

2022-2023 Duluth Public Schools Head Start Self Assessment Report

Purpose of Self-Assessment

Head Start Performance Standard §1302.102(b)(2)(i) indicates that a program must effectively oversee progress towards program goals on an ongoing basis and annually must conduct a self-assessment that uses program data, and professional development and parent and family engagement data as appropriate, to evaluate the program's progress towards meeting program goals, compliance with program performance standards throughout the program year and the effectiveness of the professional development and family engagement systems in promoting school readiness.

Head Start Performance Standard §1302.102(c)(2)(iv) indicates that a program must use information from ongoing monitoring and the annual self-assessment, and program data on teaching practice, staffing and professional development, child-level assessments, family needs assessments, and comprehensive services, to identify program needs, and develop and implement plans for program improvement.

Some questions that helped guide the process were:

- Is our program meeting the Head Start Performance Standards?
- Are our services responding to the changing needs of children and families?
- Are we doing what we need to do, or are we just doing things the way we have always done them?
- Are we achieving the goals we intended?

Duluth Head Start used a process for the self assessment that involved teams to determine success in the following areas:

1. High Quality Inclusive Classrooms: Navigating Trauma
2. Walking the Talk of Equity and Inclusion
3. Fostering Resilience with a Focus on Health and Wellness
4. Program Management and Quality Improvement
5. Parent, Family and Community Engagement, Enrollment, Transportation

Program Strengths

Duluth Head Start is a school based program with a mission to create a strong learning community in order to achieve success in the classroom and beyond.

Located in seven of the nine elementary schools in Duluth, MN, we are spread across this 27 mile long city along the shores of Lake Superior.

We have been in our public schools since 1965 and are staffed with teachers and paraprofessionals who are part of the school district bargaining units. Being compensated as public school employees means we have very low staff turnover, and many of our teaching staff have advanced degrees. Being within a public school also gives us the opportunity to work together with our school district to align initiatives and collaborate with schools directly in finding the best ways to support children and families.

Our access to staff from various departments from Early Childhood Special Education, the American Indian Education Department, and the Office of Educational Equity help us to identify enriching ways to meet the needs of our diverse population.

Some of the challenges of this arrangement is that we don't always fit perfectly within the K-12 model. Elements of the union contract need to be viewed differently when looking at early childhood programs. Despite this challenge, our program does exceptional work preparing children for kindergarten, and helping to make sure kindergarten is ready for children.

Methodology

The management team developed a self assessment plan with tasks and timelines. The Self Assessment team analyzed 5 areas:

1. High Quality Inclusive Classrooms
2. Walking the Talk of Equity
3. Fostering Resilience with a Focus on Health and Wellness
4. Program Management and Quality Improvement
5. Parent, Family, and Community Engagement; Enrollment; Transportation

Our Planning Team identified strengths and weaknesses of each area. We identified data sets that may be helpful in answering the questions we posed for each area. Teams included a management team member, a teacher, a parent, in some cases a community member with expertise in the topic. If a parent was not able to attend, we accessed parent perspectives in alternative ways - with phone calls and/or surveys.

Key Insights

Progress on Goals:

Program Wide Goals for 2021-22 included:

High Quality Inclusive Classrooms

1, Program Wide PLCs done collaboratively with Early Childhood Special Education

Academic: Teachers and program staff will increase the ways in which curriculum/learning activities are implemented to support cognitive and language development in the area of Instructional Support from 64.57% to 80% as measured by the CLASS observation tool.

2022: Collective Instructional Support Score was 75.76% with 6 teachers reaching at least 80%

Social/Emotional/Behavioral: At least 80% of teaching teams will collect data on behavior incidents.

