

# School-Aged Children and Youth

In June of 2015, King County adopted the Youth Action Plan (YAP) to set King County's priorities for serving its young people, from infants through young adults. The YAP is intended to guide and inform the County's annual investment of more than \$75 million in services and programs to ensure that all of King County's young people thrive.<sup>1</sup> Bellevue as a community values YAP priorities. Responding to the needs of and creating a strong foundation for healthy growth and development for all youth, especially those for whom there is limited access to resources they need to succeed, can improve the overall health of the community. This is critical as the economy continues to improve: research shows that children living in low-income families experience more negative life outcomes, such as poor health, impaired cognitive development, and lost economic potential.<sup>2</sup>

## What's Working?

- Friends of Youth, along with Auburn Youth Resources and YouthCare run the Safe Place program supporting teens in crisis. Safe Place locations provide immediate help and safety for youth ages 11-17, connecting them with resources or emergency shelter.
- Eastside Pathways, a Bellevue based non-profit, is a community wide partnership committed to the idea that collective action is needed to provide every child with a chance for success in school and in life. Eastside Pathways uses a collective action framework, such as shared vision and measurement, to support all children in a growing, changing Bellevue, from "cradle to career". Some of the core indicators that will be tracked include academic and work success, in alignment with the Bellevue School District's Instructional Initiatives, as well as those that help children get a healthy start, such as immunizations and quality childcare programs.
- Bellevue Youth Court, a year-round program in partnership with King County

Superior Court and the King County Prosecutors Office, was created by the Youth Link Board. As of 2014, Bellevue Youth Court worked with 56 youths involved in the King County Juvenile Justice System; 60 cases were heard in Bellevue Youth Court, and 331 youth and 119 adults were trained and volunteered in the program.<sup>3</sup>

- Newsweek magazine ranked all five Bellevue high schools among the highest in the nation in 2014. The Newsweek ranking was based on six components: four-year on-time graduation rate, percent of graduates accepted to college, Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB)/Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) tests taken per student, average SAT and/or ACT scores, average AP/IB/AICE test scores, and AP courses offered per student.<sup>4</sup> In 2015, U.S. News and World Report magazine ranked all five Bellevue high schools among the top 10 High Schools in Washington.<sup>5</sup>

## Prevalence Demographics

- According to the 2013 American Community Census, school-age youth, ages 5-19 comprised about 16% of Bellevue's population in 2011-2013. Bellevue had a smaller proportion of school-age youth than did the nation (20%), state (19%) and county (17%), but a larger proportion than did Redmond (15%) and Seattle (13%).<sup>6</sup>

## Education

- As of October 2014, the Bellevue School District's (BSD) enrollment was 19,097 which is an increase from 2013 when enrollment was 18,515.<sup>7</sup>
- Approximately 1,038 Bellevue households have students that attend school in the Issaquah School District which had a total enrollment of 19,000 students as of July, 2015.<sup>8</sup>

- Funding for Head Start and the State Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) in King County is insufficient to meet the need for quality early learning for children from families with incomes at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. Bellevue School District and Bellevue College only have a total of 181 Head Start slots in 2015.<sup>9</sup> Bellevue College has 30 of these slots.<sup>10</sup> The Bellevue School District has 60 slots ECEAP slots for 2015. The Bellevue School District in 2015-2016 was funded for 20 additional slots that provide full day childcare, half day pre-school and before and after-school programs to children six weeks to 5th grade for a total of 2,000 slots. Based on the 2014-2015 DEL saturation study, they are 83 additional 3-4 years olds that are income eligible and likely to attend, that there currently is no federal/state preschool slots for in the Bellevue School District.<sup>11</sup>

“We need more affordable after school programs for kids.”

*Community Conversation, Stevenson Elementary School Latino Parents*

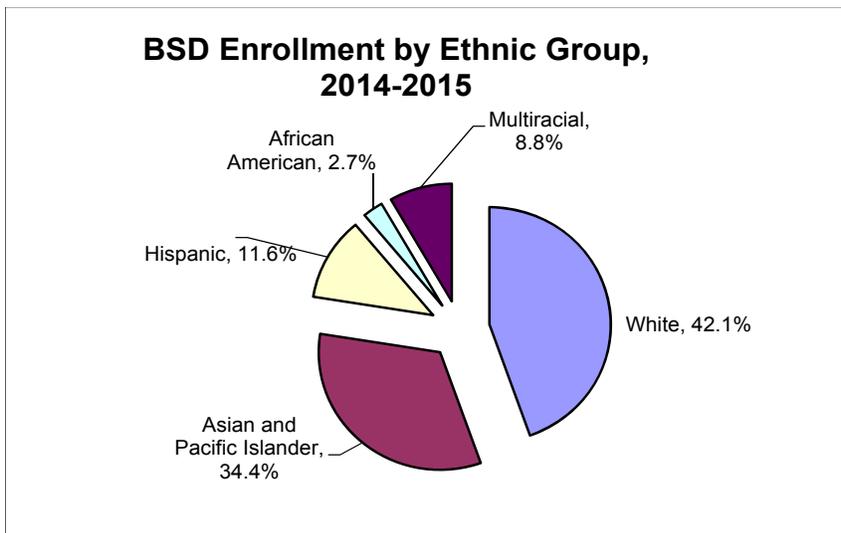
- Research shows that school dropouts have a tougher time finding employment and earn significantly less than those students who finish high school and go on to at least some college. Other studies indicate that high school dropouts are three and one-half times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested, and over eight times more likely to be in jail or in prison. Across the country, 68% of state prison inmates do not receive a high school diploma.<sup>12</sup> The State of Washington defines dropouts as 1) those who actually drop out of school before graduation and 2) those who withdraw from the district before graduation without giving information about whether or not they enrolled in another district (these students are called “unknown withdrawals”).
- The Bellevue School District in 2013-2014 had an on-time graduation rate of 88.9%, compared to 73.0% in Seattle and 88.6% in Lake Washington School Districts. These reflect the results for those students who complete their education in the standard

number of years, or “on-time” which is in four academic years for most students. Graduation rates disproportionately affect some students of color. In the BSD, Black students had an on-time graduation rate of 78.7% compared to 89.6% of White students. Hispanic/Latino students had an on-time graduation rate of 79.3%. The on-time graduation rate is the indicator used across the State as part of “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) calculations. Currently there is a national effort to have states report graduation rates in the same way, which will make state to state comparisons more valid.<sup>13</sup>

