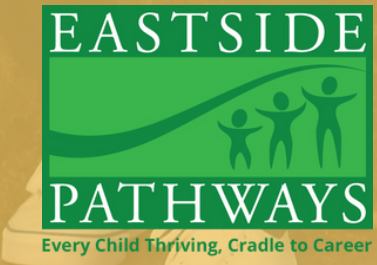




All programs and supports for high-school-aged students and youth center their holistic growth and social-emotional learning development and support youth's thrival to and through their post-secondary lives.



MINDSETS ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND HABITS – DATA REPORT 2023

DEAR FRIENDS,

Eastside Pathways Partners in the K-12 and youth/student support services sector have been working to address challenges related to youth and young adults not persisting through their post-secondary degree, training, or certificate-granting institutions. Partners continue to examine the correlation between a student or youth’s social-emotional well-being and their persistence through their post-secondary lives – especially with demographics of youth most impacted by systemic injustice.

In mid-2019, Eastside Pathways received a grant and consultation support from a researcher from the University of Washington School of Education to explore the following question:

How do in- and out-of-school programs for high-school-aged youth support their social-emotional learning (SEL) and academic outcomes as they progress to and through their post-secondary lives?

Eastside Pathways Backbone created the Mindsets Essential Skills and Habits (MESH) Collaborative to bring together Partners serving high-school-aged youth along with youth and families to work on this research question. After 18 months of collective efforts by diverse groups of stakeholders, in July 2022, we co-developed a self-evaluation continuous improvement tool called the Benchmark of Quality (BoQ). The BoQ is a research-backed tool, leaning on the wisdom of the community and best practices from in- and out-of-school providers. It acts as a baseline against which to measure the quality and efficacy of in- and out-of-school programs for high-school-aged youth.

Since early 2022, some of our Partners are engaged in the Implementation Phase of this project: adopting and testing the BoQ tool to determine the current state of their system (policies, practices, and procedures) against the BoQ scale. This is a commitment from our Partners to make systemic modifications to create equitable and sustainable environments that support the social-emotional well-being of every high-school-aged youth they serve.

This report presents the sector-wise quantitative and qualitative data from the first phase of implementation of the BoQ. The graphs highlight collated feedback from students engaged in the programs served by Partners and the self-evaluation results carried out by selected taskforce within each participating Partner organization. This isn’t an exhaustive summary of all the amazing data from the Implementation Phase, but it provides a preview of the potential use of this tool in bridging systemic gaps experienced by certain demographics of youth in East King County. Additionally, it emphasizes the shared accountability on providers from diverse sectors to build collective, equitable, culturally-conscious, and stronger safety nets to support the thrival of all youth in East King County.

The last page of this report has some links and contact information to learn and engage more.

With gratitude,

Sandy Nathan & Payton Richardson

Eastside Pathways Backbone

CONTENTS

3	Overview & Context	8	Results by Sector
4	Benchmark of Quality (BoQ)	14	Next Steps
7	Community of Practice	15	Appendix

EASTSIDE PATHWAYS GUIDING PHILOSOPHY & FRAMEWORKS

Collective Impact is the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving complex social problem. ~ J. Kania, M. Kramer (Winter 2011)

Since 2011, Eastside Pathways Partnership has been striving to realize the vision that all children, youth, and young adults from cradle to career thrive in school and life. We use the collective impact framework to engage organizations and community to work collaboratively and align efforts to address the systemic barriers that impede the thrival of certain demographic communities in East King County. The five conditions of collective success are: Common Agenda, Shared Measurement System, Mutually Reinforcing Activities, Continuous Communication, and Backbone Support.

A significant part of the Partnership's collective impact work relies on Adaptive Community Leadership – the practice of mobilizing individuals to address and tackle tough challenges that have no known solutions. This type of leadership is rooted in equity, multiple perspectives, leaning on lived and learned experiences, and providing capacity for individuals to thrive.

MINDSETS ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND HABITS (MESH)

Youth mental health supports are often stand-alone services not integrated into the holistic experience of the youth, hence exacerbating the uneven experiences for the youth being served and supported by different systems. These systems include school, health care, community organizations, in- and out-of-school providers, and government. Each adult within the system needs to assume accountability for the well-being of the youth that enter their system.

In late 2019, with the commitment to empower local perspectives – both lived experiences and expertise from organizations – Eastside Pathways Backbone convened high-school-aged youth, families, and in- and out-of-school providers in the MESH Collaborative to co-develop a self-evaluation tool called the Benchmark of Quality (BoQ). The purpose of the Collaborative is that all programs and supports for high-school-aged students and youth positively impact their social-emotional learning development to and through their post-secondary journey. Additionally, at the core of the work are the practices of weaving continuous improvement and centering the voices of youth into the culture of an organization.

