for success for children, and families and communities of color. These relationships move us closer toward our goal of becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization.

An Antiracist Multicultural Organization has within its mission, goals, values and operating systems, explicit policies and practices that prohibit anyone from being excluded or unjustly treated because of race or any other social identity or status. As we work toward becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization, we commit to:

* Implementing explicit antiracist practices and procedures, and being accountable to communities of color to define success
* Appreciating all forms of social diversity — and understanding the strengths and advantages that social diversity brings to the community
* Working systematically and deliberately to ensure all members of its diverse workforce feel fully included and have opportunities to contribute to achieving the PSESD's End
* Supporting racial equity and social justice through advocating these values in our transformational relationships with internal and community partners, and peer organizations

## Racial Equity Policy Implementation Plan

The Racial Equity Policy implementation plan includes four strategic directions for closing opportunity gaps, achieving racial equity, and becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization.

### Strategic Direction Action Team 1

PSESD will assure the cultural responsiveness and antiracist leadership knowledge and skills of all staff. We will strive to deepen every staff members’ understanding of opportunity gaps and knowledge of gap-closing and gap-perpetuating practices. We will provide staff development to strengthen employees’ knowledge and skills for eliminating racial disparities in educational outcomes and becoming antiracist leaders. We also strive to become an antiracist multicultural workplace so that all employees can thrive and support our shared End.

### Strategic Direction Action Team 2

PSESD will identify and create opportunities to cultivate a racially diverse and antiracist workplace that allows PSESD to serve as the model of a diverse and Antiracist Multicultural Organization that its partners may strive to emulate.

### Strategic Direction Action Team 3

PSESD will provide catalytic leadership with educational partners that respectfully, but firmly and persistently, accelerates the implementation of antiracist, gap-closing policies and practices.

### Strategic Direction Action Team 4

PSESD acknowledges power imbalances that perpetuate inequities. We are committed to addressing this by centering power within students, families and communities. All PSESD relationships and partnerships are rooted in antiracism practices.

### Transformation Team

Established in 2016, the Transformation Team is a collective of PSESD staff, community members and parents charged with guiding the agency towards becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization. They do so by overseeing and evaluating the implementation of the Racial Equity Policy No. 1010. This team is integral in assisting the agency in eliminating opportunity gaps and providing a bridge between the PSESD Board and the agency. Transformation Team members include:

Mary Waldron

Manager, Pre-K to 3rd Grade Systems

Aeryn King

Site Manager, Educare

Dior Davenport

Executive Assistant, Learning, Teaching and Family Support

Joli Valentino

Executive Director, Business and Operations

John Welch

Superintendent

Maxine Broussard-Upchurch

Director, Human Resources

Anna Wade

Director, Grants Management Administration

Eileen Yoshina

Manager, Equity in Education

Michelle Morse

Manager, Equity in Education

Heather Kawamoto

Manager, Equity in Education

Matthew Gulbranson

Director, Communication Engagement, Equity in Education

Sarita Siqueiros Thornburg

Executive Director, Strategy, Evaluation and Learning

Julie Rolling

Executive Director, LTFS

Greta Bornemann

Director, STEM

Lori Pittman

Advisor, Policy and Government

Amy Meiser

Coordinator, Expanded Learning

Justin Chapel

Teacher, General Education

Abraham R. Hernandez

Director, Equity in Education

Felisciana Peralta

Executive Director, Equity in Education

Angelica Alvarez

Manager, Postsecondary Success

Allyssa Zillmer

Executive Assistant, Equity in Education

The work of becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization requires mutual accountability. To instill mutual accountability, the Transformation Team is a collection of voices from the agency, community, family and students. To ensure there is communication across the Strategic Direction Action Teams, the co-leads are members of the Transformation Team. To that end, the PSESD Board, Superintendent, Executive Leadership Team and Transformation Team are mutually responsible by ensuring adequate resources and executing strategies that support the recommendations of the Transformation Team.

PSESD commits to sustain and support the continued development of the Transformation Team for the purpose of achieving full implementation of the racial equity policy and transforming the agency into an Antiracist Multicultural Organization.

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# MEASURES OF PROGRESS

The Measures of Progress help PSESD and its partners set the right priorities to advance strategically and help us gauge whether, and how, we are working toward outcomes and our End — success for each child and eliminate the opportunity gap by leading with racial equity. Our outcomes are about how we work with each other and our partners to support racially just and equitable school systems, and thereby, impact student outcomes.

## Student Measures

* Children meeting school readiness standards (Preschool Teaching Strategies GOLD)
* Students proficient in 3rd grade English Language Arts (ELA) (Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA))
* Students proficient in 3rd grade Math (SBA)
* Low commitment to school (6th grade Healthy Youth Survey)
* High school graduation rate
* Postsecondary direct enrollment
* Developmental math course taking
* Postsecondary completion
* Students experience a racially just and humanizing school system

## Systems Measures

* Exclusionary discipline rates
* Persistence of a diverse workforce in K–12 (certificated and classified educators)
* Opportunities for prosocial school involvement (8th grade Healthy Youth Survey)
* Partners adopt gap-closing practices
* Families feel empowered to partner with their child(ren)’s school

## Agency Impact Measures

* PSESD staff grow in their racial equity leadership
* PSESD supports partners to lead with racial equity

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# INTRODUCTION

PSESD offers a diverse array of programs and professional development to support our region’s children, families, educators, and community partners. The programs featured in this report offer clear examples of how the work of PSESD is contributing toward our Measures of Progress, which in turn, advance us toward becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization and eliminating opportunity gaps.

We encourage you to visit [psesd.org](http://www.psesd.org/) to learn more about everything we have to offer.