- The extended graduation rate includes those students who took longer than four years to graduate. To meet all district and state graduation requirements sometimes takes 5 or 6 years. Grads in this group might include students who entered the district after 9th grade, English language learners, certain students receiving special education services, and others. In Bellevue, the extended graduation rate was 91.0% in 2013-2014.<sup>14</sup>

## Racial and Ethnic Diversity

- According to the 2013 American Community Census (ACS), the racial and ethnic diversity of the population in Bellevue under age 18 is higher (48.0%) than the diversity of the adult population (38.1%).<sup>15</sup>
- Over the past 16 years, the percentage of Hispanic students in the Bellevue School District has more than doubled. The percentage of Hispanics in 1996-1997 was about 5.3%; in 2006-2007, it was 8.1% and in 2013 it was 10.3%. As of October 2014, Hispanics represent an 11.6% of Bellevue’s School District.<sup>16</sup>
- The percentage of White students has declined every year, which reflects the increasing diversity in the district. In 2014-2015, 42.1% of Bellevue’s students were White, compared to 71.4% in 1996.<sup>17</sup>
- Including English, Bellevue School District students speak 87 first languages. One third (33.5%) of students speaks a language other than English as their first language. Spanish is the most common language after



**Figure 1. Source: Bellevue School District, 2015.**

English, followed by Chinese-Mandarin, Korean, Chinese-Cantonese, Russian, Japanese, Vietnamese, Teluga, Hindi, French, Tamil, French, Farsi (Persian), and Arabic.<sup>18</sup>

- In 2014, 10.7% of Bellevue School District students are enrolled in English Language Learner (ELL) classes. The majority of ELL students are in grades K-5.<sup>19</sup>

“I want kids of all races to feel good about themselves.”

*Community Café, Highland Middle School Parent*

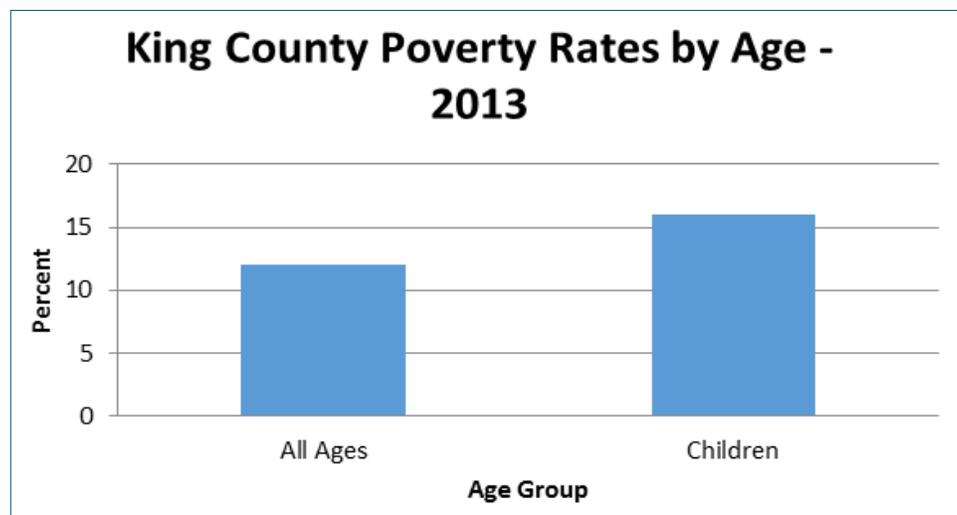
- In the Issaquah School District, the following racial breakout was reported in 2013-2014: White, 61.4%; Hispanic, 7.4%; Black/African American, 1.8%; Asian/Pacific Islander, 23.7%; American Indian, .2%.

Over 883 students received ELL services in 2013-2014. These students represent 49 different cultures and language groups. The most common are Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian and Japanese.<sup>20</sup> Some students who are Bellevue residents attend schools in the Issaquah School District: Sunset and

Cougar Ridge Elementary Schools and Issaquah Middle School. Sunset has 15 English Language Learners, with 10 languages spoken other than English, the most common are Chinese, Tagalog, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu. Cougar Ridge has 54 students who are English Language Learners, with 10 languages spoken other than English, the most common is Chinese. Issaquah Middle has 6 students who are English Language Learners, with 9 languages spoken other than English, the most common is Chinese.<sup>21</sup>

### Children and Youth Living in Poverty

- The official measure of poverty in the U.S. was developed in 1963 to track the impact of the Johnson Administration’s War on Poverty. Children are referred to as “poor” if they live in families who earn below 100% of the federal poverty level (\$23,624 for a family of four in 2013) and “low-income” if they live in families below 200% of the poverty level (\$47,100 for a family of four in 2013).<sup>22</sup> Nationally, the number of poor children has risen to 16.1 million in 2013.<sup>23</sup> The national child poverty rate has risen to 21.8 % in 2015 according to the National Report Card by Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality.<sup>24</sup> Based on a model of the



**Figure 2. Source: Communities Count, 2013.**

historical relationship between state child poverty rates and economic conditions, child poverty rate predictions for 2010 were developed for each state. In Washington State 18.6% of children lived in poverty in 2013.<sup>25</sup>

