

Transition Practices Case Study

**WEST VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT #208
AND ESD 105 HEAD START AND ECEAP**

Cross-Sector Collaboration



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Case Study Purpose



Transition practices case studies reflect what we learned in 2019 about innovative approaches that cross sector partners use to support effective transitions for children in their communities. We offer these case studies to community-school partnerships exploring possibilities for strengthening transition approaches. Each community we have included has unique strengths and challenges. These case studies demonstrate not a one-size-fits-all approach, but a range of practices and strategies that best serve children and families in each community. For more transition ideas, see the publication *Seeds of Inspiration for Effective Transition Approaches* (EL_0031) at www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/EL_0031.pdf.

Common and Unique Transition Strategy Characteristics

- Relationship-based Approaches
- Family Voice, Leadership and Advocacy
- Inclusionary Practices
- Culturally Sustaining Practices
- Coordinated Recruitment and Enrollment
- Program Alignment

Strategy Characteristics used in this case study:



Relationship-based Approaches



Family Voice, Leadership and Advocacy



Program Alignment





Background

West Valley School District #208 (WVSD) and ESD #105 Head Start/ECEAP are strengthening transitions for children in their community through relationship building, aligned curriculum and instruction, engaging families in workshops and Play & Learn groups, and shared leadership of the P-3 initiative among their early learning partners. Since 2011 when Dr. Mike Brophy started as Superintendent, WVSD has implemented the 10-step framework by Sullivan-Dudzic, Gearn, and Leavell (2011).ⁱ

- Step One: Establish need and common interests
- Step Two: Locate and connect with early childhood learning environments
- Step Three: Develop a leadership team
- Step Four: Provide high-quality professional development
- Step Five: Connect and align quality PreK to kindergarten
- Step Six: Maximize the benefits of full-day kindergarten
- Step Seven: Align and connect a strong full-day kindergarten to grades 1-3
- Step Eight: Conquer the fade-out
- Step Nine: Create a sustainable system of support
- Step Ten: Review, revise, and extend

As of 2018, WVSD worked with 17 early learning partner organizations and hosted an average of 100 participants in their quarterly P-3 professional development workshops (August, October, January, and April). Topics include aligned family engagement, social emotional development, math instruction and materials, among others. To build upon families' positive response to the WaKIDS Family Connection, West Valley teachers set up these family conversations from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Current Practices

In 2019, West Valley School District (WVSD) successfully applied to engage in a nationwide Head Start-Public School collaboration demonstration project sponsored by the Office of Head Start. In June 2019, a team of district and Head Start representatives attended a training session in Arizona for the 12 selected teams. WVSD set their “Wildly Important Goal,” planned objectives, set the timeline, and selected measurement instruments. Dr. Peter Finch, Assistant Superintendent, noted that the West Valley team set this goal based on the PreK to 3rd grade system they had established and extended since 2011.

The West Valley HSCO demonstration team included the following: ESD 105 Head Start Director, ESD 105 Early Learning Program Manager, ESD 105 Family Engagement Content Specialist, ESD 105 Head Start Center Manager, Parent and ESD 105 Head Start Classroom Assistant, West Valley School District Superintendent, West Valley School District Assistant Superintendent, West Valley School District Principal at Cottonwood Elementary.

The team built in three elements for continuous improvement in kindergarten transition:

1. Assign entering kindergartners to their teacher’s classroom in January,
2. Hold a family engagement meeting at the elementary school with the preschool teacher and kindergarten teacher in February/March, and
3. Engage in shared home visits with the ECEAP/Head Start family support staff, preschool teacher, and kindergarten teachers in April/May.

The Head Start classroom at Wide Hollow Elementary and the ECEAP classroom at Ahtanum Valley Elementary chose to participate as children in these classrooms attend all six elementary schools. They measured the outcomes of their goals with WaKIDS data.

A unique element of West Valley’s early learning focus is its district home visiting program – called Parent Child Plus, which served children three and four years of age who qualified for free and reduced meals. Two elementary schools in WVSD used high poverty LAP funds to implement home visiting for school-age children. During COVID-19, these bilingual home visitors maintained strong connections with families, which resulted in high levels of student engagement in remote learning.

