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Issue – As the country and the world absorb the impact of the coronavirus and racial injustices, our interconnectedness has never been more clearly on display. The Whole Child offers a powerful means to support one another – socially, emotionally and academically – during this challenging time. Now, more than ever, we understand how important it is to demonstrate empathy and resilience, build relationships across distance, and call upon our collective resolve to strengthen our schools and our communities. On the most recent Healthy Youth Survey Tacoma, nearly 70% of students reported experiencing depression or anxiety. Within the past 4 years, emergency room visits for children with a primary diagnosis of behavioral or mental health conditions have risen by 400% at our local children's hospital, Mary Bridge. Suicide is leading cause of death in Washington State for ages 10-14. All of this data was gathered pre-pandemic and we know the impacts of COVID and racial injustice have only magnified these issues. Whole Child practices and systems serve as a positive factor lifting students and opening space for academic learning.

Today's youth must navigate a complex, economically competitive, and globally connected world. Overwhelming evidence demands that we complement the focus on academics with the development of the social and emotional skills and competencies that are equally essential for students to thrive in school, career, and life. In the US, two-thirds of children have experienced at least one potentially traumatic event by age 16. When research emerged showing that traumatic stress "hijacks the brain", making it incapable of learning, trauma became an education problem. Yet, by making educators aware of students' trauma and giving them tools and strategies to address it, these barriers to learning can be reduced or removed. TPS has always prioritized the Whole Child, but the pandemic has truly exacerbated the needs and gaps that we will have to address now and in the foreseeable future. With a Whole Child approach, students perform better academically, and the educational community is more nourishing and vital.

Vision – Tacoma Whole Child builds an inclusive, safe, healthy, challenging, supportive, and engaging school environment for students and staff through continued improvement of a multi-tiered systems of support and implementation framework. Students whose academic and social needs are met are more likely to attend school, meet high academic standards, graduate, and thrive in and outside of school.

Approach - Tacoma Whole Child continues to focus on strategies and practices for students and adults to increase their social emotional competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Strategic Whole Child implementation improves school climate, reduces behavior concerns and boosts academic outcomes through safe and caring environments, healthy connections and social-emotional skill development. Whole Child practices are protective factors that help mitigate risk and empower students with the skills needed to navigate through the impacts of trauma that most of our youth face early in their lives.

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Tacoma's Whole Child approach is an effort to transition from a focus on narrowly defined academic achievement to one that promotes the long-term development and success of all children. More than two decades of research demonstrates that education promoting social and emotional learning (SEL) gets results. The findings come from multiple fields and sources, including student achievement, neuroscience, health, employment, psychology, classroom management, learning theory, economics, and the prevention of youth problem behaviors. According to the Aspen Institute, the promotion of social, emotional, and academic learning is not a shifting educational fad; it is the substance of education itself. It is not a distraction from the "real work" of math and English instruction; it is how instruction can succeed.

STAKEHOLDERS

Students: Students throughout our district will attend schools with a positive culture and climate cultivated by using Whole Child practices. Students enjoy school more as they feel safe and welcomed in their environment, learn and practice social emotional skills and participate in relationship building activities. These skills for students contribute to personal success as well as developing a feeling of belonging to the community. The demands of the 21st century require a new approach to education to fully prepare students for college, career, and citizenship. Research, practice, and common sense confirm that a whole child approach to education will develop and prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow.

Stakeholder group 2- Staff: Through professional development, coaching throughout the year and Whole Child team leadership, embedded practices within the school day focus on positive behavior and outcomes in the classroom and school settings to meet individual needs and backgrounds of all students. Social emotional skills are taught, and restorative practices are incorporated, to build and sustain positive relationships. Routines are established, which are culturally responsive, and trauma-informed to support student success and safety. This evidence-based approach aligns directly with 5D, specifically student engagement, culture and climate, and professional learning communities.

Stakeholder group 3- Community: Tacoma Whole Child aligns social emotional learning in school and in out of school time activities with our community partners through our Signature Practices of warm greetings, community circles and emotion checks. The goal of this collaborative work is to provide a seamless Whole Child experience for students as they move throughout their day.

CASE STATEMENT

To close the academic achievement gap, we must close the academically engaged gap. At elementary school, at least 50% of academic time is lost to do disruptive behavior (US Department of Education, 2000). At secondary, classroom non-academically engaged time climbs to 90% (Lewis, 2012). Every minute a teacher spends on redirecting behavior is not spent focused on student learning. Thus, professional development with staff and community, and continued partnership with the University of Washington-Tacoma (as well as other

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community partners), will focus on helping administrators, teachers, and community providers design instruction and foster the social, emotional and behavioral aspects of the learning environment. Through the development of social-emotional learning, teachers gain back 3 to 5 hours of instructional time per week (Barrett and Swindell, 2002), a great cost-benefit with the whole child approach. This evidence-based approach will also help with the retention of staff, as staff will have less stress by using Whole Child practices and systems within their classroom and buildings. Focusing on social emotional practices allows students to feel more connected to school, build their personal skills, and have improved outcomes. Whole Child practices have reduced disproportionality of school discipline, giving ALL students a better chance of success.

The Whole Child uses a continuous improvement process through site-based teams, utilizing data to make decisions, at both building and district level. Whole Child teams create a positive culture and climate for learning through professional development opportunities to learn, embedding social and emotional learning strategies and implementing positive classroom practices. Professional development is followed up with coaching in context to help support fidelity of implementation. The Whole Child focuses on linking data, systems, and practices to achieve performance outcomes. Research shows that SEL not only improves achievement by an average of 11 percentile points, but it also increases prosocial behaviors (such as kindness, sharing, and empathy), improves student attitudes toward school, and reduces depression and stress among students (Durlak et al., 2011). Lack of SEL can result in students bringing disruption and anxiety to educational and social encounters, and in teachers being too depleted to model emotional wellness or to inspire.