- In 2013, *Communities Count, Social and Health Indicators* across King County reported over 16% of King County children ages 0-17 (about 70,000) lived in poverty.<sup>26</sup> Poverty rates for children hasn't changed since 2010 (16%), 2007 (13%), 1999 (10%), but the number of children has increased by about 5,000.<sup>26</sup> The City of Bellevue reports 7.6 % poverty rates according to the latest American Community Survey (ACS 2013) data compared to King County's 16%.<sup>27</sup> However, certain areas within Bellevue have historically had much higher rates of children in poverty than others. For

instance in 2005-2009, it was estimated that 24% of children living in West Lake Hills were living in poverty compared to zero percent in Somerset and Northwest Bellevue.<sup>28</sup>

"Homeless youth who are students at Bellevue College: it is a challenge for them to stay in a shelter then get to class on time as the shelter is in Redmond. Also, if they have a later class they struggle to get to the shelter after class as the shelter fills up."  
*Community conversation, Bellevue College Staff*

- Another measure of poverty and low-income status in the area of food security is

the percentage of students who receive free and reduced-price lunch. According to the Bellevue School District, the total percentage of students qualifying for lunch assistance remained relatively steady until 2009. Over a ten year period, the percentage rose to 19.2% during the 2004-05 school year. It declined marginally, from 18.9% in 2005-06 to 17.7% in 2008-2009, and then jumped to 21.6% in 2012-2013. In 2013-2014, the rate declined slightly to 19.6% and in 2014-2015 the rate was at 19.0%.<sup>29</sup> The percent of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch varies by school. As shown in figure 3, there are 10 out of 30 in the district with more than 20% of student's eligible for free or reduced price lunches for 2014-2015.<sup>30</sup>

- In the Issaquah School District, about 9.3% of students are eligible for free and reduced price lunch.<sup>31</sup>

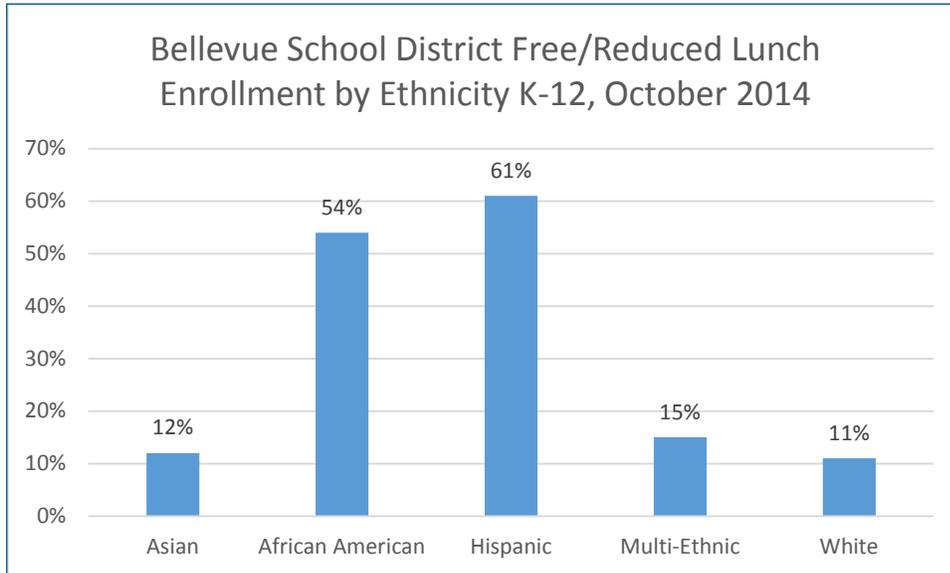
% of School Enrollment Qualifying for Free/Reduced Lunch			
	Elementary	Middle	High
0-10%	Bennett, Cherry Crest, Clyde Hill, Medina, Puesta del Sol, Somerset, Spiritridge, Jing Mei, Newport Heights	International	International
11-20%	Eastgate, Enatai, Newport Heights	Chinook, Big Picture, Tyee, Tillicum	Bellevue, Big Picture, Newport
21-30%	Woodridge	Odle	
31-40%	Phantom Lake		Interlake
41-50%	Ardmore, Sherwood Forest, Stevenson	Highland	Sammamish
51-70%	Lake Hills		
<b>BSD (2014-2015)</b>			

Figure 3. Source: Bellevue School District, 2015.

- Students of color are dis-proportionately represented in the free and reduced price lunch program. This is clear in Figure 4 that shows the percentage of students by racial/ethnic group, and the percentage of students in these categories enrolled in the free or reduced price lunch program.
- The Bellevue School District reports a large increase in students eligible to receive services funded by the federal McKinney-Vento Act because they are homeless. In 2007, 48 qualified; in 2009, the number increased to 93. In 2012-2013, 204 students were enrolled and in 2013-2014 the trend continued

to increase with 228 students enrolled. Last year the total for the 2014-2015 school year was 220 students. In the Issaquah School District, in 2010-2011, 135 students were enrolled, and in 2011-2012, that number increased to 137 students and for 2013-2014 it decreased to 122 students enrolled.<sup>32</sup>

crease compared to 2009 when it was 13.8. In 2013, the State's birth rate was 8.9/1,000, which are similar numbers to 2011 birth rates.<sup>34</sup> The national teen birth rate was 12.3 births/1000 in 2013.<sup>35</sup> One of the reasons this age group is tracked is because it is at the highest risk for poor birth outcomes,



**Figure 4. Source: Bellevue School District, 2014-2015.**

such as low birth weight and prematurity which puts the infant at risk for infant death, blindness and deafness. Children born to single teen-age mothers are more likely to drop out of school, give birth out of wedlock, and become dependent on welfare, compared to children with older parents.<sup>36</sup>