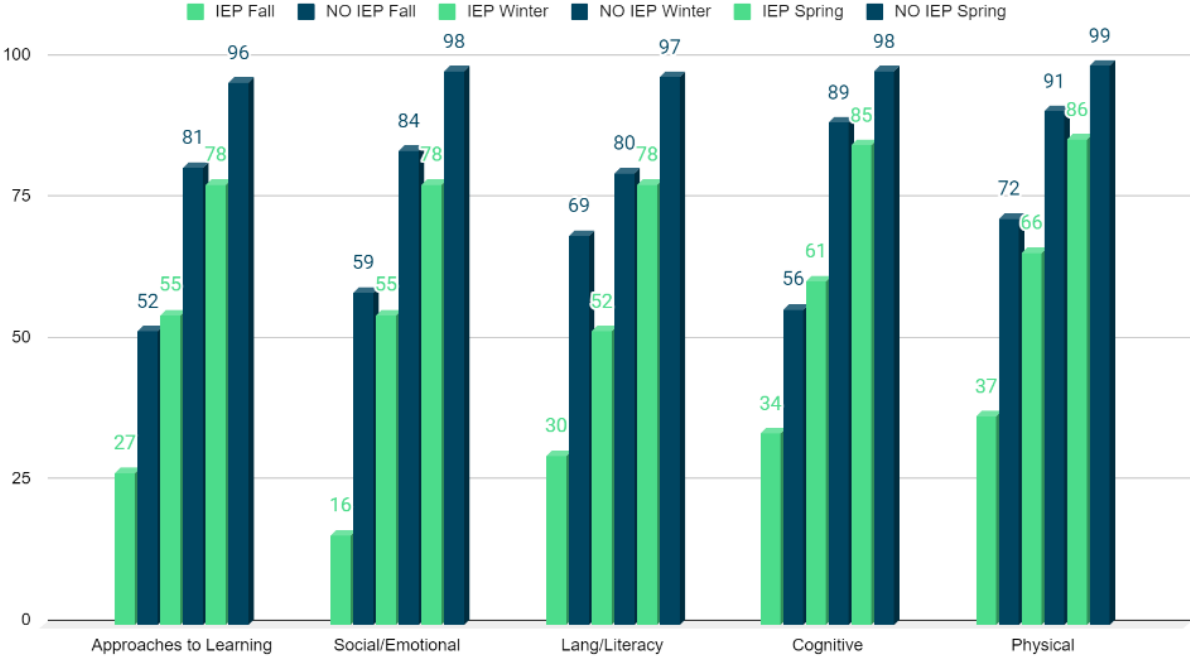
2022: More than 80% of teams completed Behavior Incident Reports.

While we clearly articulated PLC goals and tracked progress toward them in 2021-2022, we focused mainly on Safety and Strengthening Teams 2022-2023. This focus was driven by our Corrective Action Plan. Recognizing that a post pandemic reset was needed, the overall theme of the year was, "Creating a Culture of Restorative Practices". Preparing staff to have courageous conversations when something is occurring that does not align with best practices, is a safety element we believe is necessary to ensure the students we serve are receiving an optimal experience. The most vulnerable children in our community deserve the very best.

Moving forward, a renewed commitment to the PLC process will be implemented. Goals will be linked to Program Wide Goals, which will in turn, be linked to Duluth Public Schools Goals.

2. Rate of Growth for Students on IEPs surpassed the rate of growth for students not on IEPs

Head Start IEP/NO IEP 4 YO's



Students on IEPs experience incredible rates of growth in our classrooms.

3. Behavior Incident Report Data Tracking:

Boys are more than twice as likely to have Behavior Incident Reports reported.

