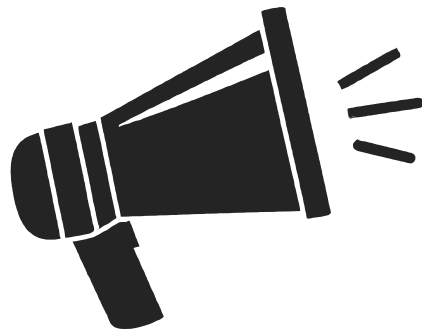




SUPERINTENDENT STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

YEAR-END REPORT

2024 - 2025



Prepared in collaboration with
*2024-2025 Superintendent's
Student Advisory Board*

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ABOUT SSAB

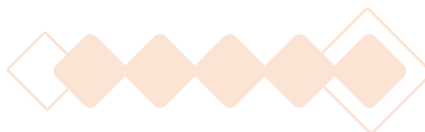
Launched in the 2023–24 school year by Superintendent Dr. Concie Pedroza and led by Director of Communications, Equity, & Engagement Naomi Byrdo, the Superintendent's Student Advisory Board (SSAB) brings together scholar leaders (grades 5-12) to share ideas, elevate scholar voice, and inform district decisions. Student representatives of the school board plan and lead SSAB meetings. Members have helped shape key policies, including Tukwila's antiracist statement and definition of safety.



Introduction

In the 2024–2025 school year, the Superintendent's Scholar Advisory Board (SSAB) continued its role as a vital structure for uplifting scholar voice and co-constructing solutions that enhance safety, belonging, and academic excellence across Tukwila School District (TSD). Guided by the district's commitment to anti-racism, culturally responsive education, and community-centered decision-making, the SSAB met monthly to engage in dialogue, surface school climate issues, and recommend research-informed actions to district leadership.

Over the course of the year, SSAB scholars offered nuanced insight into the lived experiences of scholars, affirming the urgency of systems-level improvements related to school safety, mental health, academic equity, scholar-teacher relationships, and inclusive communication practices. Their feedback directly shaped district initiatives and will continue to inform planning for the 2025–26 academic year.



OUR PURPOSE

- To provide a platform for scholars (grades 5-12) to directly share their thoughts, advice, and ideas with the Superintendent and district leaders.
- To ensure scholar voices play a significant role in shaping the district's direction and decision-making.

OUR MISSION

- The Student Advisory Board empowers scholars to share their unique perspectives and experiences.
- It prioritizes scholars who are committed to anti racist actions within the district and who seek to represent the diverse voices of the scholar body.

HOW IT WORKS

Student leaders meet throughout the school year to discuss district initiatives and provide feedback. And discuss steps to take action

REDEFINING SCHOOL SAFETY: A SCHOLAR-CENTERED PERSPECTIVE

Key Scholar Reflections

From the very first meeting, SSAB members made it clear: **Safety is not just physical.** It includes emotional and mental well-being, protection from psychological harm, and confidence that adults will act with consistency and care.

“Safety means I can be in a space without fear—physically, emotionally, and mentally.”
“You shouldn’t have to rely on willpower to be resilient. That’s not safety.”

Scholars named specific challenges:

- **Increase in harsh peer interactions:** Use of racial slurs, derogatory language, and even suicidal language (“kill yourself”) in school spaces.
- **Cybersecurity concerns:** Phishing emails pretending to come from staff, which caused confusion and fear.
- **Lockdowns and social media threats:** Repeated events led to trauma, particularly for scholars with disabilities or past exposure to violence.
- **Bullying and retaliation culture:** Scholars feared reporting issues due to perceived lack of follow-up or adult intervention.

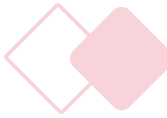
Planned Actions & Research Alignment

To address these concerns, the SSAB and district leaders co-developed the following multi-pronged strategies:

Scholar Recommendation	Planned Action	Research Alignment
Share clear safety procedures with scholars	Develop scholar-facing lockdown protocols; scripts for teachers during drills	<i>National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement</i> emphasizes transparency in school crisis plans to reduce anxiety
Increase visibility of emotional safety tools (e.g., HearMeWA)	Posters, QR codes on scholar IDs, announcements across grade levels	CASEL research finds that repeated and accessible SEL messaging builds scholar help-seeking behaviors
Preventative education around bullying	Revise classroom presentations to include scenarios, scholar hotline training, and retaliation prevention	<i>StopBullying.gov</i> identifies peer-focused education and adult modeling as essential to culture change
Improve cyber-awareness	Collaborate with the tech team to create scholar workshops on digital safety	<i>EdTech Magazine</i> supports proactive digital literacy education to prevent phishing and social engineering
Build trust through adult relationships	Ask teachers to commit to visibility during transitions (hallways, lunch)	<i>The Search Institute</i> links adult-scholar connectedness to reductions in bullying and behavior incidents



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, RIGOR & EQUITY



What We Heard from Scholars

Academic feedback was persistent and passionate. Scholars shared that while **they want to succeed**, multiple factors hinder their ability to do so:

- **Disruption in instruction:** Substitute teachers, teacher turnover, and lack of coverage for vacancies left scholars without consistent instruction.
- **AI misuse:** Some scholars relied heavily on AI tools due to unclear guidelines or lack of engagement with curriculum.
- **Unequal access to space and resources:** At Showalter Middle School and Cascade View Elementary, scholars reported limited access to libraries and classrooms, directly impacting study time and resource use.
- **Low expectations:** Scholars felt that they were not consistently challenged or held to high standards.