# STUDENT MEASURES OF PROGRESS

## PSESD Early Head Start at the Washington Corrections Center for Women

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Student Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from PSESD Pathway to Change:** A racially just and humanizing school system; all can succeed and achieve
* **Indicator Name:** Children meeting school readiness standards (Preschool Teaching Strategies GOLD)
* **Indicator Description:** The percent of children meeting developmental expectations in all six domains of the TSG assessment

### Quick Facts

The Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW), in partnership with the PSESD Early Learning Department, operates a unique Early Head Start program. This program:

* Supports mothers who are incarcerated and enrolled in the WCCW’s Residential Parenting Program
* Is designed to develop, strengthen and maintain the bond between parent and child
* Includes participants who:
  + Are pregnant women convicted of a felony, with no violent crime offense or violent crime offense against children
  + Meet minimum custody requirements
  + Have less than 30 months to serve from their due date to expected release date
  + Are able to have their child live with them while working toward reentry to society
* Helps interrupt negative parenting practices, preparing mothers with new skills to, in turn, help their babies meet school readiness standards
* Provides critical support, curbs recidivism rates, breaks cycles of poverty and abuse, and empowers moms with the skills and resources to support children throughout their education

### Supporting Learning from the Beginning

When mothers are incarcerated, their children still benefit from connection and learning. Such is the case in this partnership, the only program in the nation that provides mothers and their children with this crucial connection. The program is assessed using the Ounce Online Assessment for infants and toddlers. This data rolls up to align with the Teaching Strategies GOLD data collected across the region and that aligns with the preschool teaching strategies and practices that prepare children for kindergarten and beyond.

The Early Head Start program is a key component to meeting the goals of the Residential Parenting Program at WCCW. A strong program component is staff engagement and collective focus on the bond between mother and child, realizing that this early connection can set a solid foundation for school readiness and be a key indicator for early success in life.

Through PSESD staff called Family Educators, mothers are counseled and guided to achieve new heights upon their return to society. Additionally, a group called the Parents Advisory Council advocates for resources in early learning — and is a strong voice of support for moms, some of which have completed the program at WCCW and are living positive, productive lives with their children and families.

### Challenges With the Judicial System

“Although WCCW is the only program in the nation with a partnership of this kind,” Nelly Mbajah, PSESD Early Learning Program Service Director, said, “it [the judicial system] is still a system that affects women of color, who are disproportionately represented in corrections. Also, there are challenges to ensure mothers and their defense attorneys are even aware that a program like this exists, along with widely sharing information with judges and prosecutors who once aware of the program, can make recommendations at sentencing.” More communication about the program can make all the difference in the life of a pregnant woman entering or returning to the judicial system, particularly for those meeting program requirements and wanting to take positive steps.

WCCW and PSESD work jointly in an attempt to holistically address the person; however, stark differences exist between how people are referred to and how that reference makes them feel. Being addressed as a number with a prior offense and release date, as opposed to that of a mother, living with her child and directly applying learnings with sustainable program support, makes a substantial difference in rebuilding self pride and confidence. Natasha Roberts, Early Headstart Manager at WCCW shared, “staff [Family Educators and Infant Toddler Teachers] do a great job at making the center warm, open and comfortable. That is important because it is one less thing they have to worry about,” in the overall culture that they are living in. One mom in the program shared, “They made it really fun when I was pregnant. They had new moms meetings, groups where we’d come over and do arts and crafts and get to know each other and get to know the center. I don’t know, they just made it a very homey feeling here. To this day, this is somewhere you can come and just relax and feel like you’re not where we are. Because it gets pretty stressful over there, and just knowing that people are going to treat you like people over here is the best thing ever.”

For further growth and development, staff planned racial equity sessions for parents, which were led by PSESD’s Equity in Education Department. The three-part series consisted of concepts and practices on how to talk to children about race. Investments in both mother and child help meet the goal of racially just and humanizing systems, along with meeting school readiness standards. Another mom shared, “It’s nice to have all the information that Early Head Start and all the workshops give us, to know what our child’s gonna go through or what he’s been going through. And then having all that support from the moms and stuff is great too.”

### Looking Ahead

Both WCCW and PSESD come together to ensure that not only are mothers taught new skills, but also that their social, emotional and health needs are met. The partnership evolved even more with the COVID-19 pandemic, when both WCCW and Family Educators at PSESD began working with recent parolees to provide regular check-ins, information and planning activities while isolating. “We adopted a home visiting format because COVID-19 created an opportunity to take a deeper look at our structure and how services have been provided to the families at WCCW.” Both Mbajah and Roberts agree that for program fidelity, staff will continue to work on expanding programming and support formerly incarcerated moms as they transition back to society.

## Early Learning Racial Equity Training

### **Pathway to Change Area:** Student Measures of Progress

* **Outcome from PSESD Pathway to Change:** A racially just and humanizing school system; all can succeed and achieve
* **Indicator Name:** Children meeting school readiness standards (Preschool Teaching Strategies GOLD)
* **Indicator Description:** The percent of children meeting developmental expectations in all six domains of the TSG assessment

### Quick Facts

PSESD’s Early Learning Program:

* Serves approximately 5,000 early learners and their families across the Puget Sound region
* Consists of federally-funded Head Start and Early Head Start, and the state-funded Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)
* Directly operates early learning centers and subcontracts to centers participating in Head Start, Early Head Start and ECEAP programs in both Pierce and King Counties

### Engaging Staff, Families and Students in Racial Equity Work

PSESD’s Early Learning and Equity in Education departments partner to provide racial equity training to internal early learning staff, subcontractors, center directors at school districts, and community agencies.

The Equity in Education Department trains Early Learning managers alongside internal PSESD staff and center directors. Team managers then initiate conversations about racial equity services with center directors for consistency and fidelity. Equity meetings with team managers are monthly, as equity services to school districts and community agencies are ongoing. In addition, families in Policy Council, Peer Programs, Early Head Start at the Washington Corrections Center for Women, and Educare Early Learning Center, receive direct service from equity managers.

In the Racial Equity Trainings, “our strategy is not to be a check box, but to provide a foundation, a common language, a way of being, a practice. We are interested in supporting subcontractors and early learning providers in carrying that and connecting it in their daily practice,” said Michelle Morse, Equity in Education Program Manager.

Equity in Education Program Managers Michelle Morse and Heather Kawamoto are intentional about helping participants make meaningful connections back to their work. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the traditional two-day foundational training was adapted to a series of six, two-hour weekly sessions online. Facilitators discovered that the time in between sessions gave participants a chance to have deeper reflections. Kawamoto shared, “This happened before, during and after the death of George Floyd...we saw dramatic shifts in thinking….deep heart-felt sharing, [people] being willing to explore and learn, listening to new perspectives and what it means for their work with children and families. What Kawamoto describes as the “amazing silver lining of COVID-19,” is the ability Equity in Education managers have to serve more people — and with that added flexibility, the ability to strategically focus on direct service since traffic and travel obstacles are eliminated.

