



**Tacoma Public Schools
Head Start**

Annual Report 2023-2024

TPS Early learning

Tacomaschools.org

Head Start is a Federal grant-funded preschool program for low-income families at or below 100% of the Federal poverty guidelines offering no-cost preschool to qualifying families. Head Start grants are administered by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Head Start puts an emphasis on the well-being of the whole child, knowing that a child's health and family well-being play an important role in developing school readiness skills. Head Start provides services that support not only the child, but the family as a whole.

544,549

Funded Head Start preschool slots across the U.S states & territories, fiscal '23

(excluding AIAN, MSHS, & EHS)

6,960

Funded Head Start slots in WA State fiscal '23

((excluding AIAN, MSHS, & EHS)

400

Funded Head Start slots in Tacoma Public Schools 23-24 school year

Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) was awarded a five-year grant in July 2019 to serve 400 low-income students within the school district boundaries. The 2023-2024 school year was the last grant cycle of this 5-year period.

Head Start is an integral part of the district's early learning goal which focuses on assessment and intervention at the pre-k through 3rd grade levels to ensure early academic success. TPS is committed to early learning and along with Head Start offers four additional preschool programs: ECEAP, Peer, and Transitional K. The district overall had 1,736 preschool students enrolled in TPS for the 23-24 school year. Tacoma Public Schools looks forward to continuing a partnership with the Federal Head Start program.

Tacoma Public Schools has operated a Head Start program within the district since 1969.



Head Start Services & Classroom Structure



The Head Start program is based on the premise that all children deserve a high quality, early childhood learning experience, and that children can benefit from a comprehensive developmental program. The Head Start approach is based on the philosophy that:

- Children will benefit most from a comprehensive, interdisciplinary program that supports the development of social, emotional, and academic readiness skills.
- Focus on the whole child, including their family and community. The family, which is the principal influence on the child's development, is asked to be a direct participant in all aspects of the program.

Head Start supports all aspects of school readiness.

Early Learning

Teachers facilitate individualized learning experiences to promote school readiness skills for kindergarten and beyond. Through planned and spontaneous instruction and play, children develop language and literacy skills, early math and science concepts, fine & gross motor skills, and grow in their social-emotional development.

Family Services

Parents and families are supported in achieving their own goals such as housing stability, continued education, and financial security. Programs support and strengthen parent-child relationships and engage families around children's learning.

Health & Nutrition

Children receive health and developmental screenings, nutritious meals, oral health, and mental health support. Programs connect families with medical, dental, and mental health services, and ensure children are receiving the services they need.

Classroom Structure & Support

TPS Head Start is a center-based program and offers twenty full-day classrooms throughout 17 elementary schools and 2 early learning centers. Classrooms operate Monday through Friday with a start time of 8:25 a.m. and end time of 3:05 p.m. Each classroom has a lead teacher (associate) and two assistant teachers. The lead teacher is responsible for lesson planning and implementing curriculum.

The assistant teacher provides instructional support and assists in classroom management. The teacher to child ratio is 1:10

A family advocate is assigned to each classroom to support families with a wide variety of needs. Each classroom is guided by an instructional coach, health specialist, family-community specialist, and a mentor. The Early Learning Director oversees the program administration and curriculum implementation.



Tacoma Public Schools operated 20 classrooms within 17 Elementary schools and 2 early learning centers. The Madison location was home to 2 classrooms. February 2023, the district announced that Madison and Willard Early Learning Centers would be closing at the end of the 23-24 school year due to budget cuts. These sites were chosen as a cost-savings to the district. The operational costs for these two older buildings was no longer sustainable. The classrooms within these buildings will be relocated for the 24-25 school year. Head Start families attending Madison or Willard were offered spots for the 24-25 school year at their neighborhood school or any TPS Head Start center of their choice.

