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2024
ANNUAL REPORT



Welcome to our 2023–2024 Report to the Community,

Greetings, and welcome to our 2023–2024 Annual Report, a reflection of our path towards racially equitable and humanized school structures. At Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSED), we believe that our progress is rooted in deep collaboration with regional partners as we work together toward our End objective: Success for Every Child and Eliminate the Opportunity Gap by Leading with Racial Equity.

Within this report, you will encounter powerful stories that illustrate our mission through the voices of our partners. Highlights include our work with Seattle Central College’s Academy for Rising Educators, opening doors for students of color to earn teaching credentials, and Kingmakers of Oakland, which focuses on retaining Black male teachers. Additionally, our partnership with Potential Unleashed Consulting provides healing-centered professional development in equity training. Our collaboration with the Mockingbird Society showcases advocacy efforts that amplify youth voices in shaping foster care and education policies. Together, these stories underscore the collective power of our community partnerships in driving equity and student success. At PSED, accountability and transparency remain at the core of our work. Our Measures of Progress provide a structured framework to evaluate how effectively we promote racially equitable outcomes and fulfill our mission. These measures guide us in asking critical questions, ensuring that our efforts address the opportunity gap while prioritizing racial equity at every step. In this report, you’ll find graphs linked to our website for a deeper exploration of the data. Our Areas of Focus, or Sub-Ends, also featured in this report, outline a series of outcomes that help build toward our End goal.

Thank you for taking the time to engage with this report. To learn more about PSED and our initiatives, visit psed.org or reach out to me at jwelch@psed.org. Together, we will continue to create school systems where every student has the opportunity to thrive.

Warm regards,

John Welch, Superintendent

Activating Powerful Voices in the Classroom

An interview with Dr. Patricia (Pat) Russell, Executive Dean in Healthcare & Human Services at Seattle Central College

Though ethnic diversity is increasing across Washington state and the nation, K–12 education continues to be dominated by white professionals. In recent years, research has shown that students of color benefit when they are taught by educators who look like them. Therefore, to encourage pathways into teaching careers and to increase educators of color, Seattle Central College and Seattle Public Schools co-created the Academy for Rising Educators (ARE). Heading into its sixth year, ARE is geared toward “producing diverse, homegrown practitioners who are culturally responsive, employ antiracist, relationship-based, student-centered pedagogy, and engage in critical community discourse.” Though all applicants are welcome, the ARE is strategically focused to help nontraditional students, paraeducators, and people of color to navigate into a teaching career and return to their home communities.

The PSED commitment to removing opportunity gaps is imbued with and by transformational community relationships. The alliance forged between PSED’s Equity in Education and the Academy for Rising Educators reflects a mutual commitment to social justice and the advancement of racially just and humanizing learning environments, so we are thrilled to elevate the work of Dr. Patricia (Pat) Russell, Executive Dean in Healthcare & Human Services at Seattle Central College on behalf of diverse educators.

Fairness and equity principles are integral in the ARE curriculum. “That’s really important when we talk about educating educators who are going to go back into those community schools to work with those children of color,” says Dr. Pat. “You have to have a sense of social justice, and therefore a sense of history... to ask, ‘What does intergenerational trauma look like? How does it present, and how do you not pathologize your students?’” Leveraging students’ lived experiences creates a self-validating authenticity that activates a powerful voice in the classroom.

By employing healing-centered practices throughout the ARE program, the cohort participants reflect on their own experiences of bias and academic trauma to avoid perpetuating those systems in their own classrooms. Since all ARE instructors are BIPOC and model the program’s philosophy, the potency of mentorship is inherently present in the program.

We hope you continue reading the rest of Dr. Pat’s interview story online.

Creating a Brotherhood of Love and a Community of Care for All

An Interview with Dr. Kenderick O. Wilson, Director of Black Teacher Recruitment, Training & Retention, Kingmakers of Oakland

As the founding Program Manager for the Academy of Rising Educators (ARE) in 2018, Dr. Kenderick O. Wilson envisioned that his recruiting efforts would target recent high school graduates drawn from the Seattle Promise program. What followed was an illuminating discovery of untapped potential — in longtime district employees who, as staff and paraeducators of color, had already possessed the necessary experience and commitment to education but had never been approached about achieving a teaching credential. Kenderick, or “K.O.,” as he is known, saw their potential and initiated unprecedented conversations with these established educators, assuring them that their passion and love for the kids was worth leveraging into a teaching certificate. The absence of a degree would not hold them back: “We have a pathway for you, to get your degree,” K.O. told them. In the six years

since, annual cohorts have yielded and placed over 150 paraeducators of color in regional school districts, and presently, the sixth cohort is already underway.

ARE was founded to remedy the decades-long underrepresentation of people of color in education. Not surprisingly, many cohort participants carry negative experiences from their own youths spent in K–12 classrooms. To address this trauma, which is both historical as well as personal, ARE employs a healing-centered approach rather than one that is trauma-informed, with the focus on emphasizing resilience rather than on pathologizing damage. K.O. explains, “When we think about a healing framework, we’re also healing our instructors so we can then heal the students in our classrooms.”



Today, the PSED Equity team is working to propagate a regional approach based on the best practices of ARE: the healing framework, the cohort model, the brotherhood of love, and the community of care. We hope you’ll continue reading online about our vital community partnerships, like ARE and KOO.