Students and families feel a positive impact when professionals truly invest and engage in the work. Team Manager, Noelle Wilkins, shared, “Centers are enjoying the Racial Equity training opportunities. They are mentioning growth within their site staff relationships and new levels of appreciation for one another’s cultures and backgrounds. Staff are also benefiting from the opportunity to learn and grow in a nurturing, yet accountable environment. It is challenging individuals to reflect upon their own thoughts, actions and words while better understanding the potential impacts on others inclusive of children and families. Examining how the race work translates into the classrooms and family engagement services has been invaluable, as centers continue to provide delivery to children and families. Knowing that the race work is an ongoing journey and that it is not a space of judgement, but instead a space of building awareness to then inform change, makes for a learning environment that has space for all participants. Lastly, the virtual opportunity to continue this work has been effective and meaningful in staying engaged in the commitment to race equity and growth.”

Kawamoto said, “There is research to support that when staff is able to shift not only their practices, but their philosophy and perspective, [but] shifting heart and mind around race, children and families feel, see, and experience that. How they feel about themselves and their racial identity directly impacts their learning of all these important school and life skills. This [racial equity training] is not an arrival, but it is an ongoing process.”

### Looking Ahead: Culturally Responsive to Early Learners

PSESD’s Equity in Education and Early Learning departments are working together to provide safe nests of self identity and support for early learners. How students see themselves being mirrored back to them affects their experiences in the classroom, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and amid racial and social justice issues. “If adults make their discoveries and are able to shift their practices, families will feel seen, heard and known. Culturally responsive teaching begins to take place along with positive conversations with families around race,” said Kawamoto. The training is a start to what is hoped to be a shift in thinking and a journey toward growth and positive change.

## Washington State Fellows Network

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Student Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from the PSESD Pathway to Change:** A racially just and humanizing school system; all can succeed and achieve
* **Indicator Names:** Students proficient in 3rd grade ELA (SBA); students proficient in 3rd grade math (SBA)\*
* **Indicator Description:** The percent of students who met or exceeded standards on the 3rd Grade Math assessment; the percent of students who met or exceeded standards on the 3rd Grade English Language Arts assessment

### Quick Facts

Coordinators in each of the state’s nine ESDs, in collaboration with OSPI content-area leadership, convene Fellows three to four times a year to engage in shared learning. At PSESD, convenings offer the opportunity for Fellows to focus their learning on:

* Leading with racial equity
* Learning pedagogy and content knowledge that Fellows can take back to their districts, schools or teams
* Developing as teacher leaders
* Creating and enacting an action plan

### Shared Learning at PSESD

The [Washington State Fellows Network](https://www.k12.wa.us/educator-support/educator-leadership/washington-state-fellows-network) is a leadership program focused on equitable mindsets and practices for early learning, English language arts, math and science educators. Across Washington State, Fellows serve as educational leaders who expand their capacity to improve student learning through ongoing professional learning and leadership development within their local context and in partnership with school districts, educational service districts, and community agencies and state organizations.

### Feedback from Participants

“It’s been powerful to have a place where I track what I am doing in my district and to talk with others about their focus.” -ELA Fellow

“I really appreciated being in a community of other teachers who were all looking to be the most effective, caring and inclusive teachers possible, especially in the area of mathematics. I loved being exposed to new strategies and methods of teaching math that I could implement in my own classroom right away. I also appreciated diving more into the research behind effective and inclusive math instruction.” -Math Fellow

### Sharing Lessons with PSESD Fellows

“The real purpose of the Fellows is to make sure that they’re equipped to create access for students,” said PSESD ELA Program Manager, Becca Horowitz. “If we’re not trying to fundamentally change our practices to create equitable schools, then we’re missing the point. It’s crucial that this mindset is woven through everything that we’re doing.”

When it comes to English language arts, educators can face a difficult dilemma in trying to find the right balance of providing lessons that challenge their students without overwhelming them. Without support, well-intended teachers who want their students to be successful, can unintentionally deprive them of opportunities for development. The Fellows program provides the knowledge and structure for teachers to calibrate together on identifying curriculum that challenges students to rise to the Common Core standards for their grade levels. “The Common Core standards are really ambitious and center students, making meaning,” said Horowitz. “It’s critical that the learning that we’re doing [with Fellows] is actually in service of student outcomes.”

In the subject of mathematics, educators' approaches to student learning are equally important when it comes to effectively nurturing student development. Across grade levels, the practice of designating students by perceived abilities into different classes (known as “tracking”) has shown a negative impact, both in student outcomes and educator behavior. “Tracking is insidious,” said PSESD Regional Math Coordinator Leslie Nielsen. “It tells kids from a young age that they’re not good enough. As a teacher, in order to undo tracking you have to believe that all of the students in your classroom can do mathematics.”

For Nielsen, emphasizing teacher belief is a critical component of building capacity within the Fellows program. “In Fellows we talk about leadership of self, leadership of others, and leadership of the extended community,” said Nielsen. “Our hope is that at minimum, teachers will adapt a practice and try it in the classroom. If it goes well, they’ll share it with their grade. If it goes really well, they’ll go out and lead professional development on it. That’s baked into the structure at the systemic level.”

When the learning that Fellows share during reunions throughout the year reaches back to their own grades, districts and communities, the impact can be transformative. “Fellows broadened my perspective on the whole system and our practices. It made me rethink how and what I was teaching. It opened up the conversation within our district math team on how we are delivering math intervention instruction, said a 2019–20 Math Fellow.

### Making Equity a Priority

In the past five years, the PSESD Math Fellows program has nearly doubled in size. While the increase in interest is an exciting reflection of the demand of the Math Fellows program, the focus on equity-related issues in mathematics is really what excites Nielsen. “Math Fellows really dig into the equity work. They ask questions, and they become very reflective in the program. They reflect on and refine their own practice.”

When thinking about the work of PSESD ELA Fellows, Horowitz shared a similar experience. “When I asked them about their takeaways on the year, all of their comments were about leading with racial equity and examining their own classrooms, reflecting on their own biases, and doing that internal work. It’s meaningful that we have 40 educators who carry that with them.”