Arlington

7202 S Pine St.
Tacoma, WA 98409

Birney

1202 S 76th St.
Tacoma, WA 98408

Blix

1302 E 38th St.
Tacoma, WA 98408

Downing

2502 N Orchard St.
Tacoma, WA 98406

Edison

5830 S Pine St.
Tacoma, WA 98409

Fern Hill

8442 S Park Ave.
Tacoma, WA 98444

Franklin

1402 S Lawrence St.
Tacoma, WA 98405

Geiger

7401 S 8th St.
Tacoma, WA 98465

Jefferson

4302 N 13th St.
Tacoma, WA 98406

Larchmont

8601 East B St.
Tacoma, WA 98445

Lister

2106 E 44th St.
Tacoma, WA 98404

Madison*

3101 S 43rd St.
Tacoma, WA 98409

Manitou

4330 S 66th St.
Tacoma, WA 98409

Mann

1002 S 52nd St.
Tacoma, WA 98408

Roosevelt

3550 E Roosevelt Ave.
Tacoma, WA 98405

Stanley

1712 S 17th St.
Tacoma, WA 98405

Travis

2141 S J St.
Tacoma, WA 98405

Whitman

1120 S 39th St.
Tacoma, WA 98418

Willard*

3201 South D St.
Tacoma, WA 98418

** Denotes Early Learning Center*

Centers & Locations



Program Funding & Operational Expenses

The Congress of the United States authorizes the amount of Federal spending for Head Start each year. The Head Start program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Federal grants are awarded directly to public agencies, private nonprofit, and for-profit organizations, tribal governments, and school systems for the purpose of operating Head Start programs in local communities.



The program's fiscal year runs from September 1 through August 31.

\$7,419,217 - Operational Expenses

This amount is provided by the grant to cover general operations such as staffing costs, benefits, supplies and materials, equipment, travel, & contractual agreements. (see chart)

\$92,580 - Technical and Training

These funds are given to grantees for technical assistance and training for staff (professional development). These funds can not be used for operational expenses or any expense related to parent education or engagement. Travel related to training is paid out of this fund.

\$1,790,228 - In-Kind

In-kind contributions are non-cash donations which can be given a cash value. Types of in-kind frequently found in Head Start is the amount of time spent by the parent and child doing at-home learning activities that support the student's individual learning goals, donated classroom supplies, and parent participation in Policy Council and the classroom.

\$859,349 - Indirects

The district, as the grantee, can take 11.44% of the Federal grant award and the Technical and Training award to cover indirect program costs. These indirect costs relate to services provided by the district such as custodial services, technology assistance, safety and security, purchasing, and accounting oversight and assistance.

Budgeted vs. Actual Expenses September 1, 2023 - August 31, 2024 Operational Expenses		
Expenses	Budget	Spent
Direct Costs (A)		
Personnel	\$ 4,363,057	\$ 4,155,886
Fringe Benefits	\$ 1,811,877	\$ 1,869,219
Travel	\$ 20,200	\$ 5,095
Equipment	\$ 0	\$ 0
Supplies	\$ 137,110	\$ 222,928
Contractual	\$ 22,500	\$ 72,184
Facilities	\$ 0	\$ 0
Other	\$ 244,918	\$ 100,487
Subtotal	\$ 6,599,662	\$ 6,425,799
Indirects (B)	\$ 819,555	\$ 735,111
Totals (A&B)	\$ 7,419,217	\$ 7,160,911

Program Governance

The Head Start Act requires that grantees establish and maintain a formal structure for program governance, for the oversight of quality services for Head Start children and families and for making decisions related to program design and implementation. The structure must include a governing body and a Policy Council. Within this governing structure is also the program leadership.

Shared Governance



The founders of Head Start understood that parents are essential partners in educating young children. Head Start created the Policy Council as a formal leadership and policy-making role for parents. It lets parents have a voice in decisions about how the program spends money, what children do in their classrooms, and how the program works with community partners.

Parents can become more confident, gain skills, and connect with other parents and staff.

Program Eligibility & Demographics

Head Start offers a no-cost preschool program for children between the ages of three and four. To qualify, families must reside within the boundaries of the Tacoma School District and qualify either **categorically** or by **income**. The program does accept a limited number of over-income families. Documentation is required for families qualifying categorically and by income.



Funded Enrollment | 400

Cumulative Enrollment | 433

Cumulative enrollment - number of students served throughout the entire program year, including students who withdrew before the end of the school year.

Categorically Eligible (314)

Public Assistance

TANF (cash assistance), SNAP (food assistance), Working Connections (childcare assistance), or Supplemental Security income (SSI).

Homelessness

Families who are experiencing homelessness.

Foster Care

Children in foster care are Head Start eligible, regardless of family income.

