

# School-Aged Children and Youth

According to the SOAR King County School-Age Action Agenda, it is critical that a community prioritizes children and youth as both a future investment and a reflection of our current quality of life. Bellevue as a community clearly values that priority. 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 even more important during the current economic recovery: 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>1</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 that 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, began in 2007, and published its first baseline report in December 2013. 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 child-care programs.
- Bellevue Youth Court, a yearlong program in partnership with King County Superior Court and the King County Prosecutors

Office, is one of the Action Teams of Youth Link. As of August 2011, Bellevue Youth Court worked with 36 youths involved in the King County Juvenile Justice System; 43 cases were heard in Bellevue Youth Court; and 284 youth and 58 adults were trained and volunteered in the program.<sup>2</sup>

- Newsweek magazine ranked all five Bellevue high schools among the highest in the nation in 2013. 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>3</sup>

## Prevalence Demographics

- According to the 2010 Census, school-age children and youth 5-19 made up almost 18% of the Bellevue population. This age group grew at a faster rate between 2000 and 2010 than Bellevue’s overall population. Bellevue has a smaller proportion of school-age children and youth than does the nation (20.4%), and state (19.8%) but a larger proportion than did the county (17.7%) Kirkland (14.7%), Redmond (16.2%) and Seattle (12.9%).<sup>4</sup>

## Education

- As of October 2013, the Bellevue School District’s (BSD) enrollment was 18,515, about the same compared to 2012 when enrollment was 18,491.<sup>5</sup>

“There are lots of youth who care about education.”  
*Community Conversation, Mamas Unidas*

- Approximately 855 Bellevue households have students that attend school in the Issaquah School District which had a total

enrollment of 18,006 students as of May 2013.<sup>6</sup>

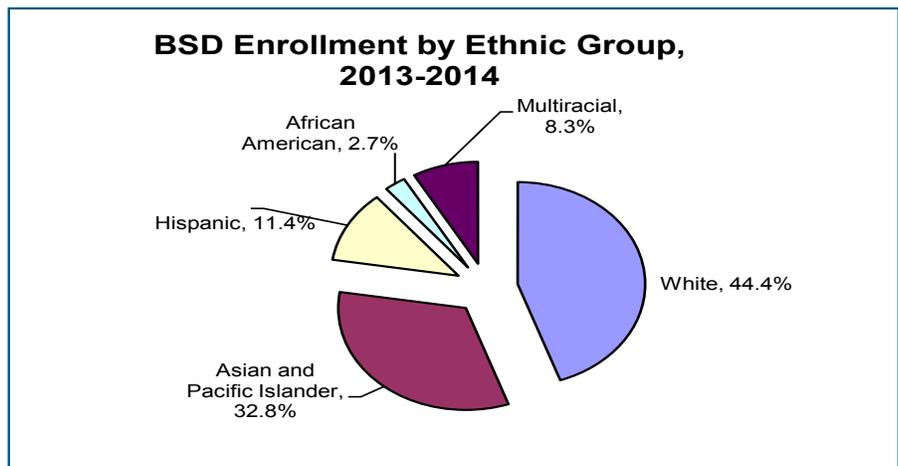
- Funding for Head Start and the State Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program in King County is insufficient to meet the need for quality early learning for children from families with incomes at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. Bellevue School District and Bellevue College only have a total of 160 Head Start slots in 2012. Bellevue College has 27 of these slots.<sup>7</sup>
- 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.<sup>8</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 2011-2012 had an on-time graduation rate of 91.8%, compared to 74.8% in Seattle and 91.9% 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 74.2% compared to 93% of White students. Hispanic/Latino students had an on-time graduation rate of 78.6%. 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>9</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 92.8% in 2011-2012.<sup>10</sup>

### Racial and Ethnic Diversity

- According to the 2010 Census, the racial and ethnic diversity of the population in Bellevue under age 18 is higher (51.4%) than the diversity of the adult population (38%).<sup>11</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%. As of October 2013, the percentage grew to 10%.<sup>12</sup>



Source: Bellevue School District

- The percentage of White students has declined every year, which reflects the increasing diversity in the district. In 2013, 44.4% of Bellevue’s students were White, compared to 71.4% in 1996.<sup>13</sup>
- Including English, Bellevue School District students speak 84 first languages. Almost a

third (32.4%) of students speaks a language other than English as their first language.