“Especially now, it’s important to view everything we do with an equity lens. It is clear that the discrepancy between students’ situations is greater than ever. It has been highlighted in our Fellows sessions how important it is for us to be adjusting our instructional and assessment practices to meet their needs rather than having students conform to our ‘way’ of doing things. Focusing on building community and providing students with lots of choice and opportunity to demonstrate their understanding is critical.” -2019–20 ELA Fellow

Though the Fellows program lasts for three years, many participants elect to become “Emeritus Fellows” and end up staying connected to the Fellows’ Network. Their presence in the Fellows community creates a connection to the experiences, practices and perspective gained over years of participation. Most recently, a group of Math Emeritus Fellows suggested that the PSESD Math Fellows read “How to Be an Antiracist,” by Ibram X. Kendi, and for Nielsen, the decision was representative of the continuous influence of the Fellows community. When educators find community in the Fellows program, the learning never stops.

### Looking Forward

With the shifts in the educational landscape due to COVID-19, the community and support provided by the Fellows program is more important than ever. As districts across the state balance remote and hybrid learning opportunities, educational inequities are at risk of being exacerbated across all grade levels. The Fellows program offers a network of support for educators that can help them tackle some of the unforeseen challenges of this new academic environment.

With much of the professional development for educators moving to a remote learning environment, Nielsen sees an opportunity for increased access: “Being virtual is opening up accessibility for teachers where distance might previously have been an issue.” As new educators are exposed to the Fellows program, the goal to positively impact every student in the state of Washington might actually become one step closer to reality.

### Footnotes

\*Data not available, as Smarter Balanced Assessment was not administered in Spring 2020 due to COVID-19.

## Low Commitment to School: 6th grade Healthy Youth Survey

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Student Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from the PSESD Pathway to Change:** A racially just and humanizing school system; all can succeed and achieve
* **Indicator Description:** This measure helps us understandthe extent to which students see the school role as viable or helpful

### Footnotes

2020 data is not available, as the Healthy Youth Survey is administered every two years and was not administered in the 2019–20 school year.

## High School Graduation Rate

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Student Measures of Progress

## **Outcome from PSESD Pathway to Change:** A racially just and humanizing school system; all can succeed and achieve.

* **Indicator Description:** Percent of students who graduate within five years of entering the ninth grade

## King County Promise

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Student Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from the PSESD Pathway to Change:** A racially just and humanizing school system; all can succeed and achieve
* **Indicator Name:** Postsecondary direct enrollment
* **Indicator Description:** Percent of high school students direct enrolling in all Washington and out-of-state private and publicly funded two or four-year institutions

### Quick Facts

The goals of King County Promise are to:

1. Provide students who have been historically underserved with more high-quality advising and support services to help them make the most of their opportunities
2. Fix the disconnects between the different parts of our fractured K–16 educational system
3. Offer a local evidence base as a demonstration to the state for future investments

### Connecting Youth to Postsecondary Education

By 2024, almost 90 percent of living wage jobs in King County will require some kind of postsecondary education or credential. Yet right now, only 31 percent of King County high school graduates complete a postsecondary credential.

[King County Promise](https://www.psccn.org/transition/king-county-promise) is a comprehensive approach to connecting youth to the postsecondary education and credentials they need. It is designed to address long-standing racial equity gaps by eliminating systemic failures and providing critical navigation support to students on both alternative and traditional pathways to college. It centers a vision for improved equity in college access and success for historically underserved, young King County residents.

“The idea of the King County Promise was to help us collectively start thinking bigger across the full region about what needs to change in postsecondary education to ensure that it’s more equitable and accessible for students of color,” said PSESD’s Postsecondary Director, Kyla Lackie. “We started with the prompt: what needs to change in our systems, and what should those systems look like?”

Since 2017, PSCCN has been engaging the education community across King County with these questions. Several consistent themes and strategies have emerged: students want more support at school from knowledgeable and culturally relevant staff, help through the transitions, and more support to reach completion once at college. “Our systems present numerous hurdles for students to get to completion,” said Lackie. “We believe that many of these barriers can be addressed with the right capacity, collective will, and clarity on solutions.”

### Investing Where It Matters Most

For many students of color, first-generation students, and students impacted by poverty, navigating the pathway to postsecondary education can depend on the presence of educational guides, both inside and outside of the school system. A lack of support can leave students unable to explore college and career options, understand academic and other requirements, and navigate the labyrinth of the college application and financial aid processes. Even when a student is able to make it to a college environment, they often will find that their college also lacks adequate support to help them be successful.

“We had an excellent advisor our freshman year who was like a mom to us. However, she left and now we have someone who isn’t supportive, or connected, or familiar with our challenges as first-generation students of color. The advisor is critical — but they also don’t stay.” -College student from south King County

“The ways in which our young people and students go through the system is not always linear,” said Mercy Daramola, a Puget Sound College Access Network Manager. “They may be in a certain high school, but their main social support might come from a community organization. We’re both addressing the short term, which is making sure that there are more staff in these roles, and also addressing that higher level coordination between systems. Investing in different places where students show up, or the different approaches that students take on their postsecondary journeys, is important.”

The need for equitable student support is underscored by the conditions of a pandemic that is disproportionately impacting communities of color across the nation. As students adapt to the dramatic shift toward remote learning, it is projected that more students will choose to attend their local community and technical colleges than ever before. For King County Promise, the intentional decision to partner with local community and technical colleges (CTCs) represents the alignment of a program that was shaped by the voices of students in our region. “The fact that the Promise reflects something that is on people’s minds even more now is incredible to reckon with,” said Daramola.

### Student Testimonial

Hi, my name is Gurjot. I’m a rising junior at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU), and I’m here to speak in support of the King County Promise.

Only a few years ago, I was a senior at Thomas Jefferson High School contemplating my future and trying to decide which college I’d go to. As a first generation college student, I felt overwhelmed. Where should I go? How do I apply? Will I do well once I’m there? Language barriers and a lack of knowledge prevented my parents from helping my siblings and I with the process. However, this is a common struggle for a lot of students throughout King County. Especially, for historically underserved populations of first-generation, low income, students of color. In fact, just 30 percent of students complete any kind of postsecondary credentials by their mid-twenties, even though 96 percent of SKC high school students want to attain some college credentials to pursue a career.