Income Eligible (119)

Income at or below 100% Federal Poverty Level

Example: a family of four with an annual income of \$31,200 or less.

Income 100-130% Federal Poverty Level

Example: a family of four with an annual income between \$31,200-\$40,559

Over-Income

The program can accept a limited number of over-income families.

Numbers represent 23-24 year families and the total number of families qualifying under each category. A chart breakdown is below.

Both three and four-year olds are eligible for the program. Enrollment priority is given to eligible children who are four years of age as of August 31 (based on Washington state kindergarten eligibility date). Within each age range, selection criteria determines family eligibility with the lowest income and highest need for services given first consideration.

Enrollment By Age

3-year olds	174
4-year olds	259

New & Returning Students

1st year enrollment	319
2nd year enrollment	114

Disabilities Services

Students w/IEPs	48
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Single and Two Parent Families**

Single parent	232
Two-parent families	184

**Not equal to cumulative enrollment due to one or more siblings attending from the same family.



Enrollment by Eligibility Type

Public Assistance (TANF, SSI, SNAP, W. Connect.)	253
Income at or below 100%	73
Income 100-130%	37
Homeless children	52
Foster children	9
Over-income	9

Education Levels (Parents)**

BA or advanced degree	40
Some college, voc. or AA	109
High school graduate or GED	171
Less than high school graduate	39
Not Reported	57

**Not equal to cumulative enrollment due to one or more siblings attending from the same family.

School Attendance

Head Start stresses the importance of consistent, on-time attendance in order for the student and family to fully benefit from all the program has to offer. "Research shows that students who miss too many days of preschool have weaker literacy and numeracy skills entering kindergarten. This is especially true for children from families living in poverty, who gain the most when they attend but lose out more when they are absent" (attendancework.org). Developing a habit of consistent, on-time attendance is a school readiness skill.



85.4%

Program-wide average attendance for the year.

90.4%

Downing - highest average attendance rate for the year.

73.8%

Fern Hill - lowest average attendance rate for the year.

The goal of the program is to have an overall attendance rate of 85% or higher.

Daily and monthly attendance data is monitored to identify children with patterns of attendance that puts them at risk of missing 10% of programs days. For those children identified as having attendance issues, the program implements strategies to improve individual attendance.

Attendance data was reviewed as part of the annual program self-assessment. There were a total of six centers that missed the 85% yearly average attendance rate. Those sites were Fern Hill, Jefferson, Lister, Madison, Roosevelt, and Travis. Sites with high absenteeism, and the program overall, would benefit from earlier identification and intervention for families whose students are excessively absent (or tardy). TPS Head Start will continue to partner with parents and offer support in helping their child be at school everyday, and on-time.

Health and Nutrition

Head Start understands the importance of ensuring students are healthy and ready to learn. Family advocates work with families to ensure that each enrolled child receives a physical and dental examination within 90 days of enrollment. For families without health insurance, the advocate assists with providing access to coverage and medical providers. The importance of annual physical exams and six-month dental exams is continually highlighted throughout the school year. The Head Start Performance Standards require 90% of all enrolled students to have a current physical and dental exam.



Head Start children are screened in the classroom for vision, hearing, eye muscle balance, height, and weight within 45 calendar days of the child's first day of school. If any concerns are found, the Head Start health specialist will inform the parents and if needed, will provide assistance in addressing the issue with a medical provider.

Children are served a healthy, low sugar breakfast, lunch and snack during the school day. Meals are served "family style" meaning teachers and students sit together, passing food around the table as students serve themselves, and converse with each other while enjoying their meal.

61%

Physical Exams

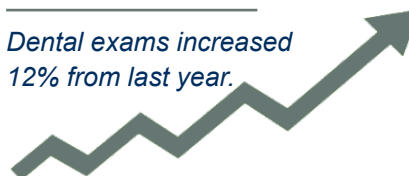
58%

Dental Exams

Percentages of students with up-to-date exams at the end of the 2023-204 school year.

Physical exams increased 14% from last year.

Dental exams increased 12% from last year.



School Readiness

Student Assessments

TPS Head Start gives preschoolers the tools and knowledge they need to be successful in kindergarten and beyond. To ensure that Head Start students are progressing, students are assessed three times during the year (fall, winter, and spring) using Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System, which is the same tool used for children entering kindergarten.