Achieving a Sense of Hope and Community Partnership— Even with Difficult Discussions

An Interview with Jahmad Canley, CEO and Senior Consultant, Potential Unleashed Consulting

Jahmad Canley wants to reassure you that it’s all right to be uncomfortable talking about race and inequity, and that acknowledging that discomfort is often the first step in creating a safe space for honest conversations about difficult topics like those involving race, ethnicity, and equity.

For many years now, Potential Unleashed has been helping organizations and school districts nationwide to tackle race and inequity, which is certainly an often daunting cultural topic. Jahmad reassures his audience that a learning curve is understandable when it comes to discussing race and equity. With this in mind, and working in partnership with the Regional Executive Leaders Of Color (RELOC), Potential Unleashed has provided healing-centered professional development to school districts seeking support in their equity training.

“It’s fun when you get a chance to see people engage in real conversations that are actually making a difference versus that surface level, no one says the wrong thing, we all nod our heads and get to check the box...but people come out of it not really having grown, versus, no, we’re going to have some messy conversations in here and it’s going to be ok.”

Part of this approach is recognizing the discomfort that participants may experience while leveraging the frequency of difficult conversations to increase familiarity and amenability. A “let’s come together” sensibility is cultivated to alleviate anxiety and encourage open, honest, and authentic conversations. Unraveling the complexities behind misspoken, racially insensitive moments can yield rich learning opportunities while also mitigating associated blame and guilt. Using this approach, PSED endeavors to lead with transparency and vulnerability, and to create an environment that doesn’t shame people for a lack of knowledge. In addition, as Black and brown men are frequently the sole male educators of color in their space, this can result in a mental health burden—one that RELOC takes care to address in their support services.

We encourage you to continue reading the full story about this partnership online.

Follow our stories:



Leveraging Data to Ensure Safe Homes for Vulnerable Youth

An Interview with The Mockingbird Society's Zivit Shechter Nissim, Director of Operations and Jeff Abdullah, Director of MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™

PSESD typically partners with school districts to ensure all children have equitable opportunities to succeed. In the case of Seattle-based nonprofit The Mockingbird Society (TMS), PSESD's Strategy, Evaluation, and Learning (StEL) team collaborated with the organization to analyze internal procedures as well as create a customized training program

For nearly 25 years, TMS has been a social justice proponent for foster care reform. Recognizing the connection between youth welfare programs and the complexities that arise when children age out of the system, TMS began addressing unhoused youth issues in 2013.

TMS's advocacy work encompasses three branches: Youth Programs (mentorship), Public Policy & Advocacy, and MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™. Their overarching goals revolve around ensuring stable, healthy, and supportive home environments for young people who are at risk of—or who are actively experiencing—foster care or homelessness. Jeff Abdullah, TMS's Director of MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY, notes that their holistic approach to

supporting vulnerable youth includes developing community. The caregiving networks, known as Constellations, consist of six to ten foster parent homes managing between up to 12 foster youth, providing a sense of belonging and peer support. To ensure consistent quality across all hub homes, TMS employs "Fidelity Markers." On the StEL team, Drs. Hilary Loeb and Paméla Raya-Carlton, assisted with reviewing the 52 Fidelity Markers for cultural and logistical relevancy. The analysis yielded refinements to guidelines and checklist development to ensure that Constellations are consistent and structured to best meet the needs of young people.

The StEL team also provided customized professional development by creating a foundational training series on data collection, evaluation, and how to interpret the way data tells a story. Spotlighting data in the context of TMS programs helped staff to build an understanding of how internal functionality aligns with state, federal, and organizational outcomes. Zivit Shechter, TMS's Director of Operations, enthused that working with

Hilary and Paméla was a pleasure, and especially appreciated their accessibility. With remote work a common practice, the StEL team distinguished themselves by meeting with TMS staff in person, and Zivit noted that being able to connect in the same room made a huge difference.

Collaborating with TMS afforded the StEL team the opportunity to potentially affect racial equity leadership and opportunity gap elimination in both national and international contexts. PSESD is proud of our community relationships and will continue to commit to these kinds of continued partnerships that further our End.

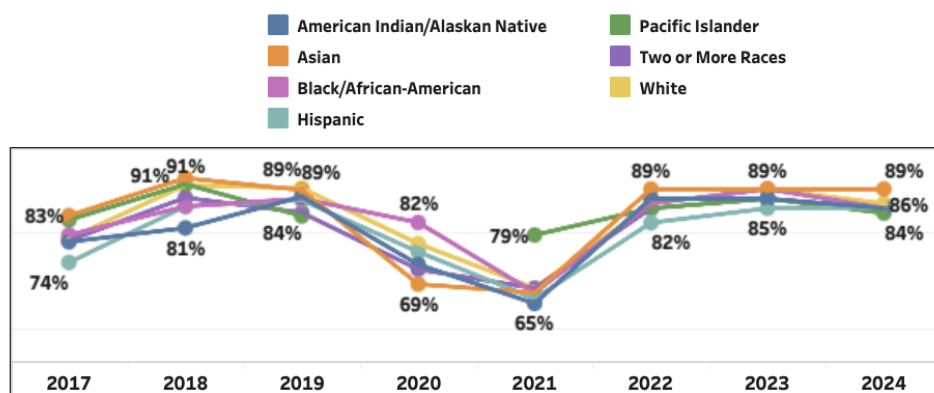


Accountability and Transparency

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.

Percentage of children meeting or exceeding developmental expectations



Scan to review the Measures of Progress online report