Furthermore, there is a direct correlation between the resources a school is provided and the success of their students. Luckily, my graduating class was a part of a mentoring program that provided students with extra school supplies, took them on college field trips, assisted with college apps, and connected with their families. But since the program only applied to my high school class of 2017, it was like winning a lottery. That’s not how our education system should work. Don’t all our students deserve the same support?

Last summer, through the WA Bus, I got the chance to talk to numerous youth about the King County Promise and their postsecondary goals. And from all the conversations, it’s clear that what students want is a system that provides them the financial and advising support to succeed in their pursuits for higher education. That’s why I, along with many others, are here today in support of funding the Promise with 38 percent of PSTAA funds.

### Looking Forward

King County Promise is now more critical than ever, and it can serve as a key component of the COVID-19 recovery strategy. Access to postsecondary education and training programs is going to be essential for rebuilding our regional economy and preparing our next generation of leaders. Moving forward, the Promise will serve to demonstrate the effective strategies and adequate funding levels needed that can be replicated statewide.

“King County Promise represents the best aspirations of our region. We know that we can do better by our students, so we put together in a package what the best of our work can look like,” Daramola said. “Let’s put it all together and dream of a system where it’s something that we have as a standard.”

“Sometimes there are these serendipitous moments where a student will say, ‘I met this person and I was so lucky that they helped guide me to my program.’ We don’t want those moments to happen by luck. We want to systematize those, so that every student has the opportunity to feel lucky.” -Puget Sound College and Career Network Manager Christian Grandlund

“I needed more than just someone saying ‘How are you doing?’ I needed the practical, specific, technical support.” -College Student from South King County

## Developmental Math Coursetaking

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Student Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from PSESD Pathway to Change:** A racially just and humanizing school system; all can succeed and achieve
* **Indicator Description:** Percent of high school graduates enrolling between summer term and spring term in remedial or developmental courses in math in a public two-year or CTC institution in Washington State

## Postsecondary Completion

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Student Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from the PSESD Pathway to Change:** A racially just and humanizing school system; all can succeed and achieve
* **Indicator Description:** Percent of students having earned a degree or certificate at a postsecondary institution or completion of an apprenticeship program at some point in the eight academic years following high school graduation (in all Washington and out-of-state private and publicly funded two or four-year institutions)

## Students Experience a Racially Just and Humanizing School System

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Student Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from PSESD Pathway to Change:** Students experience a racially just and humanizing school system; all students can succeed and achieve
* **Indicator Description:** Students reporting the extent to which they have experienced racially just and humanizing school systems, as shared through the Youth Participatory Action Research projects

### Data Narrative

This Measure of Progress was co-designed with high school interns from PSESD’s Leaders in Training program. The intention was for the data collection itself to be mutually beneficial for students and PSESD, and racially just and humanizing. The interns co-created a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) data collection approach in which students explored issues of importance to them and gained concrete skills.

Rooted in social justice principles, YPAR is an innovative approach to community improvement that centers the experiences of local youth. YPAR participants conduct systematic research projects to better their communities and institutions. This year’s YPAR internship was held virtually and led by a cohort of returning Leaders in Training interns. Supported by peer advisors Roscella Fuertes, Sonnhi Duong, and Shadia Amir, interns met as a group to learn about research protocols and discuss issues impacting their communities. Interns’ research topics included teacher trainings, antiracism in schools and homelessness. The YPAR interns intend on showcasing their findings to the public within the coming months. The results of the students’ YPAR projects will be shared in the 2021 Report to the Community.

If you’d like to learn more about YPAR, visit the [YPAR Hub](http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/) or contact PSESD lead, [Cassandra O’Francia](mailto:cofrancia@psesd.org).

# SYSTEMS MEASURES OF PROGRESS

## Positive Steps

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Systems Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from the PSESD Pathway to Change:** Capacity and resources to close racial equity gaps; implementation of racially equitable policies and practices
* **Indicator Name:** Exclusionary discipline rates
* **Indicator Description:** High school students who experienced a long term or short-term out-of-school suspension or expulsion in the school year

### Quick Facts

* 3–9 months of in-home and community-based services
* Connections with Pierce County mental health, substance abuse, social service agencies and case management services in the school community
* Advocacy and updates at court hearings and school meetings
* Functional family therapy and parent-partner services
* Parenting classes and support using [Love and Logic](https://www.loveandlogic.com/) and [Parent Project](https://parentproject.com/)

### Supporting Students Impacted by Truancy

When attendance for students is a problem, the effects can be extensive and enduring. Students with chronic truancy — missing 10 percent, or 17 days of a school year — are less likely to receive a high school diploma and eventually earn a living wage job. Truancy also predicts higher rates of violent behavior and involvement with the justice system. To identify and support students dealing with truancy through a comprehensive approach, Pierce County Juvenile Court, schools, parents, caregivers and other professionals refer students and their caring adults to the [Positive Steps program](https://dor.psesd.org/programs/positive-steps).

The Positive Steps program is a coordinated approach to support students impacted by chronic truancy through a collaboration across community-based services that includes connections with social service agencies, targeted academic support and comprehensive family engagement. In the eyes of PSESD’s Dropout Prevention & Re-Engagement Director, Arthur Dennis, partnerships in both the community and in the school are absolutely essential to the outreach process.

“When Positive Steps is at its optimum, it is a cross-system collaboration between all providers that are touching students. Social welfare staff, probation officers, court personnel and especially schools and teachers, are in a collaborative relationship in terms of sharing information about the best fit for the Positive Steps program,” said Dennis. “You have a coalition of committed people involved in the Positive Steps framework who are identifying those students who truly need that support.”

### Building a Network of Student Support

Every student is different, but the goals of the Positive Steps program remain the same: support, encouragement and positive decision-making that starts with re-engagement in the right educational environment. Involvement with the Positive Steps program can be the difference-maker that prevents a student from missing the opportunity to graduate.

Pierce County Probation Officer, Joy Schaad, has seen that impact firsthand in her work with PSESD Early Warning Specialist, Debbi Reed. “Debbi has helped a multitude of students to re-engage with their schools. Once they see that adults can care and be supportive, she will refer them to community providers,” Schaad said. “This provides a successful transition to those services as opposed to just telling the students and family to go to the agency and apply for services.This approach has helped most of the students that I have referred to her re-engage in school and improve their attendance.”