Spanish is the most common language after English, followed by Chinese-Mandarin, Korean, Chinese-Cantonese, Russian, Japanese, Vietnamese, Teluga, Hindi, French, Tamil, French, Farsi (Persian), and Arabic.<sup>14</sup>

- 10% of Bellevue School District students are enrolled in English Language Learner (ELL) classes. The majority of ELL students are in grades K-5.<sup>15</sup>
- In the Issaquah School District, the following racial breakout was reported in 2012-2013: White, 64.1%; Hispanic, 6.9%; Black/African American, 2%; Asian/Pacific Islander, 22.7%; American Indian, .4%. Over 675 students received ELL services in 2011-2012. These students represent 49 different cultures and language groups. The most common are Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian and Japanese.<sup>16</sup>

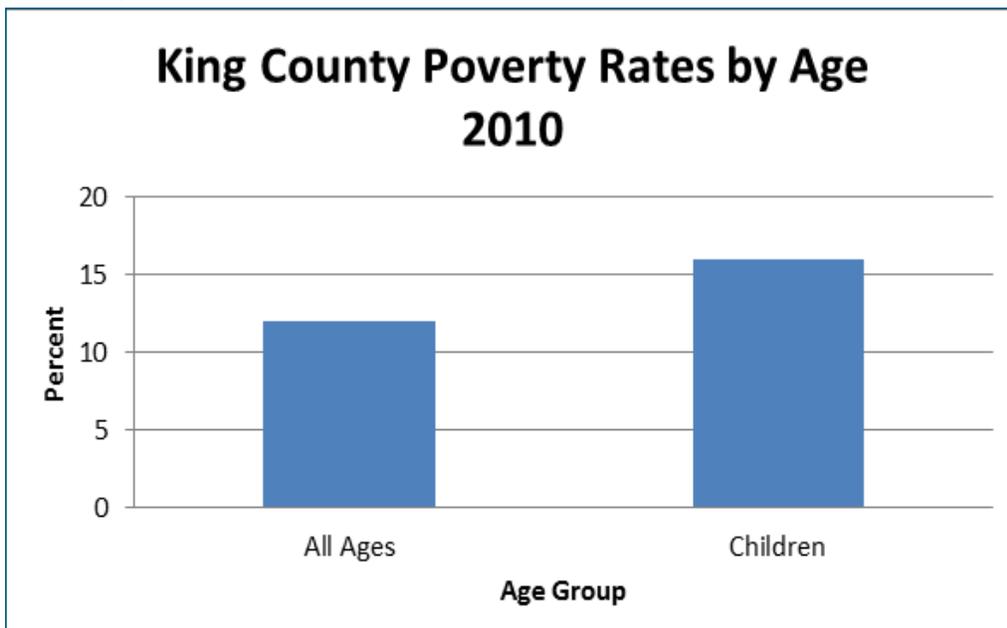
poverty level (\$47,100 for a family of four in 2013). Nationally, the number of poor children has risen to 16.1 million in 2011. The national child poverty rate has risen to 21.9% in 2011. Based on a model of the historical relationship between state child poverty rates and economic conditions, child poverty rate predictions for 2010 were developed for each state. In Washington State 18.3% of children lived in poverty in 2011.<sup>17</sup>

- In 2010 the U.S. Census showed 14.4%, nearly 48,000, King County children ages 0-17 were living in poverty. The 2008-2010 ACS estimated that about 13% of King County children lived at or below the poverty level, compared to about four percent within the City of Bellevue. 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>18</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 (\$23,550 for a family of four in 2013) and "low-income" if they live in families below 200% of the

- 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 21.2%. The percent of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch varies by school. As shown in the chart on the next

Source: Communities Count 2012

page, there are 12 out of 30 in the district with more than 20% of students eligible for free or reduced price lunches, the same as in 2012.<sup>19</sup>

- In the Issaquah School District, about 10% of students are eligible for free and reduced price lunch.<sup>20</sup>