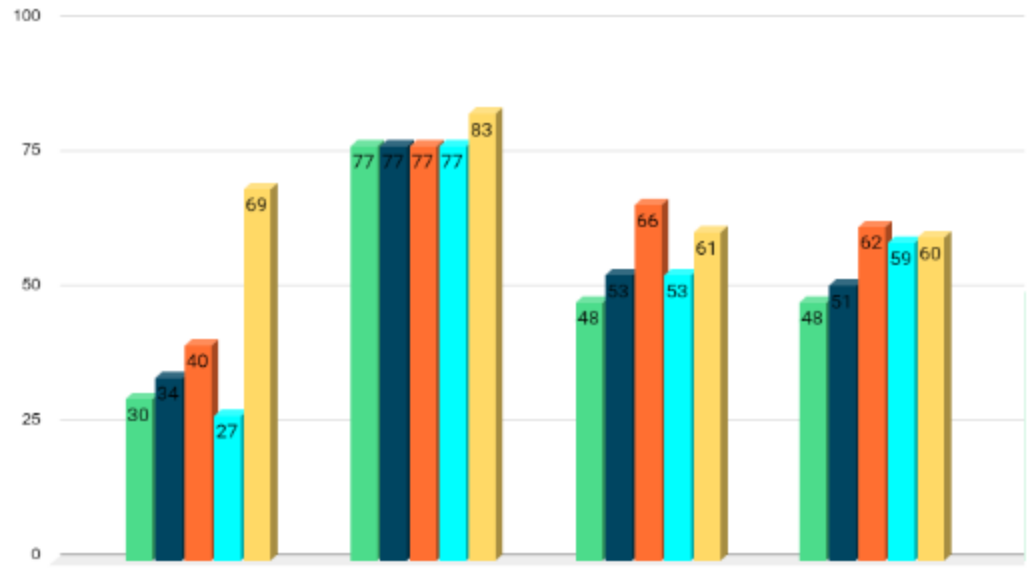
Walking the Talk of Equity

1. **Nature Play:** Nature Based preschools are the fastest growing type of preschool in Duluth. High tuition rates make them out of reach for families experiencing poverty. In our public school preschool we are providing this opportunity to *all* children.
2. **Oshki-Inwewin** In the 2021-22 school year, American Indian students were our highest performing demographic.

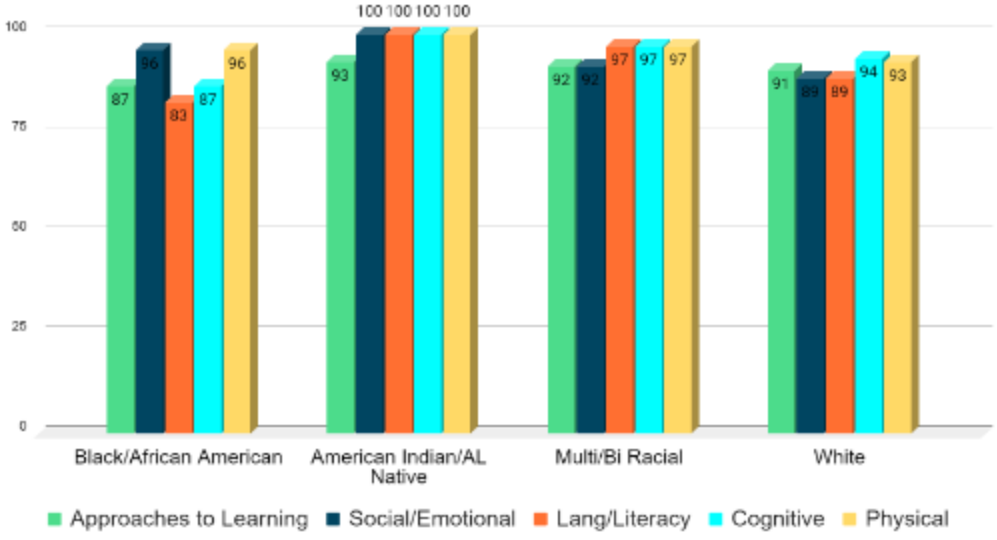
In the current year, we have had staffing changes occur in Oshki-inwewin. Despite those changes, we continue to have the expressed support of families who are grateful for our commitment to this program. Parents articulate having a community of people with shared cultural identity is very important to them.