When a network of committed partners across the community come together to lift up a struggling student, those relationships become a foundation for change. “In most cases, kids may need a positive adult in their life — that can be the Early Warning Specialist,” said Dennis. “In turn, that relationship can help the student have tremendous positive performances in school.”

### Looking Ahead

As Positive Steps and program partners continue their work, there is an emphasis on figuring out ways to reach struggling students who might be overlooked by referrals from the school system. For the small percentage of students who receive a truancy petition, there are many more at-risk youth who might benefit from the intervention and sustained support provided by the Positive Steps program and its partners. Expanding outreach is especially critical when centering the work around closing racial equity gaps.

As a longtime partner in this work, Tara Rodriguez, a Supervisor at Pierce County Juvenile Justice court, believes that Positive Steps is up to the task. “There’s nothing that [Positive Steps] is not willing to do. They are always assessing how we can all work together better to help families before they end up in a courtroom.”

## Culturally Responsive Educator Mentoring

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Systems Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from the PSESD Pathway to Change:** Capacity and resources to close racial equity gaps; implementation of racially equitable policies and practices
* **Indicator Name:** Persistence of a diverse workforce (K–12 certificated and classified educators)
* **Indicator Description:** The percent of new educators persisting for three years after they were hired

### Quick Facts

The Educators of Color Leadership Community (ECLC) is a program designed to support and retain educators of color through community building, culturally responsive mentoring and coaching, and professional learning that builds on each individual’s strengths as an educator of color. Participation in ECLC is a three year commitment, and participants attend five in-person meetings during each year.

Annual Areas of Focus:

* Year 1: Community building, leadership development
* Year 2: Strengthening leadership roles and relationships with administrators/central offices
* Year 3: Serving as a coach/leader mentor for educators of color within your own district, with ongoing support from your cohort and PSESD

### Making Mentorship Inclusive

Educator mentorship can be a formative strategy for support for teacher development, and this is especially true for educators of color.

Against the backdrop of a teaching force that is almost 90% white, educators of color face additional challenges. “We lose talent all the time because it can be a hostile working environment, people don’t feel like they’re valued, people don’t feel like they’re growing or they don’t feel supported,” said PSESD Director of Equity in Education, Eileen Yoshina. “These are all things that students of color feel, too.” Across the state there’s an emphasis on getting people in the door, but for Yoshina, retention is a critical key to maintaining a diverse K–12 workforce. “If people are leaving after a year or two in the profession, that’s not sustainable at all.”

Supporting and retaining teachers of color is a crucial strategy to eliminate the opportunity gap in the PSESD region, as well as across the state and nation. “The rate at which educators of color leave the profession is a lot higher than white educators because of barriers and bias they encounter in the system, schools and sometimes colleagues,” said PSESD ELA Program, Manager Becca Horowitz. Research shows that a diverse teacher workforce will improve educational outcomes for all students, and particularly for students of color, who are most adversely impacted by the lack of teacher diversity.

### Educators of Color Leadership Community

In partnership with the [Educators of Color Leadership Community](https://www.psesd.org/programs-services/equity-in-education/educators-of-color-leadership-community#:~:text=The%20Educators%20of%20Color%20Leadership,as%20an%20educator%20of%20color.) (ECLC), a team from PSESD developed a grant funded through the [Beginning Educator Support Team](https://www.k12.wa.us/educator-support/beginning-educator-support-team) (BEST) program to address the creation of a culturally responsive mentorship curriculum that would instill the equitable beliefs, knowledge and skills necessary to effectively support educators of color. Participants involved in ECLC attended BEST “Mentor Academies,” and they used their experience and feedback to co-develop the curriculum. “It was a real partnership with the people who are most impacted,” said Yoshina. “It was a collaboration — if we’re trying to retain educators of color, let’s actually partner with educators of color to talk about what retention and mentoring looks like for them. It felt like such a great, powerful way to really live into our values.”

For PSESD Special Services Director, Erin Stewart, the partnership also offered a way to think strategically about school support that meets the needs of our region. “This was an opportunity to really partner with educators of color in our region, to design and share their experiences and perspectives for us to think about for future programs or supports in our schools.”

Of the 433,217 students that PSESD serves, 55 percent are students of color. Centering opportunities to support educators of color is a reflection of the diversity of our region and our students. To truly lead with racial equity as an agency, deepening our learning around equity in the K–12 workforce and targeting strategies for improvement in our region is a vital step.

### Mentorship as a Strategy for Retention

When it comes to retention, there should be an inclusive view on what that looks like for educators of color. The goal shouldn’t be focused solely on keeping educators of color in the classroom, but rather systematizing opportunities to further their career into leadership roles as well. “There’s a potential for systems change, if we are viewing our educators of color as leaders and creating formal opportunities for leadership,” said Horowitz.

Educators of color provide a critical lens on what makes education effective for students of color, and that’s why it’s so important to ensure that there are pathways to leadership opportunities. For Yoshina, the connection between educators and students cannot be overstated. “If we are creating systems where educators of color are thriving, that’s an indicator of having a system where children of color are thriving. Paying attention to the wellbeing and longevity and development of our educators of color is something that we need to do if we’re really serious about improving our system.”

### Looking Ahead

“So many educators are working from home, isolated from their colleagues,” said Stewart. “Mentorship becomes even more important in this current context.”

In the face of an educational landscape that looks more isolated than ever due to COVID-19, effective mentorship becomes essential. Creating community among educators can provide a structure of support to help tackle the difficulties of working in an educational environment that looks dramatically different than ever before. For many long-time educators, partnering with younger teachers can assist their adaptation to creative teaching practices with students that are increasingly technologically-savvy. “When we think about mentoring in general, it really is a two-way relationship in that both the beginning teacher and mentor are contributing to that relationship — contributing to learning and professional growth,” said Stewart. “It’s really about shifting the power dynamic in a traditional mentoring relationship.”