2009, the number increased to 93. In 2012-2013, 194 students were enrolled.<sup>21</sup> In the Issaquah School District, in 2010-2011, 135 students were enrolled, and in 2011-2012, that number increased to 137 students.<sup>22</sup>

## Health and Mental Health Issues

% 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%	Enatai, Newport Heights	Chinook, Big Picture, Tyee, Tillicum	Bellevue, Big Picture, Newport
21-30%	Eastgate, Woodridge	Odle	
31-40%	Phantom Lake		Interlake
41-50%	Ardmore, Sherwood Forest, Stevenson	Highland	Sammamish
51-70%	Lake Hills	Odle	

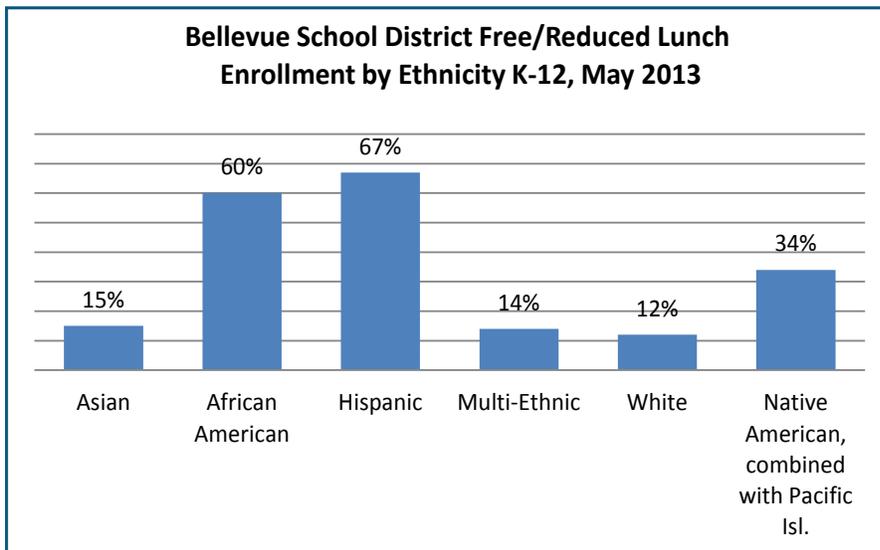
**Source: Bellevue School District (2013-2014)**

- 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

- Students of color are disproportionately represented in the free and reduced price lunch program. This is clear in the chart below 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 BSD 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

Care section of this report.)

- Providers report an increase of higher rates of more seriously disturbed, and aggressive children. The demand for services and hospital beds for these children exceeds the supply in King County.<sup>23</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.<sup>24</sup> The State's birth rate for



Source: Bellevue School District, 2013

this age group was 8.2/1,000 in 2011, a decrease compared to 2009 when it was 13.8. The national teen birth rate was 17.3 births/1000 in 2011.<sup>25</sup> Experts believe that the most recent recession was a major factor driving down birth rates in general, which would also affect teen births.<sup>26</sup> One of the reasons this age group is tracked is because it is at the highest risk for poor birth outcomes, such as low birth weight and prematurity which puts the infant at risk for infant death, blindness and deafness. Children born