The MESH Collaborative aims to:

- Raise the consciousness for every adult and system to own accountability of youth mental health.
- Leverage the rich wisdom and lived experience of youth and families as much as the expertise and best practices from organizations.
- Shift focus from individual or program to systems: to determine the root cause, make modifications which can result in sustainable, equitable experience for youth.
- Leverage national research with local perspectives as we co-develop a continuous improvement tool.
- Shift the power and accountability to adults within a system (not experts from outside) to evaluate and modify the policies, practices, and procedures (system level) that impact and influence the experiences of youth they serve.



BENCHMARK OF QUALITY (BOQ)

The Benchmark of Quality (BoQ) framework is a self-evaluation tool¹ for in- and out-of-school programs² serving high-school-aged youth to measure the quality and efficacy of their policies and practices with the aim of centering the social-emotional well-being of their students and youth. In- and out-of-school providers will be able to use the BoQ as a continuous improvement roadmap to meaningfully examine their programs and policies, assess current state, and then build an action plan with the results from the evaluation to improve conditions centering the well-being of youth they serve.

The BoQ has three main components:

- Domains
- Indicators
- Evaluation Scale

The framework is categorized into five broad domains vetted by research as critical for the construction and execution of quality and supportive in- and out-of-school programs.

- Supportive Environment
- Program Quality
- Professional Development
- Community Partnership
- Continuous Improvement

Within each domain are multiple actionable, measurable indicators which offer a baseline of best practices to evaluate programs against an evaluation scale.

THE BoQ is:

- ✓ Vetted by research and built collaboratively with diverse stakeholders, including youth.
- ✓ A self-evaluation tool empowering adults within a system to assess and modify the systems in which they operate.
- ✓ Driving a culture of continuous improvement that centers youth and their well-being.
- ✓ An action blueprint: Current state analysis and a plan to work towards improved systems, conditions, and supports for youth.

THE BoQ is not:

- ✗ An external accountability tool.
- ✗ Focused solely on individual performance, technical or programmatic changes.
- ✗ Built in isolation by 'experts'.
- ✗ Wholly based on national research.

¹ A tool used by a program or organization for that program or organization's continuous improvement. Not intended for external accountability or mandates.

² Organizations offering services to high-school youth within and outside of the school districts.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: TEST & ADOPT THE BENCHMARK OF QUALITY (BOQ)

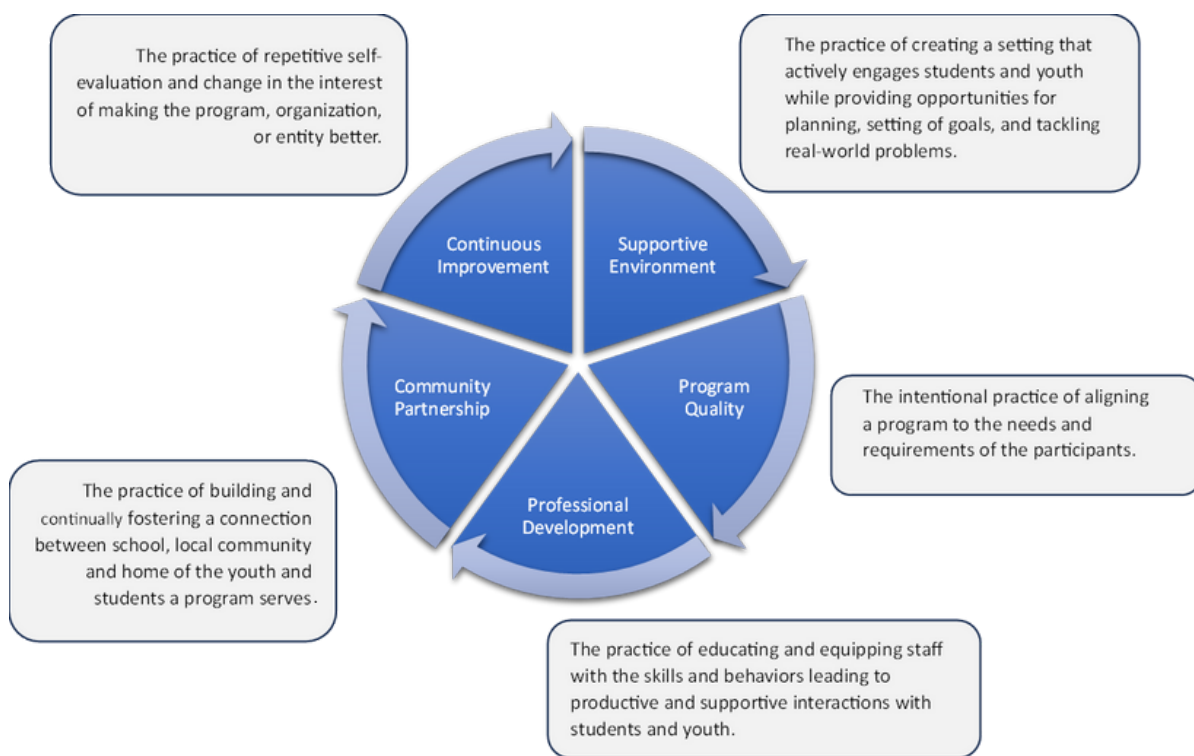
The Implementation Phase of the BoQ is an iterative process carried out in two stages:

- Small Test of Change (STC) 101: Current state Analysis
- Small Test of Change (STC) 201: Build an Action Plan to improve conditions systemically

In the first iterative stage named STC 101, seven Eastside Pathways Partners agreed to adopt the BoQ framework to self-evaluate one of their programs offered to high-school-aged youth. During this stage, the Partners had two major tasks related to data collection:

1. Administer a student survey to the students and youth participating in their program.
2. Evaluate their own program against a scale using the domains and indicators of the BoQ as an index.

In this stage, Partners were required to conduct a current state analysis of their selected program against the five conditions/domains (described below) vetted by research as critical for the holistic development of youth.



Before starting the self-evaluation process, Partners were coached and supported, through Adaptive Leadership practices and frameworks, to invest time in creating a safe and brave space for multiple perspectives, focus on personal reflection time, and create a culture of receiving and providing constructive feedback.

As a first step in the self-evaluation process, Partners pulled together staff members who were knowledgeable about the organization and the impact of its programs on the students and youth it serves. These staff formed the taskforce. Each Partner’s taskforce gathered to review the BoQ in detail and used the following evaluation scale to discuss where they, as a group, would rank their organization’s selected program(s) on every indicator in each domain.

The evaluation provided details on where and how the programs could improve or sustain practices that support the social and emotional well-being of the students they serve.

EVALUATION SCALE			
What does it mean to have an indicator...	The program has an action or practice that fulfills the indicator	This practice is known/followed throughout the organization	The practice is a part of the program and/or organization’s policy
In Place	✓	✓	✓
Partially in Place	✓	✓	✗
Partially in Place	✓	✗	✓
Not in Place	✗	✗	✗

CURRENT STATE ANALYSIS DATA

The self-evaluation results from each Partner organization have been grouped by their particular sector and are displayed in their respective sections later in this report. The five domains are necessary to understand how the BoQ is organized and how each Partner considered their work.

The data collected by Partners when grouped together in common sectors also tells a compelling story of how students and youth, and the sectors themselves consider, provide, and receive social and emotional support. This sector grouping aims to provide the reader with insight around where each sector realizes successes and challenges related to serving their students and where additional attention and investments may provide more capacity and efficacy.

In addition to their self-evaluation, seven Partners simultaneously surveyed a total of 183 high-school-aged students to gain a broader understanding of the effects and challenges of their program and its offerings. The self-report survey asked students about their past and current experiences, the comfort they felt within the program, and how the program supported or provided room for their social-emotional development. The aim of the student survey is to gather information and afford youth the agency and perspective to drive policy and procedure changes.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

As individual organizations use the same collaboratively built framework, share best practices, lived experiences and expertise, their points of wisdom form a collective system of engaged stakeholders representing diverse sectors in this work. These collective systems will offer students equitable and more culturally-conscious support no matter what program or sector they are involved in – hence forming a trusted and sustained safety net of services across sectors centering the youth’s holistic development and well-being.



Partner organizations from three sectors participated in the Implementation Phase of BoQ.

- Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
- Civic/Government
- K-12 Education

The next few pages highlight the quantitative and qualitative data for each sector.

Notes about the graphs:

- The green bars represent the sector, and the gray bars represent all sectors combined (CBOs, Civic/Government, and K-12 Education).
- 'n' refers to the number of students in a particular sector.

The information in each section illustrates how each of the five domains of the BoQ is necessary to support the organization and in turn help the particular program and staff support their students. Scaling up to the sector level, these domains are necessary to improve the systemic conditions for the holistic development of high-school-aged youth – especially as they transition onto their post-secondary journey of choice.