- Between 2008-2012, the average teen birth rate in King County for females ages 15-17 was 8.1/1,000 births. During the same time period,

average teen birth rates in South King County (12.7) and Seattle (7.3) were higher than in East (2.8) or North King County (4.0).<sup>37</sup>

## Health and Mental Health Issues

- Under the Affordable Care Act, those 18 years old or younger will have wider coverage under Medicaid and Washington's Apple Health for Kids. (Note: For more information about this issue, see the Health Care section of this report.)
- Sound Mental Health staff state that many of the children serve in their school program would not access services if they had to go outside of the community. The youth served in the program are very-low and low income whose families rely on safety net services. Issues that are addressed through their counseling program are anxiety, trauma, depression and chemical dependency. Many of the children and youth need multiple modalities to become engaged, including outreach.<sup>33</sup>
- Pregnancy rates among teens 15-17 years old in Washington State declined steadily from 59.0 per 1,000 females in 1989 to 19.4 per 1,000 in 2011, which was the lowest in almost 30 years. The State's birth rate for this age group was 8.2/1,000 in 2011, a de-

"Though there appears to be a number of resources available for youth, when doctors try to access them for patients in the Emergency Department, they find barriers that make them ineligible."

*Community Conversation, Evergreen Hospital and Medical Center Staff*

- In 2011-2013, the rate of births per 1,000 women ages 15 through 19 living within the Bellevue School District was estimated to be about 0.00 births per 1,000 women, which was much lower than the overall birth rate for women ages 15 through 19 living in King County of 12 births per 1,000 women.<sup>38</sup>
- Average teen birth rates from 2008-2012 in King County were higher among Hispanics/Latinas (31.1 per 1,000), American Indian/Alaska Natives, (19.3 per 1,000), and

African Americans (11.0 per 1,000) than among Whites (7.4 per 1,000) and Asians reporting a single race (3.8 per 1,000).<sup>39</sup>

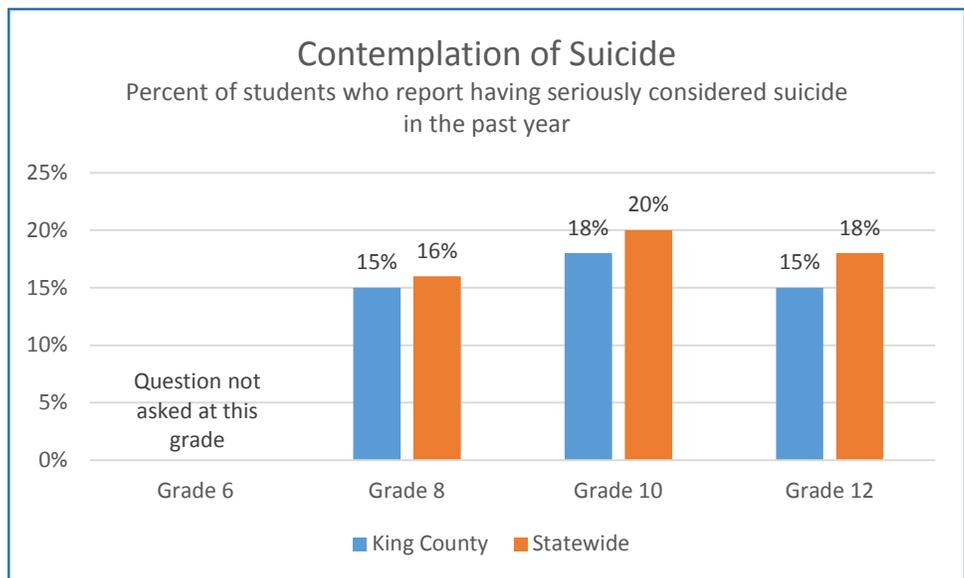
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) are spread through sexual contact with another person who is infected. Every year about four million teens in the U.S get STDs. The most common STDs for teens are genital warts (HPV), chlamydia, and gonorrhea. People affected by other STDs are two to five times more vulnerable to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).<sup>40</sup> In King County, the most frequently reported STDs among 15-19 year olds are chlamydia, gonorrhea and initial genital herpes.<sup>41</sup>
- Lack of exercise and being overweight are risk factors for serious illnesses such as heart disease, hypertension and diabetes, and contribute to premature death. Factors contributing to the increasing rates of overweight children include fewer opportunities for physical activities, media and marketing, and increased time in sedentary activities, such as watching television or using computers.<sup>42</sup> According to the findings from the most recent Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, conducted in 2014 with middle and high school students across the state, 25% of 10th grade students were overweight.<sup>43</sup> In King County in 2014, 19% of youth in grade 8, 20% of youth in grade 10, and 20% of youth in grade 12 were overweight or obese.<sup>44</sup>
- The Healthy Youth Survey also provides information about substance use by youth. In 2014 in King County, 31% of 12th graders and 20% of 10th graders reported having drunk a glass, can or bottle of alcohol in the past 30 days.<sup>45</sup> 26% of 12th graders and 17% of 10th graders reported smoking marijuana in the past 30 days.<sup>46</sup> In the Bellevue School District, 32% of 12th graders

and 21% of 10th graders reported the specified alcohol usage in the past 30 days; 20% of 12th graders and 12% of 10th graders reported smoking marijuana in the past 30 days.<sup>47</sup>

- Youth Eastside Services (YES) staff report that more young people are coming into their offices with higher acuity than before: more substance abuse, anxiety, suicide ideation and depression. They have also noticed that more youth from middle and higher income families are seeking help, rather than youth from families with more risk factors, such as poverty. Funding for prevention services has been decreasing over the past decade and YES staff speculate that perhaps this has contributed to the increase of youth with more issues currently.<sup>48</sup>

