



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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report online



FOCUSING ON ESTABLISHING JUST AND HUMANIZING  
(ANTIRACIST MULTICULTURAL) SCHOOL SYSTEMS

# Welcome to our 2022-2023 Report to the Community,

a reflection of the strides we've made in fostering an Antiracist Multicultural Organization (ARMCO) at Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD). Together with our dedicated partners, we've been working towards the realization of just and humanizing school systems.

As we delve into the report, it's heartening to share that in the spring of 2023, 94% of our partner agencies, surveyed in our annual feedback process, acknowledged PSESD's support in racial equity leadership during the 2022-2023 school year. While this affirmation is encouraging, it's crucial to acknowledge that more than one third of our district partners expressed the desire for PSESD to intensify its efforts, providing added training and shared learning opportunities. It's a clear signal that there's more work ahead of us.

At PSESD, accountability and transparency are the cornerstones of our endeavors. Our Measures of Progress serve as a tool to hold ourselves accountable for achieving racially equitable outcomes and embodying our commitment to being an ARMCO.

In 2022, the PSESD Board of Directors took a significant step by adopting five goal areas, known as "Sub-Ends," providing clarity on how we approach our mission. **This report spotlights our progress towards Sub-End 1.1a, focusing on establishing Just and Humanizing (Antiracist Multicultural) School Systems.** Through consistent practices, we aim to create a space where all—students, educational leaders, staff, and Boards—can thrive and succeed in an antiracist, multicultural school community.

Within this report, you'll find stories illustrating the impact of PSESD's Puget Sound College and Career Network, Early Learning Department, and the Workers Compensation Trust Unemployment Pool. They further emphasize our commitment to building just and humanizing school communities. We hope these narratives bring our work to life, complementing the data presented with reflections from our staff, partners, and program participants.

Thank you for dedicating time to engage with our report. To explore more about PSESD, please visit [psesd.org](http://psesd.org) or feel free to reach out to me at [jwelch@psesd.org](mailto:jwelch@psesd.org).

Warm regards,



John Welch  
Superintendent

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## A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

### "I Felt Supported By His School. I Couldn't Imagine Being Anywhere Else"

Meet Rosie McCarter—a parent of three who graciously accepted an invitation to share her thoughts about the preschool experience of her youngest child, in an interview that aptly demonstrates the importance of just and humanizing school system.

From about the age of four, Rosie's child (a boy using he/him pronouns) expressed a love for wearing dresses. At that time, in 2021, Rosie's son was a student enrolled in ECEAP (Early Childhood Education Assistance Program) at Highline Public Schools Valley View Early Learning Center. Rosie recalls that one day he wore a dress to school, and she was amazed to find that the teachers and staff had responded positively and taken no issue with it.

"It was a relief," recalls Rosie. "I felt supported by his school. I couldn't imagine being anywhere else when he decided to make that change about wearing skirts—they were wonderful to us. The outreach person at the school was in constant contact with me for the two years he attended, so that if there was ever any concern, I could reach out via text message. She even helped to make sure that we had presents for Christmas."

Another challenge for Rosie at the time was the fact that her son's speech was still hard to understand. Rosie was grateful to discover, however, that the staff were nothing but supportive. "They were amazing," she comments. Even within two weeks of his start with the preschool, Rosie found that his speech was improving and that more people could understand him because the staff really listened and cared. "They listened, and they made him excited about going to school," adds Rosie. "He loves school—maybe not the getting up early part—but he definitely loves school."

For Rosie, the whole experience had a profound and positive impact on her whole family, and that impact continued as her son's schooling advanced. At the urging of the center staff, Rosie joined Puget Sound ESD's Policy Council in her son's second year of preschool.

We encourage you to read the rest of Rosie's story online.