Below are the domain skills that are assessed:

Social/Emotional: Regulating emotions and behaviors; following limits and expectations; and taking care of own needs appropriately.

Literacy: Rhyming, matching sounds, identifying letters and sounds; using and comprehending stories; using writing and print to represent ideas.

Math: Counting; quantifying; connecting numerals with their quantities; spatial relationships and shapes; patterning; comparing and measuring.

Language: Listens to and understands increasingly complex language; uses language to express thoughts and needs; uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills.

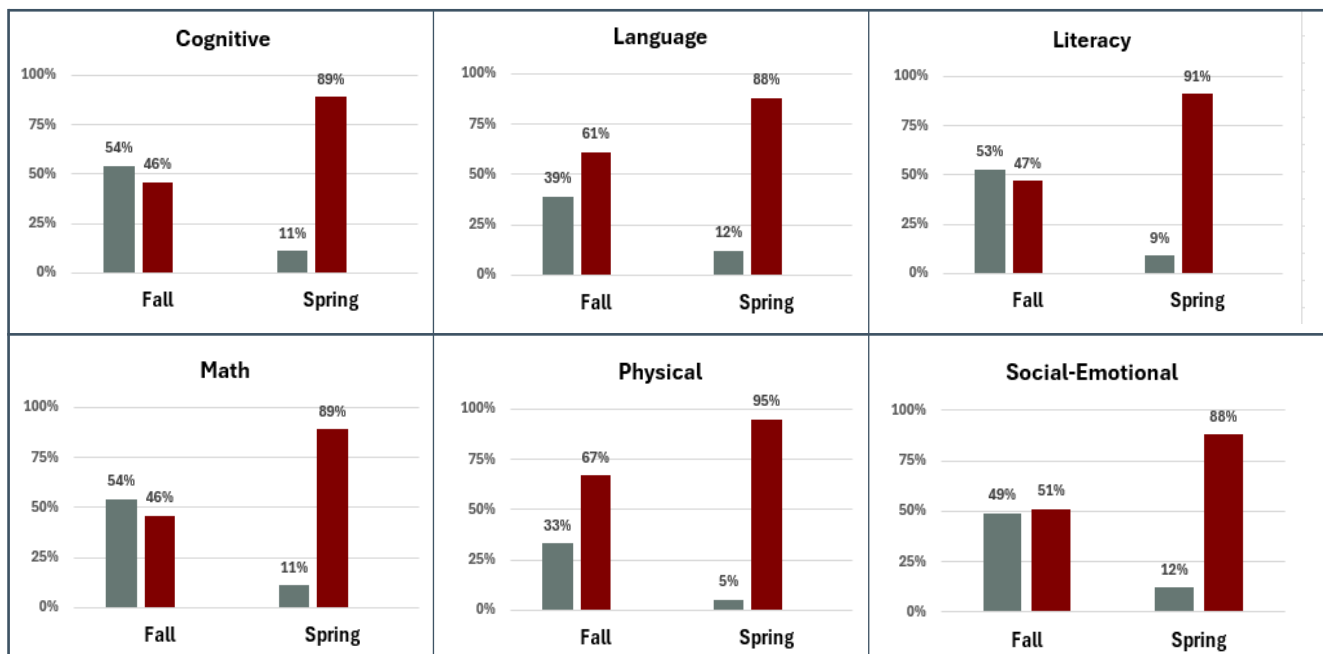
Cognitive: Listens to and understands increasingly complex language; uses language to express thoughts and needs; uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills.

Physical: Demonstrates traveling skills; demonstrates balancing skills; demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills; demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination.

The following graphs represent student assessment data from the GOLD Widely Held Expectations report. This report compares information for each child, class, or group, and places children into three categories: Below, Meeting, and Exceeding Widely Held Expectations. For reporting purposes, TPS Head Start has combined Meeting and Exceeding categories.

Below Expectations

Meeting and/or Exceeding Expectations



Classroom Assessment Scoring System

CLASS

Classroom Assessment Scoring System or CLASS, assess the quality of teacher interactions in preschool classrooms. It assesses Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support through the use of trained observers performing in-person observations twice a year. This system is used to meet the monitoring requirements in section 641A(c)(2)(f) of the Head Start Act.