“We need programs that help kids who are experiencing stress and pressure from parents and school. Maybe a parent/student night so both can communicate with each other about these stresses.”  
*Community Conversation, Bellevue Boys and Girls Club Participant*

- Nationally, 16% of high school students consider suicide, 13% have a plan, and 8% attempt suicide.<sup>49</sup> Suicide is associated with major depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and substance misuse.<sup>50</sup>



**Figure 5. Source: 2014 Health Youth Survey-King County/ Washington State.**

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Washington youth ages 15-24 and the third leading cause of death nationally.<sup>51</sup> In Washington, an average of two young people die of suicide each week, and seventeen attempts result in hospitalization.<sup>52</sup> According to the National Center for Health Statistics, Washington has the 21st highest overall suicide rate in the nation.<sup>53</sup> The Healthy Youth Survey 2014 showed 16% of Bellevue School District youth (8th, 10th and 12th graders) had contemplated suicide in the last 12 months.<sup>54</sup>
- In Bellevue in 2014, 14% of eighth graders and 16% of twelfth graders said they contemplated suicide.<sup>55</sup>

## Youth Violence

- In 2011, 23,004 juveniles were arrested in Washington State, a rate of 32.6 per 1,000 youth age 10-17; this is the lowest juvenile rate reported since prior to 1982, a 48% decrease from the 2001 rate, and approximately a 10% decrease from 2010 to 2011. There were 1,016 violent crime rate arrests, for a violent crime rate of 1.4 per 1,000 youth age 10-17 juveniles (the lowest violent crime rate reported since prior to 1982). This is a 44% decrease from 2010 to 2011. Females represented 30.4% of all juveniles' arrests in 2011, remaining relative constant over the past 9 years. Between 2001 and 2011 the percentage of total arrests increased by about 7% for girls, for boys it decreased about 3% in comparison. The percentage of juvenile arrests by race shows an increase of 8.8% in the overall percentage of total arrests for minority youth from 2010-2011.<sup>56</sup>
- Washington State data collected on youth in the juvenile justice system reveals that minority youth are disproportionately represented as they progress through the juvenile justice system. For this reason, disproportionate minority contact (DMC) has become the priority issue for the Washington State Partnership Council on Juvenile Justice. For example, while in 2011 Washington State's population of minority youth 10-17 years old made up 33.6% of the total youth population, they composed 56.8% of youth held in Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration facilities. A tool called the Relative Rate Index (RRI), used to measure differences in respect to an occurrence of an event found that if a youth who is African American or Black is 4.5 on the RRI for juvenile arrests, he is 450% more likely to be arrested than a youth who is white. A study found that minority youth are diverted from criminal prosecution at lower rates than white youth and are less likely to be diverted for subsequent offenses than white youth.<sup>57</sup>
- Youth come to the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration with complex disorders which often are the root of their criminal behavior. In 2011, the JRA reported that more than 64% of youth held in JRA facilities had "significant mental health issues," and 48% had substance abuse issues. Over 80% of JRA youth had co-occurring disorders both in residential care and on parole aftercare.<sup>58</sup>
- In 2013, there were 667 juvenile arrests in King County, a 30% decrease compared to the 961 that were reported in 2012.<sup>59</sup> In Bellevue in 2014, 328 youth were arrested, a 28% decrease compared to 2009 when there were 422.<sup>60</sup>
- In King County in 2013, there were 118 juvenile violent crime arrests (murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault).<sup>61</sup> In 2014 in Bellevue, 17 juveniles were arrested for violent crimes.<sup>62</sup>
- In 2014, while 90% of King County sixth graders feel safe at school, only 65% report actually enjoying school, similar to 2012. About the same number of twelfth graders reported feeling safe (89%), and enjoyed school (40%) also similar to 2012.<sup>63</sup> In Bellevue, 92% of sixth graders and 93% of twelfth graders felt safe at school, both similar to 2012; 65% of sixth graders and 40% of twelfth graders reported enjoying school, also similar to 2012.<sup>64</sup>
- In 2014, 5% of King County twelfth graders report having been a member of a gang in the past 12 months; almost 4% of Bellevue eighth graders reported gang membership, a decrease from 2012 when it was 6%.<sup>65</sup> According to the Bellevue Police Department, gang activity has declined greatly.

In 2008, there was 11 gang related cases. In 2014-2015 there was no gang related cases. The Bellevue officers that do community outreach based out of Crossroads Police Substation report that agencies that have youth after-school and summer programs such as YES, Boys and Girls Clubs Teen Centers, YWCA, Jubilee REACH and Salvation Army are one of the reasons that there is not more gang activity in a growing city like Bellevue. Programs that work with youth from low-income families who may be “latch-key” kids because their families work several jobs to make ends meet are especially critical to help provide experiences such as mentoring, sports, school homework support and positive role models. Such programs give youth, especially those in middle school where often early gang involvement begins, alternatives that can be life changing. In the Bellevue School District, they have added 2 additional School Resource Officers (SRO) that total 8 officers for the district. In the 2 middle schools, 4 officers are stationed there and the other 4 officers are stationed at the 4 high schools to provide support to youth in a more positive setting, and also redirect youth who need help in a more positive direction.<sup>66</sup>