to single teenage 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>27</sup>

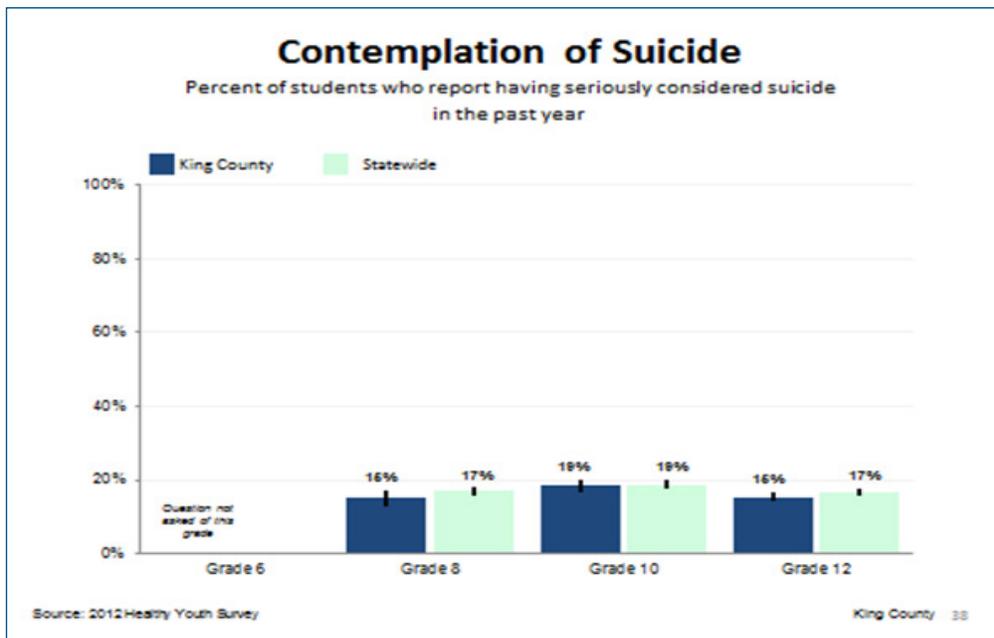
- Between 2008-2010, the average teen birth rate in King County for females ages 15-17 was 18.2/1,000 births. During the same time period, average teen birth rates in South King County (14.6) and Seattle (9.1) were higher than in East (3.1) or North King County (4.7). The Bellevue School District rate for 2009-2011 of 3.45 births/1000 girls 15-17 years of age<sup>28</sup> was lower than the overall King County teen birth rate of 14.8.<sup>29</sup>
- Average teen birth rates from 2009-2010 in King County were higher among Hispanics/Latinas (35.9 per 1,000), American Indian/Alaska Natives, (26.4 per 1,000), and African Americans (13.8 per 1,000) than among Whites (8.3 per 1,000) and Asians reporting a single race (6.1 per 1,000).<sup>30</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>31</sup> In King County, the most frequently reported STDs among 15-19 year olds are chlamydia, gonorrhea and initial genital herpes.<sup>32</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>33</sup> According to the findings from the most recent Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, conducted in 2012 with middle and high school students across the state, 10% of 10th grade students were overweight.<sup>34</sup> In King County in 2010, 21% of youth in grade 8, 21% of youth in grade 10, and 21% of youth in grade 12 were overweight or obese, all higher than in 2010.<sup>35</sup>

- The Healthy Youth Survey also provides information about substance use by youth. In 2012 in King County, 36% of 12th graders and 21% of 10th graders reported having drunk a glass, can or bottle of alcohol in the past 30 days. 27% of 12th graders and 16% of 10th graders reported smoking marijuana in the past 30 days. In the Bellevue School District, 41% of 12th graders and 21% of 10th graders reported the specified alcohol usage in the past 30 days; 25% of 12th graders and 13% of 10th graders reported smoking marijuana in the past 30 days.<sup>36</sup>
- Youth Eastside Services staff report a spike in heroin use among their clients. Commonly smoked, youth often move to injecting the drug, which makes them more vulnerable to disease such as HIV or hepatitis.<sup>37</sup>
- Nationally, 14% of high school students consider suicide, 11% have a plan, and 6% attempt suicide. Suicide is associated with major depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and substance misuse.<sup>38</sup>
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Washington youth ages 15-24 and the third leading cause of death nation-

“Behavioral health services are a need for adults and children. It can take up to 3 weeks for a child to see a psychiatrist if they are not a danger to self.”