As educator mentorship adapts to this new educational environment, making it a priority to provide support for educators of color will be a key strategy to ensure equitable learning opportunities. “We’ve seen just in a short time with those couple schools that teachers [of color] will say, ‘I’m feeling supported. Come work in this school,’ ” said Yoshina. “To me, those are signs of effectiveness.”

## School District Financial Health

PSESD supports schools not only with academic and educator services, but also with financial, operational and administrative services. Strong financial systems assist schools to focus resources on students, educators and school staff, in service of eliminating opportunity gaps.

Substitute House Bill 1431, passed in 2011, directed the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to work with educational service districts to develop a tool that would provide information about the financial health of school districts.

Aligned with OSPI’s model, PSESD is using a modified version to support districts in the Puget Sound region. In addition to assisting districts with the annual budget and financial statement submission to OSPI, PSESD is piloting the modified version of the tool this year.

The PSESD fiscal indicators as of 2020 are as follows:

1. Fund Balance to Revenue Ratio: Measures the percentage of a district’s revenues it currently has “in reserve.”
2. Expenditure to Revenues: Measures whether expenditures were greater or less than the amount of revenue the district brought in.
3. Days Cash on Hand: Measures the number of days a district could operate if all funding were ceased.
4. Salary and Benefits to Total Expenses Ratio: Measures the balance between employee compensation and non-employee costs.

## Opportunities for Prosocial School Involvement (8th grade Healthy Youth Survey)

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Systems Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from the PSESD Pathway to Change:** Capacity and resources to close racial equity gaps; implementation of racially equitable policies and practices
* **Indicator Description:** The percent of students reporting opportunities for prosocial involvement (ways for students to participate meaningfully in important activities at school)

### Footnotes

2020 data is not available, as the Healthy Youth Survey is administered every two years and was not administered in the 2019–20 school year.

## Partners Adopt Gap-Closing Practices

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Systems Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from the PSESD Pathway to Change:** Capacity and resources to close racial equity gaps; implementation of racially equitable policies and practices.
* **Indicator Description:** Percent of school district strategic plans and policies with evidence of racially equitable practices

### Data Narrative

PSESD’s pathway to change, or theory of change, is to support partners to lead with racial equity and develop their capacity so that they adopt and scale gap-closing practices, or racially just practices. This measure helps PSESD better understand strengths and opportunities for growth in this area.

A design team of PSESD staff and partners, plus high school students from PSESD’s Leaders in Training (LIT) internship program, co-designed the approach to this measure. LIT interns are analyzing school district strategic plans and policies using a rubric they developed to look for evidence of racial justice practices. They are also comparing their own experiences in school with the results of their analyses. In addition, the design team is interested in hearing from more students about their experiences with gap-closing practices in their schools. This dovetails with efforts to understand student and family experiences in other parts of PSESD. The design team will be working in 2021 to develop ways to hear from students and families about their experiences to help shape the approaches PSESD takes in different parts of our organization.

## Families Feel Empowered to Partner with Their Child(ren)’s School

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Systems Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from the PSESD Pathway to Change:** Capacity and resources to close racial equity gaps; implementation of racially equitable policies and practices.
* **Indicator Description:** Percent of families with children in elementary school reporting that their school supports them to partner with the school

### Data Narrative

This measure focuses specifically on families with children in early elementary school. Parents have shared that they feel connected and empowered when their children are in early learning programs, but feel less welcomed by schools when their children enter elementary school. Information from this measure will help PSESD and its partners and families to build stronger connections in those early elementary years.

Development of this measure will be finalized in the 2020–21 school year. The current plan is to survey parents who are connected with PSESD programs, such as our Early Learning program and Early Math project, to hear from them about their experiences. This may evolve as we build our capacity to learn from student and family experiences in different parts of the organization.

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# AGENCY IMPACT MEASURES OF PROGRESS

## Staff Grow in Their Racial Equity Leadership

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Agency Impact Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from the PSESD Pathway to Change:** Skill and will for change; adoption of racial equity lens; culture that fosters best work
* **Indicator Description:** Staff reporting growth in their racial equity leadership

### Data Narrative

As part of implementing PSESD’s racial equity plan, which includes the goal of creating opportunities in hiring, advancement, and retention of a diverse and antiracist workforce, this system supports the development and evaluation of leaders based on antiracist leadership competencies. These include: Cultural Proficiency, Racial Equity Advocate, Racial Equity Mindset and Transformational Values. The Antiracist Leadership Competencies are part of a larger new agency-wide competency-based leadership development and evaluation system.

Full implementation took place in 2019–2020, after a 2018–2019 pilot. An evaluation of the system explored the overarching question: how do we create a culture where continuous professional growth and development contributes to the retention and advancement of a racially diverse and antiracist workforce? The co-designed evaluation focused on the project kickoff, professional learning workshops for Personal Accountability and Coaching for Continued Success, and the implementation of [NEOGOV](https://www.neogov.com/) Perform, an online Performance Management System. The evaluation also lifted up staff members’ experiences with the antiracist leadership competencies.

This year, PSESD is measuring its progress based on qualitative evaluation of staff experiences implementing the new system. Over time, this measure will incorporate data from this system.

Overall, pilot participants gave high ratings for workshop content, with particular praise for the Personal Accountability workshop. Some staff identified time and capacity as barriers to participation in training. Regarding NEOGOV adoption, pilot participants communicated the value of electronically recording their goals and using an online system throughout the year to prepare for performance evaluations. However, like with the introduction of any new technological tool, some pilot participants cited implementation challenges, including NEOGOV’s user interface and learning the new system.

Departments utilized a variety of approaches to select which competencies to focus on for staff goal setting. Some participants struggled to connect their job-specific goals to a competency, partially based on a lack of clear understanding of the role competencies play in their work. Additionally, some participants were unsure how the competencies would be used in staff evaluations. During focus groups, staff members cited a fear of being evaluated on what pilot participants understood to be subjective criteria.

The results of this evaluation were used to adjust the system before full implementation. These modifications included: communications about the value of NEOGOV and training opportunities; clarification about how competencies would be assessed and what role they would play in individual evaluation; and continued support and learning opportunities for staff with various levels of comfort and knowledge about antiracist leadership practices.