There are quality threshold scores that represent the Office of Head Start's expectations for all grantees regarding the quality of classroom instruction. If a program's overall average in one of the three areas falls below the quality threshold, the Office of Head Start will provide support in improving that program's quality of teacher-child interactions in the classroom.

The three domains (categories) of interaction that are assessed are:

Emotional Support: Teacher creates a positive climate in the classroom. Dimensions: Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Educator Sensitivity, Regard for Child Perspectives.

Classroom Organization: Classroom routines and procedures related to organization and management of children's behavior, time, and attention in the classroom. Dimensions: Behavioral Management, Productivity, Instructional Learning Formats.

Instructional Support: Curriculum implementation that effectively promotes cognitive and language development. Dimensions: Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, Language Modeling.

Tacoma Head Start contracted with Bright Sparks to perform the CLASS assessment in all 20 Head Start classrooms. The CLASS reviewers are trained and certified to perform CLASS observations. The reviewers conducted two-20 minute observations per classroom and assessed dimensions within each domain to calculate a classroom score.

Scoring | 7-Point Scale with 1 = low and 7 = high (in Negative Climate, a "1" is the optimal score)
A "7" is desired with the exception of "Negative Climate", where a "1" is the desired score

A mean (or average) is calculated for each domain from all classroom scores and submitted as the overall score for the 23-24 program year.

National Mean* ('20) & TPS Head Start Mean ('24)		
Domains	National	TPS
Emotional Support	6.03	6.30
Classroom Support	5.78	5.89
Instructional Support	2.94	3.16



Grantees across the nation have struggled in the area of Instructional Support as evident in the national CLASS scores.

The National mean is also the quality threshold that programs should meet.

**OHS only has the mean scores for 2020 available for comparison purposes.*



Parent Engagement

The parent is the child's first and most important teacher and TPS Head Start encourages parents to take an active role in their child's education. Parents are offered numerous opportunities to participate in the program.

Classroom Volunteer

Our Head Start classrooms value the skills and experiences that parents bring into the classroom and parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer. Volunteers work with children in the various classroom centers, assist with transitions, special events, and can be guest readers.

Parent Center Committee Meetings

Each center conducts five Parent Center Committee meetings per year. (referred to as Family Gatherings). These meetings provide an opportunity for parents (and other involved adults) to come together to discuss what is happening in the classroom and in the Head Start program overall. Light refreshments are served and a parent-child activity is usually completed at each meeting.

Policy Council

Policy Council is a group of elected Head Start parents and community members that participate and share in the decision-making process within Head Start. At the October Parent Center Committee meeting, each center elects a Policy Council Representative and Alternate. Council members meet once-a-month to discuss program operations, curriculum, child assessment data, program expenses, and available resources within the community.

Parents are encouraged to participate in Head Start events and those events sponsored by the elementary school in which their classroom resides.

Participation on
Interview Teams

WSA
Advocacy
Day

Parent
Education
Events

Field
Trips

Program
Self-Assessment



Looking Ahead



The 23-24 school year is the last year in the current 5-year grant cycle. In June 2025, Tacoma Head Start will be submitting an application for another five-year grant cycle (Sept. 2025 - Aug. 2030) .

Part of the preparation process for applying for the new grant is to forecast operational expenses for the full five-year cycle. The largest increase year after year is in salaries and benefits. There is an anticipated change in Head Start Performance Standards around salaries and benefits and that will have an impact on how the program delivers services. In order for the program to continue providing high quality early learning education, changes in the program model (staffing) will need to be made.

Anticipated Program Changes:

- Reducing classroom assistants from two to one (eliminating assistant B position).
- Creating a new position of Family Resource and Instructional Assistant. This replaces the role of the family advocate. This new position now supports families and the classroom.

The program changes listed above were chosen as a way to avoid submitting a Change of Scope, which would have directly affected students and families. A Change of Scope is when a Head Start grantee makes a substantial modification to their program. Head Start leadership considered cutting slots from 400 to 360 in an effort to meet the budget constraints. Due to high demand for services, and the district's dedication to early learning, the district will step in and provide in-kind support to keep all 400 slots and not eliminate services.

The program will review upcoming changes to the Head Start Performance Standards to ensure all of the program's policies and procedures are in alignment.

