Tukwila Community Schools Collaboration
Tukwila, Washington

Located just south of Seattle, Tukwila is the most diverse city in Washington State. Residents speak over 60 different languages and are highly mobile. Poverty, high drop-out rates and a lack of connections to the community are just some of the issues that the Tukwila Community Schools Collaboration (TCSC) has tackled since its inception in 2001. With a strong conviction that community resources had to be engaged to help the children and families living in Tukwila, TCSC was created to develop full service community learning centers. The city of Tukwila is a major supporter of the initiative, investing $100,000 of city funds this year.

All of Tukwila’s schools are community schools. They provide support to youth as they transition from elementary to middle and middle to high school and a safe place after school for students to receive academic support and enrichment. Tukwila’s community schools successfully engage all of the city’s population, including its large population of foreign language speaking and recent immigrant families. Community Liaisons involve non-English speaking families from four of the five major language groups by both providing information on how the school system works—like how their children qualify for and “graduate” from English language classes, what to do when your child misses schools, etc.—and bringing community concerns back to the schools. A good example of this exceptional two way communication was a recent Latino Parent night that focused on student discipline. Through a question and answer period, parents identified concerns about gang activity. This concern resulted in a gang awareness forum held for parents and school staff.

Parents and community residents actively participate in and help to lead Tukwila’s community schools. Parents, community residents and business, non-profit and school professionals make up TCSC’s Board of Directors. And community members offer educational and recreational activities—running a chess club, teaching a reading program, coaching sports—throughout all five schools, either through the City’s Parks & Recreation department, or as independently-initiated programs.

All the principals at Tukwila’s schools noted that the partnership with TCSC was one of the primary reasons for meeting their annual yearly progress goals. The involvement of teachers and para-professionals in extended learning day activities has created a seamless transition for students from the regular school day into after hours programs. The result has been a cultural change within the District that brings the community into the schools and the schools out to the community.

About Tukwila
The city of Tukwila is a multi-ethnic suburban community experiencing urbanization, immigration, transience and rapid growth. It is home to a continuous influx of refugees from around the world. All schools in this community are community schools. Tukwila has become a model for surrounding communities who hope to replicate Tukwila’s successes beyond the city limits. Tukwila has an enrollment of 2100 students in 5 schools.

Some Key Partners in Tukwila
Arts Corps
Bezos Family Foundation
City of Tukwila
Key Bank
Marguerite Casey Foundation
Medina Foundation
Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation
Puget Sound ESD
The Seattle Foundation
Somali Community Services Coalition
Starfire Sports
STEPS to a HealthierUS
The Stuart Foundation
Tukwila City Parks & Recreation Department
Tukwila Children’s Foundation
Tukwila School District
Virtuextraining.com
Washington Education Alliance
HEROS
Washington Reading Corps

Who’s Who In Tukwila
John Barbee, Foster High School Site Coordinator, TCSC
Verna Griffin, Tukwila City Council President
Lynda Hall, Elementary Program Director, TCSC
James Hammond, Superintendent
Cory Manago, Tukwila School Board, President
Steve Mullet, Mayor
Deborah Salas, Executive Director, TCSC
Willie Seals, Showalter Middle School Site Coordinator, TCSC
Alma Villegas, Executive Assistant/Latino Community Liaison, TCSC

For more information, contact Deborah Salas at salasd@tukwila.wednet.edu or 206-901-8044

Results
Since 2001, decreased absentee & drop-out rates have decreased for middle and high school students; on-time graduation rate increased.

Elementary teachers report TSCS’ extended day program improves students’ homework completion, in-class behavior and participation.

For families participating in TCSC programs, the mobility rate is 5% compared with the district average of 23%.

Reading, math and writing scores for middle school and high school students are well above neighboring districts.

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