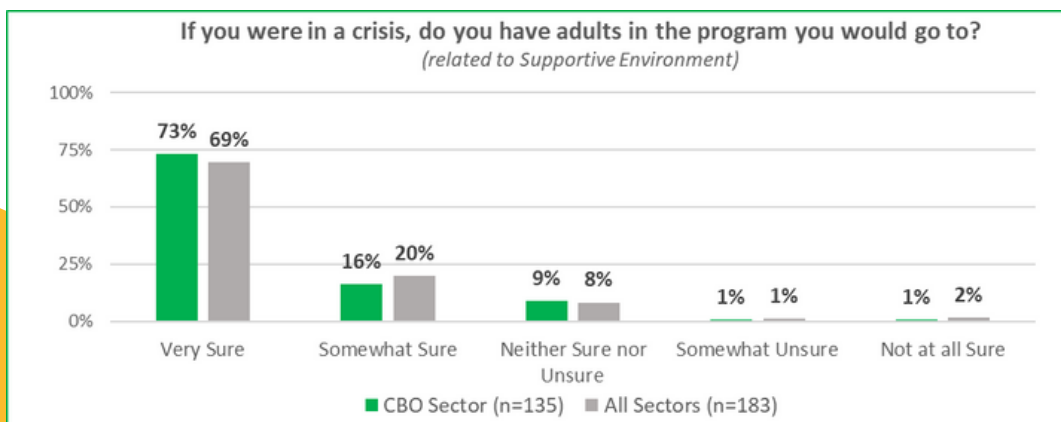
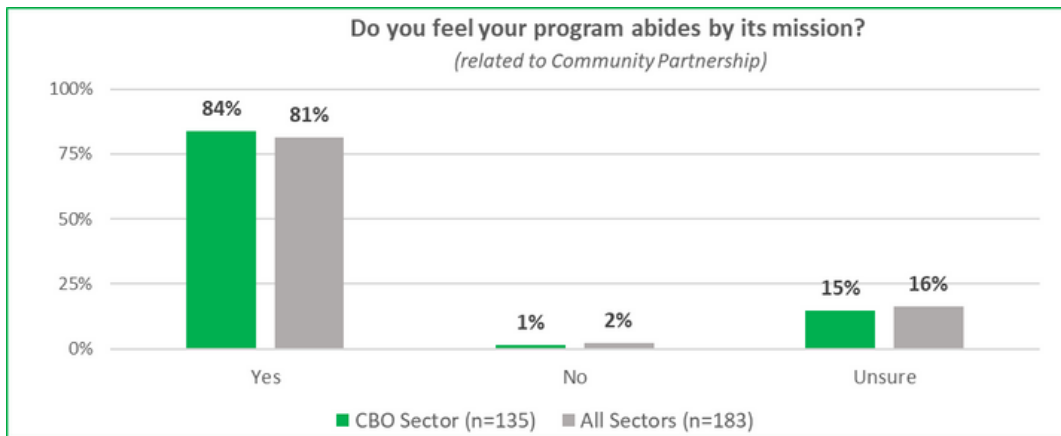
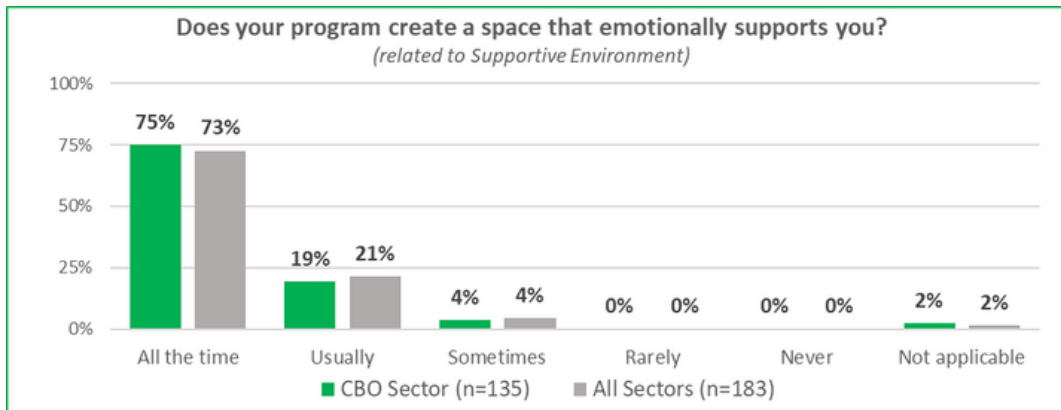
RESULTS BY SECTOR

COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOs)

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have a mission to care for and support their students and community to enable the students to reach their full potential. Within the Eastside Pathways Partnership, CBOs often have the capacity to be nimble and respond more deftly to the needs and challenges of their students. As a result, the CBO results slightly outpace all sectors combined at the positive selections.

