

SHA/SPS Partnership 2017-18 Progress Report

ATTENDANCE PROGRESS

- Preliminary data shows that within the first 20 days of this school year we saw a 24% decrease in chronic absenteeism among SHA students.
- All participating schools, Aki Kurose and Asa Mercer International Middle Schools, Olympic Hills, Martin Luther King Jr., and West Seattle Elementary Schools met their City of Seattle attendance levy goals. Out of 810 SHA students that collectively attend these five schools, the percentage of chronically absent students has decreased from 19% in SY 16-17 to 15% in SY 17-18.

Family Engagement

Families and educators are building direct positive relationships that will lead to positive change at school and in community.

Progress:

- Four SHA families created a Somali Children's Alphabet Book. 1,000 copies are now in schools, libraries, SHA communities, and with families.
- An SHA parent and SHA staff person participated in the interview panel for the next Washington Middle School Principal.
- 40 school teachers and administrators and 6 SHA staff participated in Equity Based Family Visits and are conducting up to 60 family visits this year.
- Over 20 NewHolly parents and children participated in 6 family co-design dialogues to develop a family-led strategy that improves the educational experience for NewHolly families.
- Year 1 of "nudge letters" pilot completed to inform all SPS chronically absent students of the number of school days missed.
- SPS educators attended over 10 community events hosted by SHA to build positive relationships with SHA/SPS families.
- Aki Kurose selected an SHA parent as their parent ambassador to lead family engagement activities this year.
- Four SHA families co-created culturally responsive teaching materials, a Somali Children's Alphabet book, that is now in every SPS elementary school library and Seattle Public Library.

What we are learning:

SHA families would like to monitor, support, and be engaged in their child's education progress and build good relationships with educators. Educators in turn are looking for outlets and meaningful ways to engage with families. SHA families experience challenges connecting with the school due to language, culture, or communication barriers. This year, we will complete a telephone survey, focus groups, and informational interviews with families to better understand their experience and shape our partnership to be responsive to family's needs.

Community Supports

Coordinated adults and wraparound supports and resources are important to increasing school attendance.

Progress:

- Two new mentorship opportunities were created at NewHolly community.
- Mercy Housing and Bellwether Housing are now engaged in partnership with SPS.
- Over 30 SHA staff and 15 SHA partners attended 11 different professional development topics offered by Seattle Public Schools this school year.
- Over 100 SHA students received perfect or improved attendance certificates from SHA who attend Aki Kurose and Mercer Middle School.

What are we learning:

Students are absent from school for a variety of different reasons. It's important that they have schools that they feel welcomed at and people they can turn to that encourage, support them, or connect them to resources or services. SHA can play a role in building the protective factors that help children cope and work through negative or challenging experiences.

Systems Alignment

SHA and SPS are improving their capacity and coordination to decrease chronic absenteeism.**Progress:**

- Five Attendance Partnership Schools are modeling effective partnerships with SHA.
- An SHA Community Builder is a My Sister's Keeper Mentor at Aki Kurose Middle School and bringing her cross-sector knowledge to benefit both the school and NewHolly.
- SHA participates in four task forces and committees at SPS shaping family engagement, professional development, and peer learning processes at SPS.
- The partnership work led to the creation of a new training offered by SPS staff, "Equity Based Family Visits" and a joint training on race and implicit bias offered by SHA and SPS staff.
- The SHA/SPS Executive Steering Committee contributed the following this year:
 - SPS staff included SHA as a partner in two grant applications
 - Dedicated key SPS/SHA staff to implement nudge letters, family engagement activities, and other projects
 - Continue to be thought partners and guide initiatives
 - Communicated partnership successes

What we are learning:

- Schools need a collective team to tackle attendance with a point-person to monitor and track data and coordinate with families and community partners.
- We are still experiencing challenges reaching out to Housing Choice Voucher students and families, but are examining ways to support their educational experience with the HCV team.
- Directory level data sharing helps us coordinate across agencies and connect students and families to services.
- SPS and SHA agency connections have expanded tremendously this school year into eight actively involved schools.
- SHA can play a key role in supporting positive family engagement with schools.
- SHA staff care deeply about the education of children and in times of crisis or emergency can help families connect to educational services.
- SHA creates spaces for school staff to build positive relationships with students and families that could lead to positive school climate.

This year, a toolkit highlighting the strategies of the five attendance partnership schools will be created to expand and replicate this work across other schools and communities.