In December 2019, the Director of the Office of Head Start, OHS Central and Regional offices, and Head Start Collaboration Offices convened state partners to share results of the 12 pilot demonstration projects, provide technical assistance and tools to convene state summits, and directed each participant to expand to ten more projects in 2020. The 12 demonstration districts convened a state summit or hosted equivalent support to ten new teams, as they set their “Wildly Important Goals” for PreK to 3rd grade collaboration and launch their work together.

Due to COVID-19, West Valley’s planned spring 2020 home visits did not take place. In summer of 2020, the team was awarded a grant to pivot and continue this work through the 100 Schools Reach Initiative. Building on the success of the P-3 Initiative, the West Valley team aims to improve transitions by focusing on family voice and culturally sustaining practices in their diverse community, including implementation of their teacher home visiting plan.

Based on the success of their work in the Head Start Demonstration Project, the West Valley team applied for and received a grant from the Flamboyant Foundation for a multi-year national cohort to focus on the improvement of family engagement. The West Valley team expanded to include the Yakima School District and Educational Service District #105, as well as La Casa Hogar, which is a community-based organization that focuses on parent education and family engagement.

Seeds of Inspiration

Many outstanding strategies and characteristics of effective transitions are visible in the collaboration of West Valley Yakima and ESD 105 in their 100 Schools Reach Initiative. We chose to highlight this work in a case study to demonstrate the strengths of deep cross-sector collaboration and long-term commitment to improving transitions. Though West Valley has made great progress toward their goal of improving kindergarten readiness, they continue to seek out gaps and identify strategies to improve outcomes in their community.

Wide Hollow Elementary School 2019-20

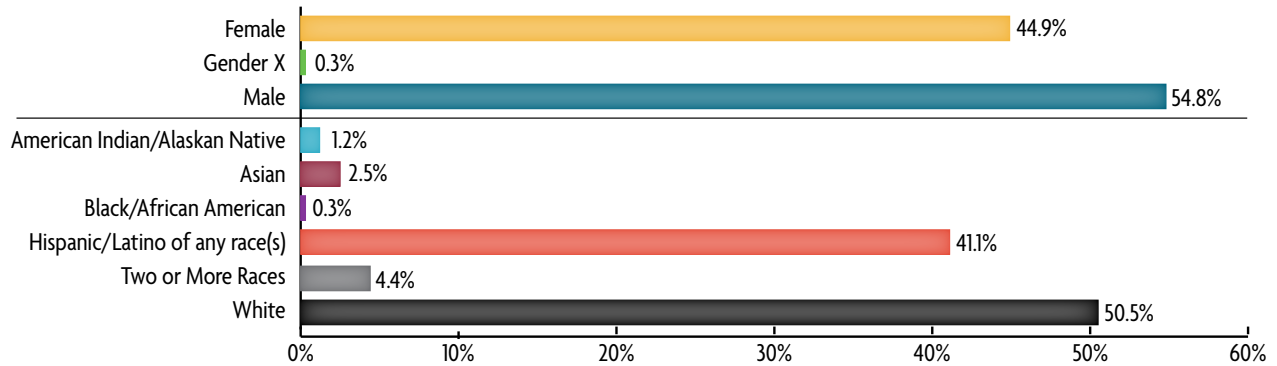


Figure 1: Wide Hollow Elementary enrollment by demographic (OSPI, 2020)