*Key Informant Interview, Eastgate Public Health Clinic Staff*

ally.<sup>39</sup> In Washington, an average of two young people die of suicide each week, and seventeen attempts result in hospitalization.<sup>40</sup> According to the National Center for Health Statistics, Washington has the 16th highest overall suicide rate in the nation.<sup>41</sup> The Healthy Youth Survey 2012 showed 12.1% of Bellevue School District youth had contemplated suicide in the last 12 months.<sup>42</sup>



Source: 2012 Health Youth Survey-King County/Washington State

- In Bellevue in 2012, 13% of eighth graders and 13% of twelfth graders said they contemplated suicide.<sup>43</sup>

## Youth Violence

- In 2010, 25,772 juveniles were arrested in Washington State, a rate of 36.2 for every 1,000 juveniles in the state age 10-17, a decrease from 2008 when the rate was 46.8. The 2010 rate is the lowest rate reported in Washington State since prior to 1982. There were 1,287 violent offense arrests of youth for a violent arrest rate of 1.8 per 1,000 youth age 10-17, a 1.2% decrease compared to 2008 (2.1/1000). Females represented 30.5% of the total juvenile arrests in 2010; this rate has remained relatively constant over the past 7 years. From 2000-2010, the percentage increased 11% for girls.<sup>44</sup>
- Juvenile court offense referrals, incarceration and juvenile arrests disproportionately affect youth of color. 56.8% of young people in care of the State's Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) are youth of color, yet youth of color make up only 35.3% of the state's juvenile population. For example, Black youth make up 5.6% of the State population, but are 20% of the population in JRA.<sup>45</sup>
- In 2011, the JRA reported that more than 64% of youth held in JRA facilities have "significant mental health issues," and

55% of the youth in residential care are substance abusers or chemically dependent. Of juveniles in residential care, 80% have co-occurring disorders.<sup>46</sup>

- In 2012, there were 961 juvenile arrests in King County.<sup>47</sup> In Bellevue in 2012, 281 youth were arrested, a 66% decrease compared to 2009 when there were 422.<sup>48</sup>

- In King County in 2012, there were 90 juvenile violent crime arrests (mur-

der, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault).<sup>49</sup> In 2012 in Bellevue, 15 juveniles were arrested for violent crimes, slightly lower than 2009 (16).<sup>50</sup>

- In 2012, while 90% of King County sixth graders feel safe at school, only 65% report actually enjoying school, similar to 2010. About the same number of twelfth graders reported feeling safe (90%), and enjoyed school (40%) also similar to 2010.<sup>51</sup> In Bellevue, 90% of sixth graders and 90% of twelfth graders felt safe at school, both similar to 2010; 65% of sixth graders and 40% of twelfth graders reported enjoying school, also similar to 2010.<sup>52</sup>
- In 2012, five percent of King County twelfth graders report having been a member of a gang in the past 12 months; almost six percent of Bellevue eighth graders reported gang membership, the same compared to 2010.<sup>53</sup> According to the Bellevue Police Department, gang activity has stayed about the same, with no increases over the past few years. In 2008, for example, there were 11 gang related cases. In Bellevue, gang activity is related to primarily one gang, the Crossroads Locos, located in the East Bellevue area. Some of the activities include drug dealing, vehicle prowls, graffiti, and malicious mischief; to a lesser extent, gang members may be linked to violent

crimes such as stabbings and armed robbery. 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, School Resource Officers (SRO) are stationed at two middle schools and all four 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>54</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. There are currently almost 400 volunteers in the program. Staff report that with the growing diversity in the district, teachers are asking for multiple classroom volunteers who can work 1-1 with students who need language help and encouragement. Also, the economic recession has impacted more families; teachers note that more support is also needed for those students in families accessing housing and emergency services.<sup>55</sup>
- The Wrap-Around Services Program, a collaborative partnership between the City of Bellevue, Bellevue School District, and United Way of King County, 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>56</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>57</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>58</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, and provides a monthly open session for teens in needs. Distribution occurs at the World Impact Network.<sup>59</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>60</sup>
- Athletes for Kids provide mentorship for children with disabilities, referred by school counselors, by teen athlete mentors. Demand is increasing for mentor matches, with about twenty children on a waiting list. Funding is limited so they can only serve a few geographical areas.<sup>61</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 (compared to 83% currently). They address this gap with strategies in school readiness, school attendance, and summer and extended learning.<sup>62</sup>

## Health and Mental Health Issues

- YES has a variety of Early Intervention Programs for individuals, families or groups in all three departments - General Counseling, Substance Abuse, and Outreach. They see clients with a wide range of problems including those who have experienced trauma and abuse, but also many people with challenges around 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 quarter 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 chemical dependency.<sup>63</sup>
- 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

“Bullying: many girls are jealous of others and this can take the form of bullying. The person who bullies has low self-respect and judges rather than supports other girls.”