 Proven benefits of using Whole Child practices include:

- More positive attitudes toward oneself, others, and tasks including enhanced self-efficacy, confidence, persistence, empathy, connection and commitment to school, and a sense of purpose

- More positive social behaviors and relationships with peers and adults

- Reduced conduct problems and risk-taking behavior

- Decreased emotional distress; students who received SEL instruction had lower reports of depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal than their peers who did not receive SEL instruction

- Improved test scores, grades, and attendance

- Higher job satisfaction for teachers

In the long run, greater social and emotional competence can increase the likelihood of high school graduation, readiness for postsecondary education, career success, positive family and work relationships, better mental health, reduced criminal behavior, and engaged citizenship (e.g., Hawkins, Kosterman, Catalano, Hill, & Abbott, 2008; Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015).   [Aspen Institute's National Commission on Social Emotional and Academic Development's](#) Council of Distinguished Scientists showed that SEL yields results: sweeping academic gains, one up to 3.5 years after students' last SEL intervention, in addition to improved behavior and life. In sum, the Whole Child shouldn't be a "maybe" in schools. Whole-child instruction leads to students who are happy, healthy, safe, engaged, and challenged, ensuring they are empowered to chase and achieve their goals—be they in school, work, or life.

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WHAT SPECIFIC BOARD-ADOPTED BENCHMARKS WILL BE INFLUENCED BY THIS WORK?

- Number of students without a suspension or expulsion (priority benchmark)
- Social-emotional learning plans of each elementary school (priority benchmark)
- Percentage of healthy youth surveys completed
- Number of climate surveys returned

MEASURABLE GOALS

- We will decrease the number of **students** with a suspension or expulsion in each grade by 15% by the end of 2023 as measured by Power BI.
- We will increase the number of climate surveys returned to 20,000 by the end of 2023 as measured by the Center for Educational Effectiveness.
- We will achieve 100% of sites implementing a Social Emotional Learning Action Plan by 2023.

SCOPE OF WORK

Inputs / Resources	Activities	Outputs / Outcomes
Professional Development / Whole Child Team (Coordinators and Director)	Professional development covering our 8 Whole Child pillars: social emotional learning, positive behavioral supports, trauma informed practices, physical and mental wellness, restorative practices, signature whole child practices, advanced tiers and continuous improvement	Decrease in the number of suspensions and expulsions due to positive climate and culture, proactive strategies and nurturing relationships. Exceptional quality of support for all students and high retention rates of teachers through job satisfaction.
Team-Based Implementation/ Whole	Coaching of site based Whole Child teams to use	Improved climate and culture demonstrated on the climate survey. Adoption and implementation

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Child Team (Coordinators and Director)	data to inform implementation and refinement of Whole Child practices throughout the school	school-wide of expectations and best practices. Decrease in suspensions and expulsions through improved proactive supports.
Systems and Online Supports/ Whole Child Team (Coordinators and Director)	Building out systems of support for each of the 8 Whole Child pillars including online learning modules in a multi-tiered system. Incorporation of SEL Action Plan into the CAP plan process.	Sustainable implementation using data to inform decisions. Clear guidance for sites to understand where they are and actions to take for their next evolution.
District-wide Surveys	Climate Survey and Healthy Youth Surveys planned for, promoted, implemented, information shared with stakeholders, meaning created of results for action planning, coaching of action steps	Use of data for continuous improvement of school climate and student well-being.

Educational Equity

Barriers to educational equity include disproportionate poverty. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (2016), 12% of White children are poor compared to 34% of Black children. Although not often included within formal definitions of trauma, poverty also is considered a traumatic event. Low-income families are more likely to experience higher levels of prolonged stress which can contribute to difficulties in later adjustment. (Blair et al. 2011; Jiang, Granja, and Koboll 2017; Wadsworth and Santiago 2008). Previous research suggests that economic hardship negatively affects the overall well-being of a family. The healthy development of brain circuits is dependent on good experiences. (Shanks and Robinson 2013; Tierney and Nelson 2009). Negative consequences of poverty appear to intensify the longer a child remains impoverished and exposed to stress factors. Because of the intersection between race, poverty, and trauma, many children and families experience complex trauma from historical trauma. From the science of learning and development, we know students need healthy, happy brains to engage in learning at school. However, traumatic experiences—including repeated microaggressions—have a negative effect on students' brain

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development. A key to trauma-informed practice is to get to know kids well enough that you become familiar with what they are experiencing. A strong relationship with a caring adult is a key protective factor that helps support students who have experienced trauma.

Building teacher-student relationships is also critical to serving students of color. National statistics show white teachers of Black students admonished students for misbehavior two to four times as frequently as teachers who were the same race as their students. Additionally, White teachers of Black students were more likely to have highly charged interactions with students instead of privately pulling students aside to have a conversation (Rutgers University, 2019). SEL-focused learning builds on meaningful relationships between students, families, communities and educators. It starts with educators reflecting on their SEL competencies as well as personal biases, that can influence discipline practices, and SEL instruction and more. And it addresses discipline as an opportunity to practice restorative justice and skill building. Mistakes are owned and learned from so that they are not repeated. A quality Whole Child environment increases academic achievement by building safety, trust, substance and meaning so that all students are ready to learn classroom content. We can ensure their classroom are full of joy when excellence and responsibility are expectations, and all students feel that they belong.

PROGRAM COST - BUDGET USE ONLY

Fund Description	18-19 FTE	Salaries & Benefits	Supplies	Contract Services	Travel	Capital Outlay	Total
Total							