Wide Hollow Elementary School 2019-20

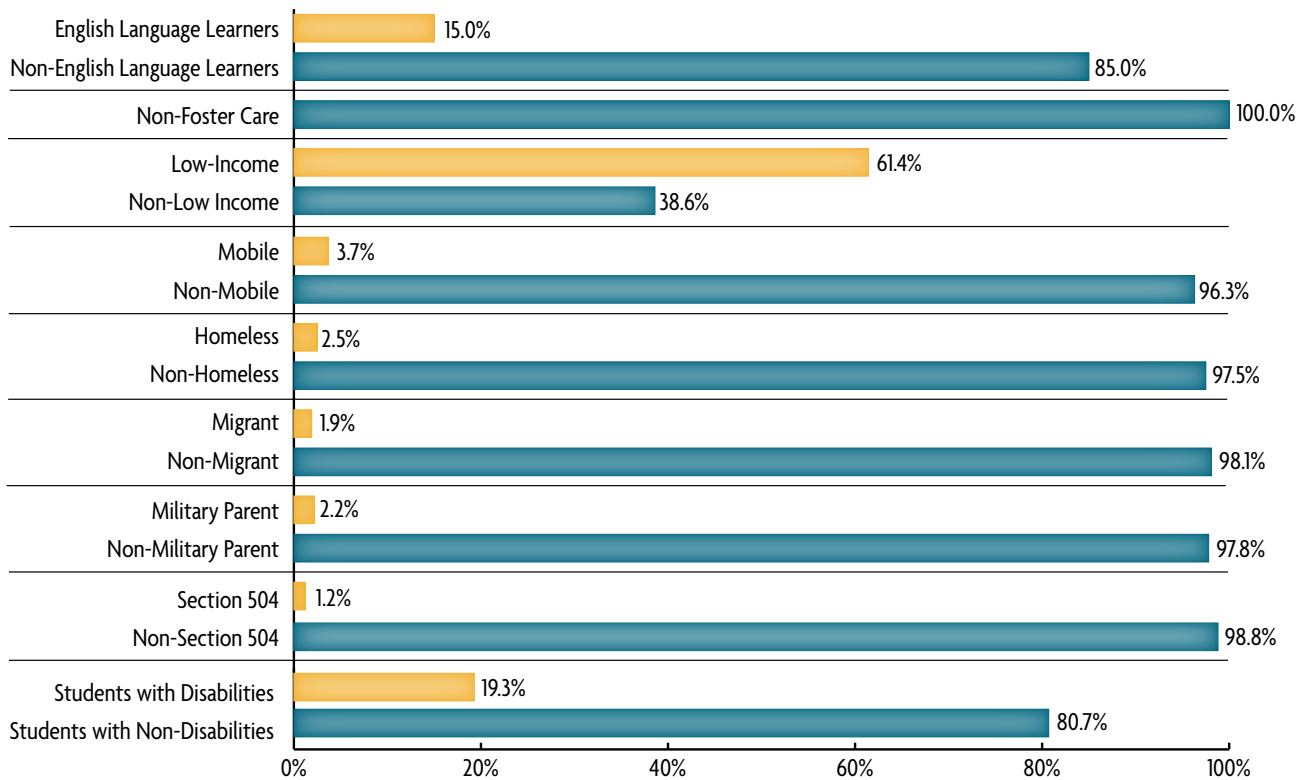


Figure 2: Wide Hollow Elementary enrollment by program (OSPI, 2020)

Cottonwood Elementary School 2019-20

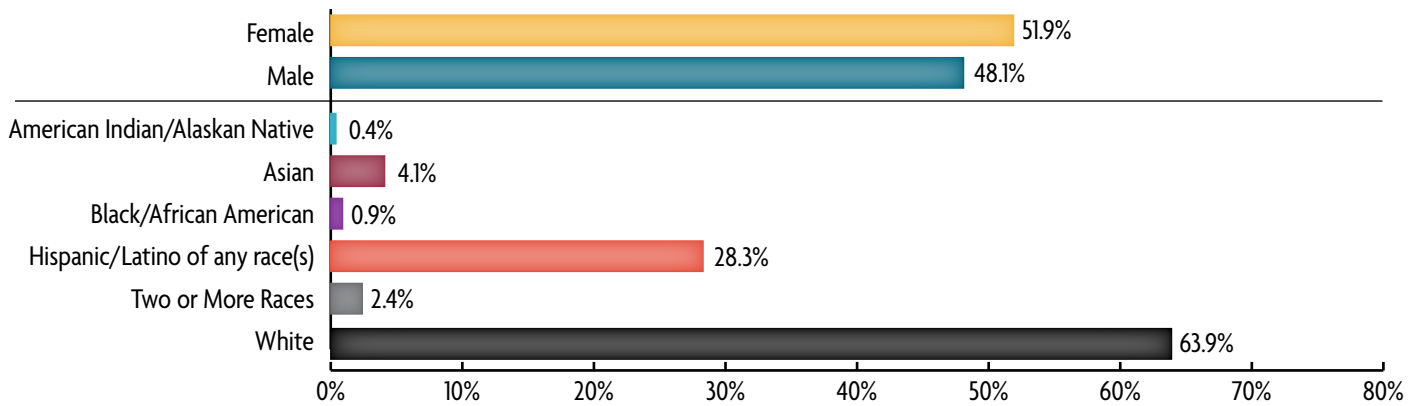


Figure 3: Cottonwood Elementary enrollment by demographic (OSPI, 2020)