Head Start 4 YO's by Race **Fall**

 UPDATE



Spring



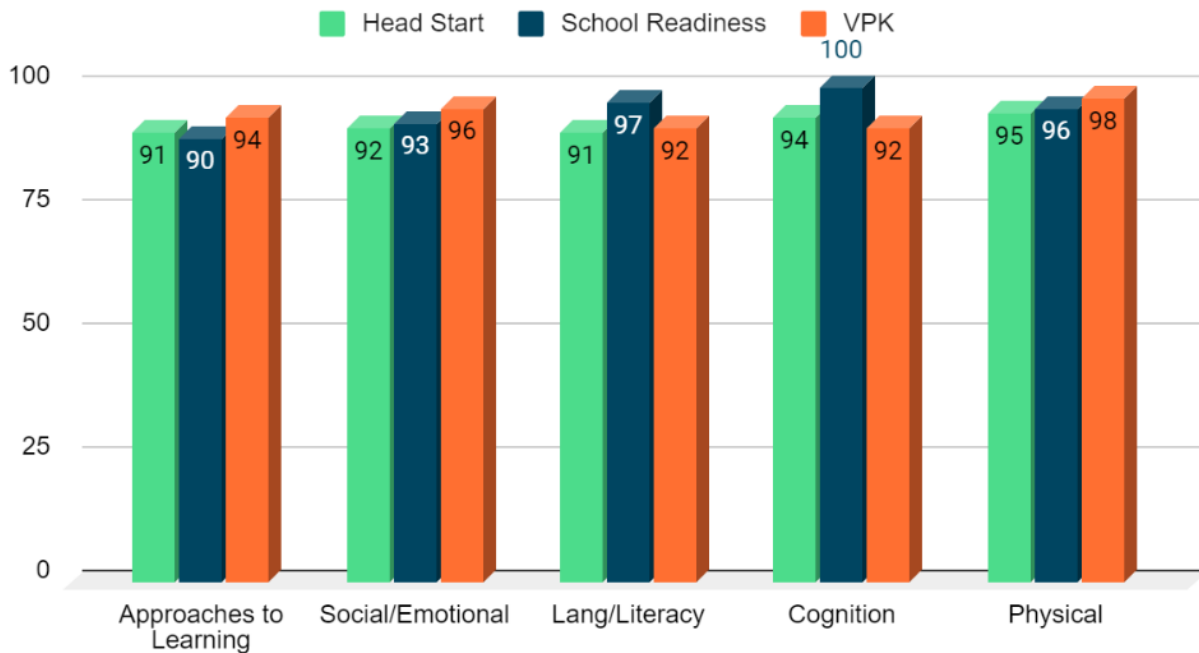
Success of this program is currently based on student achievement, but family testimonials of feeling welcome and honored are measures not to be denied. We would like to expand some common Ojibwe words and phrases throughout our program.

3. **Equity Team:** Our Equity team has merged with the Office of Educational Equity Advisory Committee as a subcommittee.

- We continue to offer annual book studies for teachers on anti racist ideals.
- Our classrooms are required to do Cultural Sharing.

School Readiness Measures at 85% or higher for all four year olds across all funding streams. *School Readiness must always be included as a Grant Goal

Program Comparison 4 YO's Spring



First six weeks of school. We have focused on setting the stage for optimal learning in the first six weeks of school. This may include modifying the environment to meet identified needs of current students, or gradually increasing stamina /scaffolding for a variety of situations.

Play Based Learning We believe that leaving ample time for play and supporting children's ability to engage in play is paramount in the successful learning equation.