# Equity and Care: PSWCT/UP's Impact on Just and Humanizing School Communities

Within Puget Sound ESD 121's commitment to fostering just and humanizing antiracist and multicultural school communities, the voice of Christian Porter, Return to Work Manager in the Workers Compensation Trust/Unemployment Pool (PSWCT/UP) department, sheds light on the department's strides during the 2022-2023 school year.

## FOCUSING ON SERVICE AND INCLUSIVITY

Christian explains that one of the most impactful changes in the 2022-2023 school year was a fundamental shift in service provisions:

**"Our focus on service and how we interact with our member districts has been transformative. We aim to be an extension of the communities we serve."**

This deliberate pivot towards service prompted initiatives like translating service materials into multiple languages, ensuring that the diverse needs of injured workers and district representatives were met.

Christian highlights the introduction of injured worker responsiveness surveys as crucial: "These surveys hold us accountable. Actively

listening to our stakeholders allows us to consistently enhance our services, aligning with cultural responsiveness principles."

## HUMANIZING CLAIMS MANAGEMENT: FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS

One of the transformative strategies employed by PSWCT/UP involves assigning a single adjuster for each district to manage claims. Christian elaborates on this approach, emphasizing its profound impact: "Consolidating claims by assigning a dedicated adjuster for each district goes beyond efficiency. It's about building relationships."

Having a singular point of contact for each district helps to create a rapport and understanding between the PSWCT/UP team and the district's stakeholders. "This approach isn't merely about managing claims," Porter explains. "It's about understanding the unique needs and circumstances of each district, forging a partnership based on trust and familiarity."

By fostering these relationships, PSWCT/UP not only simplifies the claims process for injured workers but also enables the district representatives to collaborate closely with a familiar contact. The adjuster becomes a liaison, working together with the district



Christian Porter, Return to Work Manager  
PSWCT/UP

to ensure a smoother, more personalized experience for everyone involved.

This approach not only streamlines processes but also cultivates a sense of support and empathy. "Injured workers and district representatives feel heard and supported," Porter emphasizes. "The relationship-building aspect goes a long way in humanizing what can often be a challenging and impersonal process."

Through this personalized approach, PSWCT/UP transcends the traditional claims management paradigm. They prioritize relationships, understanding that fostering connections is integral to creating a more just, humanizing, and supportive environment for all stakeholders involved in the school community.

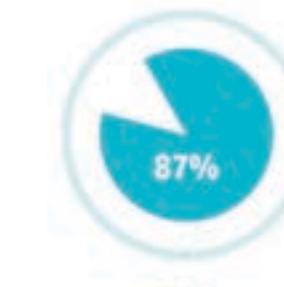
We welcome you to read the full story online.

## Partner Survey Results

Originally developed through a pilot process in Spring 2021, PSESD has adopted the PSESD Partner Survey as an annual process to gather and reflect on feedback from our partners. The intent is for PSESD to understand how we work with partners in ways that are racially equitable as well as culturally responsive and supportive of our collective racial equity work. This information supports relationship building, learning, and accountability among PSESD and our partners.

The PSESD Partner Survey provides data specific to Sub-End 1.1 indicator percentage of institutional partners reporting that PSESD supported them in their racial equity leadership. Our target is a 2-percentage point annual increase. In Spring 2023, 94% of partners reported that PSESD supported them in their racial equity leadership during the 2022-23 school year (n=48 of 51), which was a decline from 96% in 2022.[1] Though we did not meet the target, we believe that the

## Percentage of Institutional Partners reporting that PSESD supported them in their racial equity leadership



2021

2022

2023

results are still strong. 48 of 51 respondents believe we supported them in their racial equity leadership. Our target is a 2-percentage point annual increase. In Spring 2023, 94% of partners reported that PSESD supported them in their racial equity leadership during the 2022-23 school year (n=48 of 51), which was a decline from 96% in 2022.[1] Though we did not meet the target, we believe that the

the actions they have taken, as well as areas for improvement. Nearly half of all respondents appreciated individualized direct support and raising awareness of racial equity.