## Service Trends

### Support for Youth in the Community

- The VIBES (Volunteers in Bellevue’s Education System) program works in all Bellevue schools to provide one-on-one mentoring and tutoring to students. They are continually trying to bring support to elementary schools for the 3rd grade Reading Initiative, academic tutors for struggling middle and high school students and college application specialists for high school students. They always have more requests for tutors and mentors than volunteers. The greatest lack is in bilingual volunteers (primarily English-Spanish) as they see a continuing increase of students of color and upper end tutors (AP Chemistry, AP Calculus, AP Statistics).<sup>67</sup>
- The Wrap-Around Services Program, a collaborative partnership between the City of Bellevue, and Bellevue School District provides a number of activities for school-aged children and youth including before and after school programs and anti-bullying programs at two elementary and one middle school. In addition to youth focused goals, program staff help parents connect with resources, as well as build good relationships with the school and the community.<sup>68</sup>
- Youth Eastside Services’ (YES) SUCCESS Mentoring Program recruits mentors to encourage youth to develop the skills and qualities they need to be successful in life, help them build self-esteem and provide them with continual support and guidance. Research shows that mentoring can decrease involvement in high-risk behavior. Many of the YES clients come from single-parent, female headed households, so a positive male model who is a mentor is especially important.<sup>69</sup>
- Bellevue Boys & Girls Club provides a *Project Learn* after school program. The program is designed to increase academic performance in reading, writing, and homework.<sup>70</sup>
- Teen Closet provides gently used and new clothing for homeless and low-income teens on the Eastside, to raise self-esteem and keep youth in school. Organized by a Youth Link action team, youth set up and pick up clothes from a primary sponsor, Plato’s Closet. Distribution is in various locations, but the primary one is the Ground Zero “The Club” site with the Boys and Girls Club of Bellevue.<sup>71</sup>
- Jubilee REACH, a family support center in the Lake Hills neighborhood, offers an extensive array of services for children and their families. Some services that specifically address the needs of school-aged children and youth include KidREACH tutoring, a music and recording studio, art club and studio, one-on-one GED teaching, as well as summer camps and after-school activities.<sup>72</sup>
- Eastside Pathways’ partners, along with the Bellevue School District, have united to close the gap in reading ability among all children in Bellevue. Their first area of focus is the critical time from birth through third grade, which research has shown is crucial to life success. They have a goal of

100% of children reading at grade level by 2016 and beyond (the rate is 87.9% currently). They address this gap with strategies in school readiness, school attendance, and summer and extended learning.<sup>73</sup>

- The Bellevue School District created a Department of Equity which operates with the belief that, “An equitable and excellent school district is one which all students achieve high levels of academic success, regardless of any student’s race, ethnicity, culture, country of origin, religion, gender, special needs, sexual orientation, neighborhood, income of parents, or mother tongue. In an equitable and excellent school district, there are no persistent patterns of differences in the academic achievement or treatment of students grouped by race, ethnicity, culture, special needs, country of origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, neighborhood, income of parents or mother tongue. Equity and excellence occur when each and every student is served effectively to achieve high levels.” The areas in which the department has goals include teaching and learning, student and family supports, and leadership and equity in the workplace.<sup>74</sup>

## Health and Mental Health Issues

- YES has a variety of Early Intervention Programs for individuals, families or groups in all three departments – Youth and Family Counseling, Substance Abuse and Education & Prevention. They see clients with a wide range of problems including those who have experienced trauma and abuse, and also many people with such challenges as: family communication, parenting skills, peer and social problems, or needing skills to cope with anxiety, depression and anger. Staff note that they have experienced a higher than usual demand for counseling services over the past year when comparing their numbers of new referrals to the agency from the past several years. In addition, they have seen an overall trend of a growing number of clients being served in counseling programs both at school and agency sites as compared to previous years. Common issues youth are presenting

with include: anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, self-injuring behavior, anger management problems, academic challenges, social problems and bullying, divorce, behavior problems, family conflict, parents with addiction issues, and exposure to domestic/family violence. They are also seeing a trend of clients who present with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse. Due to the high acuity of many YES clients, some who are exhibiting life-threatening behaviors, the agency has committed to training their staff in evidence-based therapies so clinicians can intervene most effectively with their clients. Some of these EBP’s are Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, TFCBT, and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy.<sup>75</sup>

“The sheer number of young people coming in with high acuity, substance abuse, anxiety and depression is increasing. We are seeing more middle and high income youth seeking help, not just lower income youth and families with traditional risk factors.”  
*Community Conversation, Youth Eastside Services Staff*

- Bullying has been defined as physical or psychological aggression which is intended to harm or disturb, occurs repeatedly, and has a powerful person or group attacking a less powerful one. In 2002, Washington State passed an Anti-Bullying Law that requires schools have a policy in place, notify staff and students of the policy, and that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction must establish policies, training and resources.<sup>76</sup> The academic consequences of bullying are severe, as are the mental and physical well-being of targeted students and bystanders. School-wide anti-bullying projects, involving parents and non-teaching staff along with teachers and student leaders have been shown to reduce harassment by as much as fifty percent.<sup>77</sup> 31% of sixth graders in Washington state reported in the 2014 HYS that they’d been bullied in the past 30 days. By twelfth grade, this rate had dropped to 16%. In Bellevue, 25% of sixth graders reported being bullied, compared to 30% in 2012; almost 16% of twelfth

graders reported being bullied compared to 17% in 2012.<sup>78</sup>

- Friends of Youth, which provides mental and substance abuse intervention and prevention for youth, reports an increase in heroin use, anxiety and stress related symptoms for youth. While they have been getting fewer referrals for substance abuse in outpatient treatment, they are seeing youth in the schools. Staff observe that stigma for substance use treatment is still very prevalent in the affluent areas in East King County. Mental health referrals have continued to stay high over the past 2 years.<sup>79</sup>
- Staff from Asian Counseling and Referral Service are seeing more acutely mentally ill youth, many who have attempted suicide, just discharged from inpatient hospitalization and in need of a higher intensity level of mental health services. They also are experiencing more requests for services, yet there is a lack of bilingual/bicultural professionals who are willing to work with the current level of salary. The current level of funding will not sustain on-going increases of salary scale.<sup>80</sup>
- Almost two-thirds of youth depression goes undetected and untreated, public awareness and youth education is critical. Washington's Youth Suicide Prevention Program (YSPP) works to increase public awareness of depression and suicide, provides public awareness, training to teachers, parents and students and promotes community-based suicide prevention plans.<sup>81</sup> The Crisis Clinic's Teen Link provides a youth-answered help line open evenings to respond to calls from youth on a wide variety of topics. Teen Link is a teen peer-to-peer support line that offers support through anonymous and confidential telephone call and on-line chat. Teen Link handled 2,271 calls in 2014. Teen Link also offers suicide prevention training in junior, middle and high schools, and youth serving organizations. In 2014, Teen Link provided 370 suicide prevention presentations that reached 9,441 teens.<sup>82</sup>