Cottonwood Elementary School 2019-20

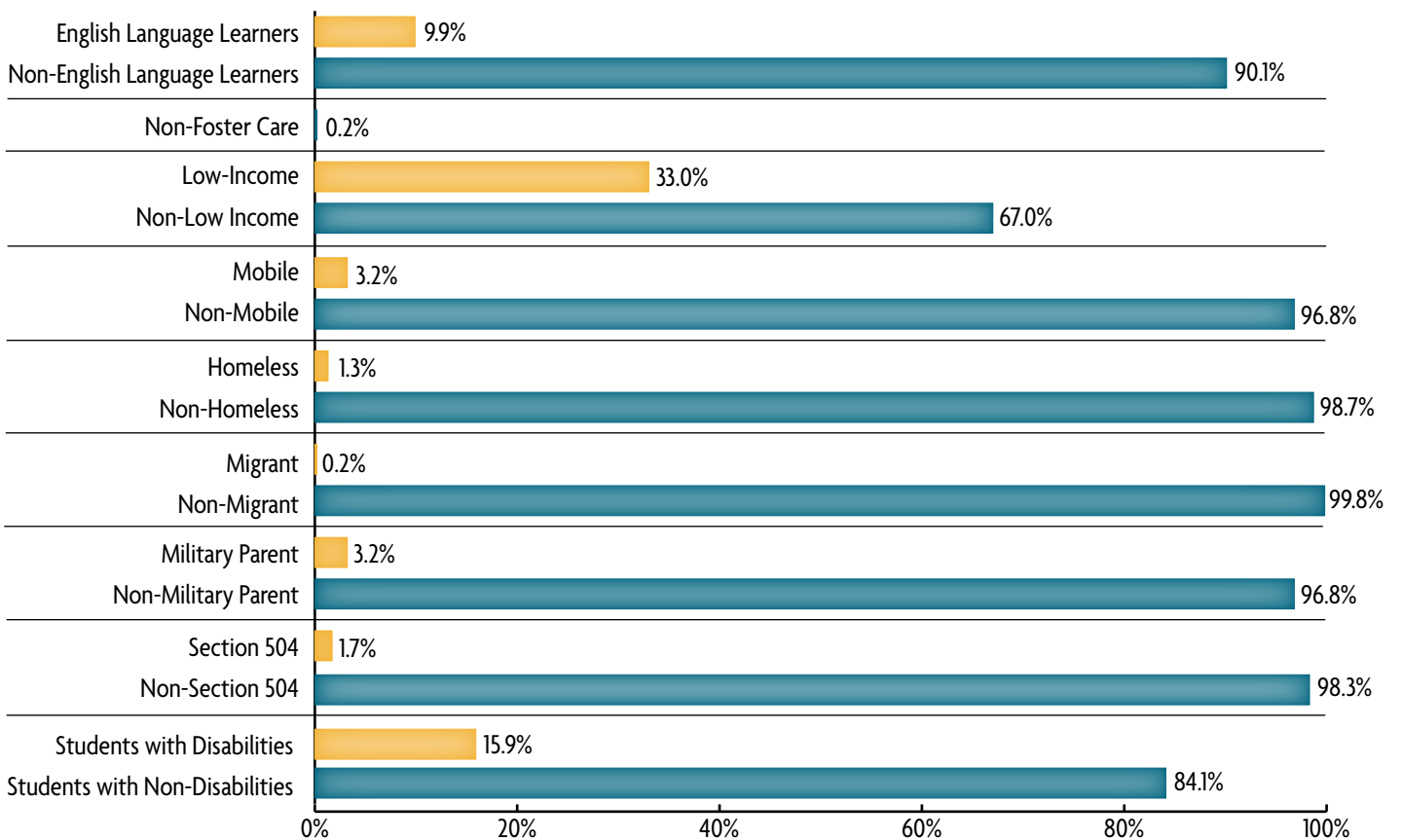


Figure 4: Cottonwood Elementary enrollment by program (OSPI, 2020)

Endnotes

- i For full description of West Valley P-3 initiative, see case study: https://aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Resources/Leadership_Development/Early_Childhood_Learning/EL-CaseStudyWestValley.pdf

References:

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2020). Washington State Report Card. Retrieved from <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/102540>

Sullivan-Dudzic, L., Gears, D.K., & Leavell, K. (2010). Making a Difference: 10 Essential Steps to Building a PreK-3 System. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.