More details on the partner survey results are available online.



# King County Promise: A Regional Model Empowering Collaboration and Partnerships

Our region's students aspire to pursue postsecondary credentials yet face formidable barriers within our under-resourced and complex K-12 and higher education systems. From a survey of over 7,000 students, it emerged that 96% expressed a desire for postsecondary education. However, the stark reality is that only 30% actually achieve a credential within 6 years of high school graduation. Further, most local living wage jobs in our region require a postsecondary credential and King County youth want and need much higher quality advising support than they have been receiving.

The Puget Sound College & Career Network (PSCCN) recognizes these systemic challenges and, in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, has given birth to the King County Promise (KCP), a comprehensive student support model. KCP, a public-private partnership, aims to humanize the educational journey for historically underserved young people, ensuring equitable access to postsecondary credentials.

King County Promise deliberately shifts focus from institutional priorities to centering on the needs of our students. This humanizing approach is evident in our unique implementation across KCP Partnerships. The Highline Promise Partnership (HPP) is a local model supporting Black and Brown males in the Highline area, streamlining postsecondary transition through a culturally relevant

College & Career Curriculum. Our Promise to Community Partnership (PtC) is a regional model empowering the collaboration of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) up to postsecondary enrollment, and Renton Technical College to serve Opportunity Youth (OY) to, and through, their postsecondary enrollment.

This intertwining of postsecondary success resources with the cultural context of our CBOs creates a unique support network for scholars disconnected from educational services in King County.

Unlike typical regional partnerships with a lead institution, our collaborative codesign model ensures equal input from all partners, fostering a more cohesive experience for students moving between institutions. The inclusion of CBOs with an equal voice elevates the needs of our targeted student populations, creating a feedback loop for institutional partners to bridge services effectively.

Central to King County Promise is centering student voice, a key pillar for implementation. Working closely with our partners, we identify impactful, student-centered approaches for continuous program improvement, allowing KCP to evolve alongside the shifting needs of our students furthest from educational attainment.

Please continue reading online about the great work by King County Promise.



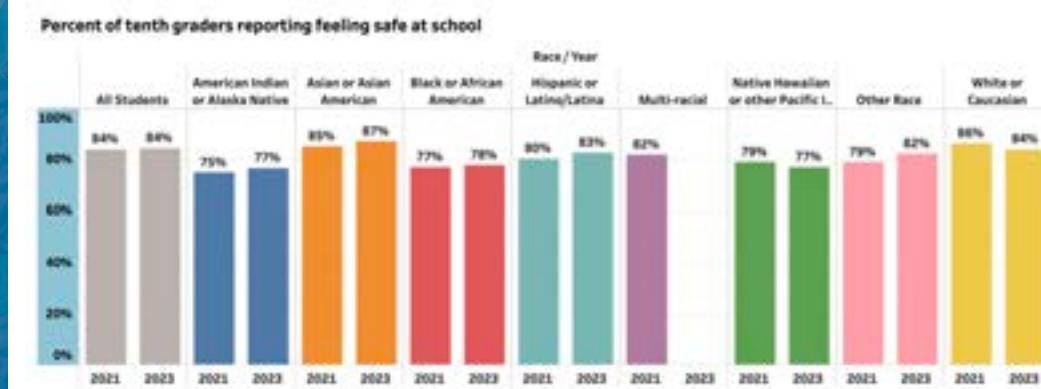
Dr. Sy Ear, Director, Postsecondary, PSCCN



## Accountability and Transparency

We invite you to explore the complex data that helps us to evaluate achievements towards our end goal.

PSESD's Measures of Progress are one way in which we are accountable to ourselves and the communities to which we are in service. Information from the Measures helps us to set priorities toward our End: Success for each child and eliminate the opportunity gap by leading with racial equity. The Measures also help our Board to assess our progress toward this goal.



Scan to review the  
Measures of Progress online report