*Community Conversation, Planned Parenthood Youth Council*

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>64</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>65</sup> The increase in bullying was mentioned several times by youth and parents during Community Conversations. Youth at the Planned Parenthood Teen Council discussed bullying related to low self-image and jealousy issues.<sup>66</sup> 30% of sixth graders in Washington state reported in the 2012 HYS that they'd been bullied in the past 30 days. By twelfth grade, this rate had dropped to 18%. In Bellevue, 26% of sixth graders reported being bullied, compared to 30% in 2010; almost 16% of twelfth graders reported being bullied compared to 17% in 2010.<sup>67</sup>

- Friends of Youth staff report that demand for services has increased among homeless youth and young adults in all categories of services including housing, employment support, mental health counseling and emergency shelter.<sup>68</sup>
- Staff from Asian Counseling and Referral Service reported an increased number of high school youth referred for specific mental health reasons - depression, suicidal ideation, psychotic symptoms, substance abuse and dual diagnosis. Staff reported many would've benefitted by receiving services earlier.<sup>69</sup>
- Because 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>70</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, including crisis intervention. Teen Link also offers suicide prevention training in junior, middle and high schools, and youth serving organizations. Teen Link handled 1,492 calls in 2012, with 27% of those from North and East King County.<sup>71</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>72</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 26 English Language Learners, with 10 languages spoken other than English, the most common are Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu. Cougar Ridge has 41 students who are English Language Learners, with 10 languages spoken other than English, the most common is Chinese. Issaquah Middle has 30 students who are English Language Learners, with 9 languages spoken other than English, the most common is Spanish.<sup>73</sup>
- Since 2004, the Bellevue School District has sponsored a program called Parent Action and Advisory Council (PAAC) serving families of students of color and

English Language Learners by improving cross cultural communication skills, hiring interpreters when needed, and offering more parent education tailored to the needs of these families. Examples of activities include monthly Japanese coffee talks for parents district-wide, Korean Moms’ group, and telephone language lines in Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian.<sup>74</sup>

- Latino HEAT, a youth leadership, community service, and community empowerment program, where members address problems in their community. They also participate and promote cultural and academic events in the community.<sup>75</sup>

## Youth in the Foster Care System

- As of September 2013, there were 9,326 children living in foster care and out-of-home placement in Washington. 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.<sup>76</sup> 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.

## 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 12 to 19 who may identify 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.<sup>77</sup> They see an average of 20 youth (13-20 years old) per week coming from the Eastside region, as well as outlying areas.<sup>78</sup>

- YES has seen an increased number of families accessing services for counseling support because their child is “gender expansive” or transgender. These youth are 6-22 years old. In addition to providing counseling, YES has also provided technical assistance to the schools these youth attend to help the whole system better understand and be equipped to work with transgender students, and understand gender, sexuality and non-traditional families better in general.<sup>79</sup>
- 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>80</sup>

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

- Friends of Youth (FOY) provide emergency shelter, transitional housing, counseling, case management and foster care to homeless teens. The agency runs two emergency shelters in East King County (one in Bellevue, one in Kenmore) for youth ages 11-17, serving 83 youth annually. New Ground Kirkland is the newest addition to FOY’s Transitional Living Program, serving single, young adults ages 18-21 for up to 18 months. In 2013 staff reported a 46% increase in demand for services for homeless youth over the past two years.<sup>81</sup> (*Note: For more information about this topic, see Goal 1 in this report.*)