“We don’t want easy work. We want teachers who believe in us—and show up.”
“I lost an entire quarter of learning because we didn’t have a consistent science teacher.”

Planned Actions & Research Alignment

Scholar Recommendation	Planned Action	Research Alignment
Increase teacher accountability and professionalism	Add teacher training modules on trauma-informed teaching, culturally responsive discipline, and classroom management	<i>Learning Policy Institute</i> links teacher preparation to academic engagement and scholar achievement
Improve academic consistency	Identify high-need subjects and provide increased support for staffing	<i>RAND Corporation</i> emphasizes staffing continuity as critical for equity in learning outcomes
Make AI policies clear and educational	Add guidance to scholar handbooks; integrate AI literacy into SEL or tech classes	<i>ISTE</i> encourages digital responsibility education in tandem with academic integrity frameworks
Reintroduce SEL in meaningful ways	Design interactive SEL experiences, such as circle time, collaborative games, and team-building activities	<i>CASEL</i> finds interactive SEL to be more effective than worksheet-based or “check-the-box” approaches
Rethink assessment culture	Advocate for balanced exam schedules and teacher coordination	<i>Edutopia</i> suggests that reducing academic overload improves scholar well-being and performance



SCHOLAR-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS & BELONGING



A major throughline across all meetings was the quality of scholar-adult relationships. Scholars stressed that **the way adults treat them directly shapes their ability to thrive.**

- **Scholars felt overlooked:** Teachers often did not intervene in conflict or bullying due to fear of making it worse.
- **High emotional stakes:** Scholars linked feelings of being seen to moments when teachers remembered their names, acknowledged their identities, or created culturally responsive spaces.
- **Requests for more supervision:** Especially during unstructured times (lunch, passing periods, bathrooms).
- **Desire for affirmation:** Scholars asked for teachers to use positive feedback and celebrate scholar effort, not just outcomes.

“When teachers say, ‘you matter,’ it helps. Even more when they act like it.”

Planned Actions & Research Alignment

Scholar Recommendation	Planned Action	Research Alignment
Prioritize staff visibility and presence	Expectation for hallway and lunch supervision; teacher reflection prompts after incidents	<i>Breaking Ranks II</i> highlights visibility as a protective factor in school climate
Improve teacher cultural competency	Infuse training on microaggressions, pronoun use, racial and ability identity	<i>Zaretta Hammond's</i> work shows culturally responsive relationships drive scholar engagement
Recognize scholar voices and identities	Expand leadership opportunities, club recognition, and identity-based assemblies	<i>Gloria Ladson-Billings</i> emphasizes cultural relevance as a cornerstone of achievement
Support community-building in classrooms	Integrate restorative practices and community circles into homerooms	<i>Oakland Unified School District</i> found restorative circles improved behavior, empathy, and relationships



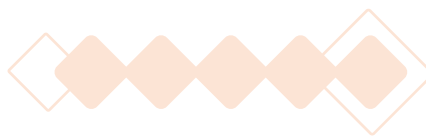
Elevating Scholar Voice in Policy & Planning

SSAB members took active roles in shaping district processes. From presenting feedback on school safety to offering strategic guidance on SEL implementation, scholars served as thought partners—not token voices.

KEY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Feedback loops with Racial Equity Leads**
- **Input on districtwide tools like HearMeWA**
- **Scholar-designed classroom visits to encourage peer engagement**
- **Development of a scholar-family orientation plan**
- **Expansion of SSAB roles into budget participation (2025–26 pilot)**

“We don’t want to just be listened to—we want to be taken seriously.”



LOOKING AHEAD: 2025-26 AND BEYOND

End-of-Year Reflections

In March and April, scholars reflected on the year through the lens of emotional experience:

- Most common emotions: Stress, anxiety, disengagement.
- Biggest challenges: Lack of breaks, uncoordinated schedules, pressure to perform.
- Most affirming moments: Multicultural assemblies, spiritual inclusion, peer praise, and trusted staff.

Shared Vision for a Mentally Healthy School Day

- Breaks between academic blocks
- Community time built into schedules
- Clubs and leadership roles that are accessible to all
- Teachers who see and know every scholar by name
- Equitable access to arts, athletics, and leadership

CONCLUSION

This year, Tukwila scholars demonstrated what we have long known through research: when scholars are **seen, heard, and valued**, school becomes not just a place to learn, but a place to grow and thrive. Their ideas reflect a sophisticated understanding of systems, relationships, and equity—and their advocacy is shaping a better future for every learner in our community.

As we look to 2025–26, Tukwila School District remains committed to transforming scholar feedback into action. The SSAB will continue to lead the way, ensuring that our schools reflect the brilliance, care, and courage of our young people.



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