Fostering Resilience with a Focus on Health and Wellness

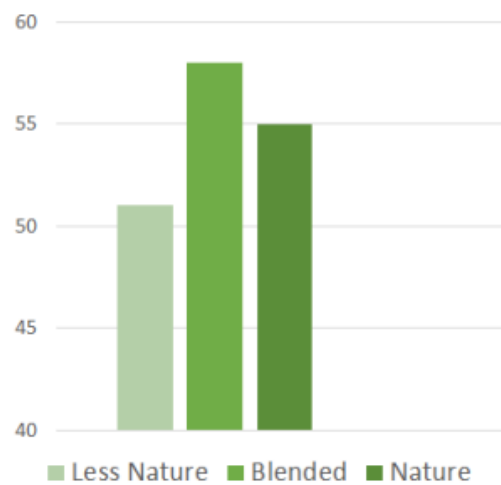
Nature Play

- 100% of families believe it is good for kids to spend time in nature
- Study with UMD reveals spending some time in nature increases student's Executive Functioning. *Growth rates were so high it is believed that time in nature may help to close achievement gaps experienced by students with lower SES.*
- 23% of Behavior Incidents happen outside, and, of these only 10% happen in the Playscapes. 77% of behavior incidents happen inside.



Comparison of Posttest EF Across Preschool Types

*controlling for pretest, age, and gender



*Duluth Preschool is the Blended class

Partnership with YMCA

Each year, the YMCA offers 4 of our full day classrooms an anti drowning program called, “**Safety Around Water**”.

72 children participated in these classes in 2021-2022 and a different 72 children participated in 2022-2023.

Head Start Days at the Y and Family Day Passes

In 2021-22 we had several Head Start Days at the Y on Saturdays. They each had 3-4 families in attendance. While the numbers are low, the impact was great. We worked to streamline scholarships for our families.

In 2022-23 the Y provided our program with Family Day Passes for all Head Start families.

Creating a Culture of Safety

We have spent much Professional Development time on looking at how staff as individuals and as teams respond to challenging behaviors.

We have also developed a monitoring system to ensure that all elements of Active Supervision are in place in every classroom.

Health and Wellness for Staff

Teachers have been feeling overwhelmed. They are requesting more time to team, plan, and engage in reflective practice.

Restorative Practices were the focus of 4 staff training sessions. These equip teams with skills to help them have courageous conversations in order to strengthen the health of our program as a whole.

Program Management and Quality Improvement

Ongoing monitoring. Following our Corrective Action Plan, we have added some checklists to use when visiting classrooms to provide feedback for what is in place, and what needs to be reinforced. We have also created a checklist to prepare us for OHS monitoring that will likely happen next year.

Self Assessment Process Our process for self assessment is deeply considered each year. Again this year, some changes have been identified that will make the process feel more logical and streamlined.

Family Engagement, Enrollment, Transportation

Under Enrollment: We have not reached full enrollment this year. Suspected reasons are:

1. Half Day Sessions: Families are asking for full day classes. In two of our sites, the half day classes are at half capacity.
2. Teachers asking for no additional students to be added due to challenging behaviors in their classrooms.
3. Larger systemic issues that impact enrollment are lack of transportation for 3 year olds and at the mid-day for half days, and lack of wrap around childcare.

Family Engagement:

With many schools not allowing preschool parents to escort children into schools, family advocates have lost some connecting points with families.

Family Advocates are working on ways to both engage and better document our connections and impacts with families.

Transportation:

We have had an instance where students were dropped off without an adult present, and are working with the transportation department to make sure systems are in place to prevent that from happening in the future.

Recommendations

The following five program wide recommended course corrections and areas are noted for continuous quality improvement.

1. We will use ongoing monitoring tools to track safety and compliance.
2. We will train PLC+ teacher leaders to guide PLCs.
3. Continue to increase data capacity in all areas, including PFCE and Self Assessment process.
4. We will seek to convert 2 half day classrooms to full day classrooms and to explore potential wrap around care.
5. We will continue our commitment to Restorative Practices to keep our teams strong and able to have the courageous conversations necessary when committed to a high quality, inclusive, and equitable program.

Annual Self Assessments require Governing Board and Policy Council Approval.

Signatures below indicate this document was approved by each of these entities

Jill Lofald, School Board Chair

Shandi Mickle, Policy Council Chair