- FOY, in partnership with the Bellevue YMCA, provides a shelter for young adults ages 18-24 years old in Bellevue called The Landing five days a week. FOY staff provide case management and work to engage participants in services such as housing, employment, mental health and education. Due to funding cuts in 2012 they have had to reduce the number of youth they can serve from 20 to 15. In 2012 The Landing served 251 unduplicated clients.<sup>82</sup> During a Community Conversation with the Landing staff and clients, several issues were identified that act as barriers to obtaining permanent housing. These include lack of “low barrier” housing, places to go during the day when the shelters are closed, appropriate clothing for job interviews, and discrimination in employment. The majority of youth who come to the Landing have experienced significant trauma due to physical and/or sexual abuse. Many have aged out of the foster care system or run away from dangerous situations and have little or no personal support. Many of these young adults experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, mood disorders (depression and bipolar) and conduct disorders. The drugs of choice of current Landing guests are primarily alcohol and marijuana, with some prescription drug abuse, methamphetamine, heroine, and crack cocaine usage.<sup>83</sup>
- 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>84</sup>
- In August of 2013 King County adopted a “Comprehensive Plan to Prevent and End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness in King County by 2020”. The Comprehensive Plan is a community commitment to prevent and end homelessness among youth and young adults by 2020. The group of over 80 community stakeholders developed steps to be taken by King County and com-

munity partners consisting of intervention, prevention, and system improvements. The plan pays particular attention to LGBTQ youth and youth of color as they are disproportionately represented in the homeless population.

## 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>85</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>86</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>87</sup>
- The Bellevue Police Department is represented on the FBI sponsored Children' Exploitation Task Force (CETF) with a half-time VICE Detective and his 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

"During a recent CETF Sting in Bellevue, 12 females were contacted as potential victims of sexual exploitation with three agreeing to intervention by Law Enforcement. Using vouchers from the Salvation Army, we were able to accommodate one night in a hotel for one of the victims. All three victims could have benefitted from a set of sweats, flip flops, undergarments and toiletries since the suspects who were selling their services on line had total control of their belongings, including the phones they were carrying. They often have literally nothing except their purses and what little clothing they might have on. Through this cooperative intervention we strive to bring some hope, dignity and trust to their very complex, violent and turbulent lives."

*Major Michael Johnson, Bellevue Police Department*

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 telephone.<sup>88</sup>

## Community Perceptions

- Only 13% of 2013 phone/online survey respondents reported that *not having quality K-12 education for children in the household* was a major/moderate problem, this rate dropped slightly from 16% in 2011
- 14% of phone/online survey respondents ranked *teens dropping out of school* as a major/moderate community problem. This has dropped from 20% in 2011.
- Slightly less people (17%) ranked *lack of services for children and youth/teens* as a major/moderate community issue in the 2013 phone/online survey than in 2011.
- 7% of phone/online survey respondents rated *teen pregnancy* as a major/moderate community problem, lower than in 2011 which had 17%.
- 16% of phone/online survey respondents rated *effects of gang activities* as a major/

moderate community problem, similar to the last survey in 2011.

- In the consumer survey, low numbers of respondents reported that youth related issues were a major problem, such as children or youth with emotional problems, child abuse or neglect, or getting after school care.

## Implications for Action

- Access to programs for school-aged children and youth to ensure their health and well-being is even more important in a weak economy. As some families face prolonged or intermittent unemployment and loss of income, many struggle to provide the basics for their children. Lack of these resources can put children and youth at risk for poor outcomes, and eventually take an economic toll on the community. According to a recent report on child poverty in the U.S., public agencies and private charities can expect to see continued increases in the number of children and families seeking assistance in meeting basic needs.<sup>89</sup>
- Programs held over the summer months can keep youth engaged in positive activities while providing social support they may lose when not in school over the holiday.
- 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 or to gender-based differences. Involving the families is needed to ensure school success. Efforts such as Eastside Pathways are critical to ensure that all children reach their full potential.
- As families experience more stress due to the economic downturn, many children are internalizing this stress, exhibiting problems in school, and depression, as evidenced by comments from school staff and

“There is a need for more ways to get kids into sports; funds are the barrier. Families on low incomes can’t afford the fees and equipment.”  
*Community Conversation, Eastside Latino Leadership Forum*

mental health agencies. Prevention oriented services, including those that promote health, such as recreation activities and mentoring, are needed to help minimize more serious problems, such as substance abuse and involvement in gangs.

- After school programs that enhance relationships and build community are proven supports for success for children and youth. Building upon and expanding access to current programs in order to reach more children can prevent many problems down the road.
- 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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