## Refugee and Immigrant Youth

- Disparities in student academic achievement, called the "achievement gap", mean that students of color and students in poverty have fewer opportunities to access academic programs and supports, and therefore have less success in school. For example, fourth grade reading test scores in Washington clearly show that Asian and White students consistently do better than Black, American Indian, and Hispanic students. To address this issue, in 2008, the Washington State Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee was created, developing recommendations and providing training and community education. The 2013 recommendations included decreasing the disproportionate number of students of color in disciplinary actions, enhance school cultural competence, enhance English Language Learner programs, and invest in recruitment and retention of educators of color.<sup>83</sup>
- The Bellevue School District has two parent groups that help to address the growing diverse student population. Since 2004, the Bellevue School District has sponsored the Parent Action and Advisory Council (PAAC) serving to support English language learners, culturally and racially diverse families. PAAC promotes the highest levels of academic achievement for all students with a special focus on English Language Learners, students of culturally and racially diverse backgrounds and other groups of students who need advocacy. Impulso Escolar Latino de Bellevue was created in 2005 to support Spanish speaking families and students to navigate and access Bellevue's education system. This group of Latino parents which has representatives from many district schools works with the school district to develop and offer programs that support Spanish-speaking parents in understanding the school system; the group also advises school and district leaders on strategies for increasing family involvement and help eliminate the achievement gap for Latino students.<sup>84</sup>
- Youth Eastside Services provides a number of programs for Latino youth and families.

Safe Youth is a program to help Latino youth avoid violence, gangs and involvement with the criminal justice system through culturally sensitive mentoring and using violence prevention strategies. Latino H.E.A.T. is a student leadership, community service and cultural empowerment group that meets at Sammamish High School. Members take action and address problems in the community. Mamas Unidas offers workshops, support, community information, resource sharing and involvement to empower Latino mothers to be leaders and mentors in the community.<sup>85</sup>

### Youth in the Foster Care System

- The latest Washington Court report indicates that there are 9,326 children living in foster care and out-of-home placement in Washington.<sup>86</sup> According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, youth in foster care are 17 times more likely than the general public to experience homelessness. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy completed several studies over the past ten years related to education outcomes of youth in foster care. These studies found gaps in graduation rates, dropout levels, and assessment scores between foster youth and other students in Washington. As a result, the State developed four measures, such as school retention and graduation rate, that are being tracked for youth in foster care. For example, the graduation rate for youth in foster care was 48% compared to 72% statewide for non-foster students. For these and other risk factors such as substance abuse, it is important to have supportive services early on for children and youth in foster care, including counseling, mentoring and housing for those youth 18-24 years old who have aged out of the foster care system.<sup>87</sup>

### Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth

- B-GLAD, sponsored by Youth Eastside Services (YES), has a drop-in support group open to kids ages 13 to 19 who may iden-

tify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender or who may be questioning their sexuality. Co-facilitated by trained professionals, B-GLAD is a safe environment for youth to meet their peers, share common concerns, ask questions, and receive information and support in a professional setting that encourages responsible decision-making. They see an average of 20 youth per week coming from the Eastside region, as well as outlying areas. Interlake, Sammamish, Bellevue and Newport High Schools all schedule one-day of LGBTQ youth panels in health class as a way to deepen the understanding and respect of LGBTQ students in the Bellevue School District.<sup>88</sup>

“LGBTQ youth are almost invisible”.  
*Community Conversation, BGLAD Support Group at Youth Eastside Services*

- Participants in the BGLAD group for LGBTQ youth and young adults commented on a number of issues that they encounter in school, in the community and in the work place. Issues include perceived discrimination in hiring, lack of training of teachers, school nurses and counselors on working with LGBTQ students, more effective and inclusive opportunities to dialogue between straight and LGBTQ youth such as in panel presentations, and stereotypes about the LGBTQ community that are perpetuated by lack of accurate information.<sup>89</sup>

### Emergency Shelter, Transitional and Long-Term Permanent Housing Options for Homeless Youth

- In 2014-2015, Bellevue School District reported 224 homeless students according to the State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.<sup>90</sup>
- Friends of Youth (FOY) provides a shelter for young adults ages 18-24 years old in Redmond seven days a week. FOY staff provides case management and work to engage participants in services such as housing, employment, education and mental

health. FOY staff report that they are seeing a big increase in youth with co-occurring disorders (e.g. mental health and substance abuse). There is also an uptick in heroine usage which is consistent with trends reported throughout King County. There has been a consistent high demand for services.<sup>91</sup> (Note: For more information about this topic, see Goal 1 in this report.)