## PSESD Supports Partners to Lead with Racial Equity

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Agency Impact Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from the PSESD Pathway to Change:** Adoption of racial equity lens; skill and will for change
* **Indicator Description:** PSESD partners who report PSESD has helped them lead with racial equity

### Data Narrative

Working with partners to support them in leading with racial equity is at the heart of PSESD’s work. A 15-member Measures of Progress Design Team of partners and PSESD staff co-designed the measurement approach for this Measure of Progress and is finalizing its data collection tool. The Design Team spoke with internal and external partners to learn how PSESD should measure how well the agency is supporting partners to lead with racial equity. Their feedback formed the foundation of the approach.

PSESD will interview or survey institutional partners to learn how the agency supports their racial equity leadership and how it can strengthen supports. The pilot of this data collection will be during the 2020–21 school year. This data will be helpful given the variety of supports provided across the agency. The results of this data collection will be shared in the 2021 Report to the Community.

## Data Capacity for Equity Partnership

* **Pathway to Change Area:** Agency Impact Measures of Progress
* **Outcome from the PSESD Pathway to Change:** Adoption of racial equity lens; skill and will for change
* **Indicator Description:** Partners adopt gap-closing practices

### Quick Facts

This partnership of six community-based organizations (CBOs) serving the South King County area began in November of 2016, through a grant made possible by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The partnership aims to positively impact the way agencies collect and use data to explicitly address racial inequity. For this reason, partners worked to:

* Increase data access and use
* Build capacity for data
* Foster collaboration between schools and CBOs

In the two-strategy grant, six CBOs received grants to build organizational data and evaluation capacity and participate in a learning community as members developed and implemented projects. The project team, Hilary Loeb, Mona Mazraani and Cassandra O’Francia, also presented a four-part data capacity series that engaged close to 70 educators from CBOs, school districts, and state government.

The community based organizations participating were:

* [African Community Housing and Development Organization](http://www.achdo.org/)
* [Child Care Resources](https://childcare.org/)
* [Kent Education and Equity Partnership](https://www.facebook.com/Kent-Education-Equity-Partnership-200598463717084/)
* [Renton Innovation Zone Partnership](https://rizpartnership.org/)
* [Somali Parents Education Board](https://speboard.org/)
* [Sound Discipline](https://www.sounddiscipline.org/)

### Using Data to Address Inequities

PSESD’s Strategy, Evaluation and Learning Department (StEL) goes beyond the traditional service offerings of an ESD to offer a groundbreaking learning community that examines how data is used to address deep inequities in education and to support the adoption of a racial equity lens. Dr. Hilary Loeb, Director of StEL, said about the inaugural program, “Public education data gets weaponized against children of color. We [at PSESD] don’t view the problems in education in terms of an achievement gap. We seek to address the access to opportunities linked to institutional racism. There is a deep and long history of how schools have poorly served students of color. Part of that service are some of the unquestioned assumptions about data. Our efforts are part of a larger body of work to help better understand that first, and think about alternatives to talking about teachers, kids, families and opportunity.”

Community-based organizations (CBOs) examined how data is used, developed problems of practice and used the PSESD Racial Equity Tool to create questions that enabled them to gather relevant data. Their projects included the creation of new data and shared measurement systems, program evaluations, and a white paper about responding to COVID-19. Loeb reflected, “there is an eagerness on behalf of many who work with data, not to cause harm [to our students].'' A member of the Kent Education and Equity Partnership shared a key lesson through the project, “We would serve the community better by giving them opportunities to react to the processes each step of the way — the identification of issues, understanding causes, planning for action, the actions taken, and evaluation of the results. Attending [to] data communications with our community has to be a two-way street.”

The PSESD project team of Loeb, Mazraani and O’Francia was pleased with the response to the Data Capacity for Equity Series. Participant evaluations reflected a deepened understanding of both the challenge and necessity of equity-centered approaches in the development, application and refinement of data collection tools. Respondents shared that they had a sense of responsibility that work with data is collaborative and responsive to the changing needs of the community. One noted, “I would like to introduce the idea of utilizing logic models for program improvement through an equity lens.” Another shared, “I would like to improve our logic models to be more inclusive of all key stakeholders in the district: students, families, community partners, etc.”

For Mazraani, "Data Capacity partners are deeply invested in the success of students, and understand the powerful role data plays in supporting equitable opportunity for all students.” Regional change is needed to improve both data access and use. The idea is that schools and CBOs will work together to make data connections and share data about students to improve student outcomes, with both quantitative and qualitative data, to understand the root cause of students’ opportunity gaps.

### Adapting to a New Normal

During COVID-19, the PSESD StEL team shifted its practice as they revisited the Data Capacity for Equity Partners’ needs. For example, Loeb, Mazraani and O’Francia learned that partners focused on food insecurity and access to technology. The StEL team shifted all training and support online and extended the project timeline. They sought to understand and support how data capacity can be strengthened in a crisis. Certain partners needed to re-envision their data capacity work. Others needed to gather stories about the impact of school closures to improve their services in a rapid cycle.

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# AGENCY LOOKING FORWARD

As we look ahead to the rest of the 2020–21 academic year, we know that measuring the impact of our work will not be a process without complications. We will be tasked with responding to changes in education with innovation in understanding student, family and staff experiences. As families, educators, students and school staff are adapting to a new educational environment, it is our job to ensure that the critical support provided by our services remains resolute.

The Measures of Progress developed to track agency-wide outcomes are not just limited to recording quantitative data, but also include qualitative stories of service that chronicle the many successes and challenges of this work. Through this process of reporting, we hope that the work of PSESD comes alive both in the data we present and the reflections shared on behalf of program staff, partners and participants. Capturing the impact of such a diversity of programs requires an inclusive approach toward measurement, and we acknowledge that this work is an evolving process.

This year has been a time of racial reckoning across our nation, and it's a moment in which we as an agency must lean into our mission. The COVID-19 pandemic that disproportionately impacts communities of color has further exacerbated educational inequities across the country. Ensuring that our agency is effectively serving the educational community is critical, and we’re grateful for the sustained guidance and support of our partners in this work. Our transformational relationships with schools, organizations and communities are indispensable, and we’re eager to hear from you about how we can support your efforts and advance toward a racially just and humanizing school system.[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. All data accompanied with Student, Systems and Agency Measures of Progress can be found at: [www.RTC2020.psesd.org](http://www.rtc2020.psesd.org/). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)