- The Homeless Youth and Young Adult Initiative is King County's community-wide response to prevent and end homelessness among young people. The Initiative is led by the King County Committee to End Homelessness, advised by agency and government leaders, supported by private philanthropy and the public sector, and grounded in the voices and input of homeless and formerly homeless young people.<sup>92</sup>
- In May 2015, King County did an update to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan to Prevent and End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness in King County by 2020. This YYA Comprehensive Plan Refresh was endorsed by the YYA Advisory Group and Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness. It outlines strategies in the areas of (1) making homelessness rare and brief, (2) making homelessness one-time, (3) supporting YYA of color, (4) supporting LGBTQ YYA and (5) improving access to housing and matching housing with YYA needs. The Comprehensive Plan Refresh outlines priority activities, system activities, and measures of success for the next 2 years.<sup>93</sup>

## Youth Violence

- Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) provide a youth prevention and early intervention program, as well as a skills group for young women. The Teen Peer Advocate Program (TPAP) trains and recruits girls from Interlake and Sammamish High Schools to educate their peers and the broader community on teen dating violence, sexual assault prevention and community resources. This program addresses the need for a culturally relevant program for Asian Pacific American young women but all races are welcome to join.<sup>94</sup>
- Human Trafficking, which includes labor

and sex trafficking, is a modern day form of slavery. Approximately 600,000 to 800,000 victims annually are trafficked across international borders and include women, men and children. Some victims are native born U.S. citizens, as well. Children and youth under the age of eighteen can be part of forced sex trafficking which subjects them to physical and psychological abuse, such as severe beatings, rape, drug addiction and other forms of violence.<sup>95</sup> In Washington State, which is one of the top human trafficking destinations in the U.S. due to the easily accessed public ports and proximity to Asia, the Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network (WARN) provides a 24-hour urgent response hotline, access to safe housing and immigration advocacy and legal assistance.<sup>96</sup>

- The Bellevue Police Department is represented on the FBI sponsored Children' Exploitation Task Force (CETF) with two full-time VICE Detectives and their Supervisor. CETF is tasked with locating and recovering juvenile victims of commercial sex exploitation. This task involves networking with Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies in an effort to provide comprehensive intervention to the victims they locate and recover. The involvement of non-governmental organizations is vital to this process in providing tools and services that there is no funding for. These may include but is not limited to: hotel vouchers for short-term stays, clothing items such as sandals, sweatshirts and pants, undergarments and small duffle bags; travel sized-toiletries; gift cards for items such as gas, food and the telephones and/ or minutes to load their phones.<sup>97</sup>

## Community Perceptions

- 15% of phone/online survey respondents in 2015 ranked "teens dropping of school" as a major/moderate community problem, similar to the ranking in 2013.
- Slightly more people (20%) in the 2015 phone/online survey ranked "lack of services for children and youth/teens" as a major/moderate community problem compared to 17% in 2013.

- Only 10% of respondents to the phone/online survey in 2015 ranked poor quality education, K-12 a major or moderate community problem compared to 13% in 2013.
- Effects of gang violence dropped from 16% as a major/moderate community problem in the 2013 phone/online survey compared to 9% in 2015, a significant difference.
- In several community conversations, the need for youth leadership development was expressed, for all youth, but in particular those from diverse communities. For example, the India Association of Western Washington sponsors a youth mentorship program; the youth board is mentored by young adults who are Indian. Each summer there is a camp that offers workshops on cultural awareness and engaging in projects that support the greater community. The Muslim Community Resource Center involves their youth in projects related to hunger and homelessness.
- Staff from Bellevue College commented that they see undocumented and older foster youth who have aged out of the system who are students have challenges with obtaining basic needs, which in turn presents barriers to education.
- A theme at some of the community conversations with youth and adults were lack of activities for teens, and affordable after school programs for children.
- The Bellevue School District convened with the help of community partners over 20 Community Café meetings in 2015. Themes for these meetings were dependent upon the groups that met. The groups included parents and youth from diverse communities including Asian Pacific Islanders and Latinos. Community partners included Jubilee REACH, Crossroads Community Center and many of the middle and high schools in the District.
- Youth Link board members were most concerned about student depression, increased drug and alcohol usage, hunger, and pressure to be “high performing”. Members also mentioned some potential ways to help: more peer mediation, group support help students who are stressed, and more support from the community.
- Teen unemployment was mentioned by several groups as a barrier for students who need the money to help their families make ends meet, and also learn valuable job skills. In Bellevue, as a part of Youth Link, a partnership between the City and the Bellevue School District, Youth Link University was created as a 6 month skill development and leadership training for teens 13-17 years old. The trainings focus on assisting students develop essential civic and/or business leadership. Students work in teams and are mentored by business leaders in the community.

“Some students have parents who have lost their jobs and the students must take jobs to help out. Then you see a decline in these students’ ability to participate in school activities because they have to work.”  
*Community Conversation, Youth Link Board, Student Member*

- About 16% of respondents to the 2015 consumer survey rated “not having community or individual support in your role as a parent/caregiver of children”, slightly higher than in 2013.

## Implications for Action

- Access to supports for school-aged children and youth to ensure their health and well-being is critical to ensure that they are prepared for success in whatever they do in life. Though the unemployment rate is down, many families still struggle to provide the basics for their children. Lack of resources can put children and youth at risk for poor outcomes, and eventually take an economic toll on the community. Efforts such as Eastside Pathways provide an important framework by which to “mobilize the community to support every child, step by step, from cradle to career”.<sup>98</sup>
- With the growing diversity in Bellevue, there is a need for more culturally sensitive programs and activities for school-aged children and youth and their families who may be coping with adjusting to a new country and culture or to gender-based dif-

ferences. Involving the families is needed to ensure school success.

- As families experience the lingering effects of the economic downturn, many children are still internalizing this stress, exhibiting problems in school, increased substance abuse, anxiety, suicide ideation and depression, as evidenced by comments from school staff, parents and mental health professionals. Evidence based and promising prevention oriented services, including those that promote health, such as recreation activities and mentoring, are needed to help avoid more serious problems later.
- There is a gap in the “safety net” for homeless youth and young adults, up to age 24. More housing with services and outreach to this at-risk population is needed to help them move on to productive lives. Some have “aged out” of the foster care system; others are employed or going to school, but lack family or community support.

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