Total number of students surveyed: 183

Number of students surveyed from CBOs: 135 (74%)



In addition to student responses, the strengths of CBOs are also reflected in their self-evaluation on the five domains of the BoQ.

- These organizations are intentional about partnering with their communities, and as a result, create safe and affirming spaces for their students and youth.
- The CBOs self-evaluative scores in the domains of Supportive Environment, Program Quality, and Community Partnership indicate that the students’ positive experiences in these areas are supported by intentional efforts.

The graph below highlights the highest average value for ‘In Place’ indicators in each domain. The total number of indicators is shown by the number in parentheses next to the domain. Each number within the grid represents the average number of indicators in that square.

For example, the average number of ‘In Place’ indicators for Supportive Environment is 6.0 for the CBO Sector and 5.0 for All Sectors Combined.

Benchmark of Quality Self-Evaluation (average values)						
Domain	CBO Sector			All Sectors		
	Not In Place	Partially In Place	In Place	Not In Place	Partially In Place	In Place
Supportive Environment (9)	0.7	2.3	6.0	1.2	2.8	5.0
Program Quality (10)	0.3	3.3	6.3	1.2	4.2	4.7
Community Partnership (9)	0.0	2.3	6.7	0.5	3.5	5.0
Continuous Improvement (6)	0.3	2.0	3.7	1.5	2.0	2.5
Professional Development (9)	1.7	2.7	4.3	2.8	3.2	2.7

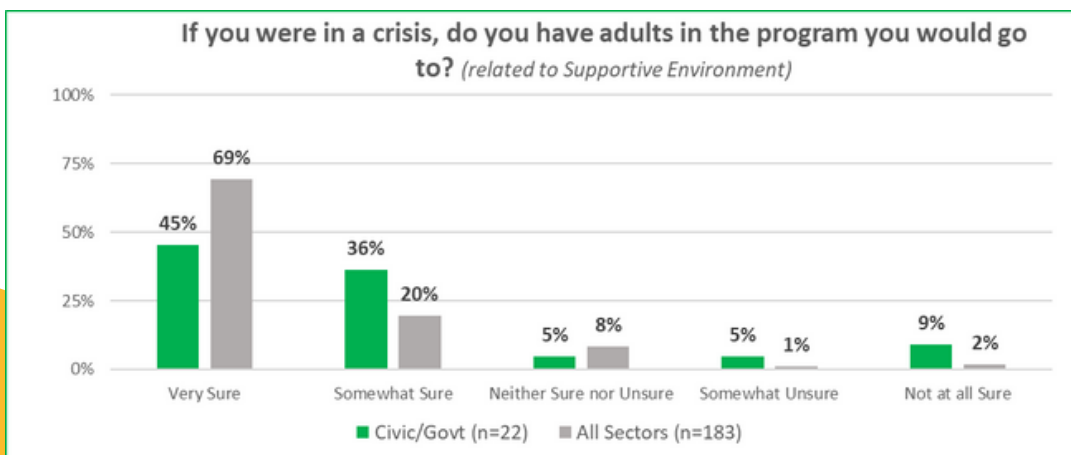
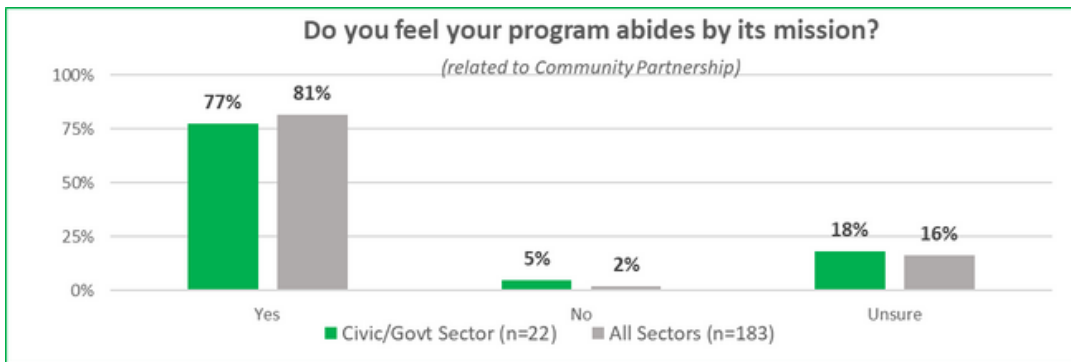
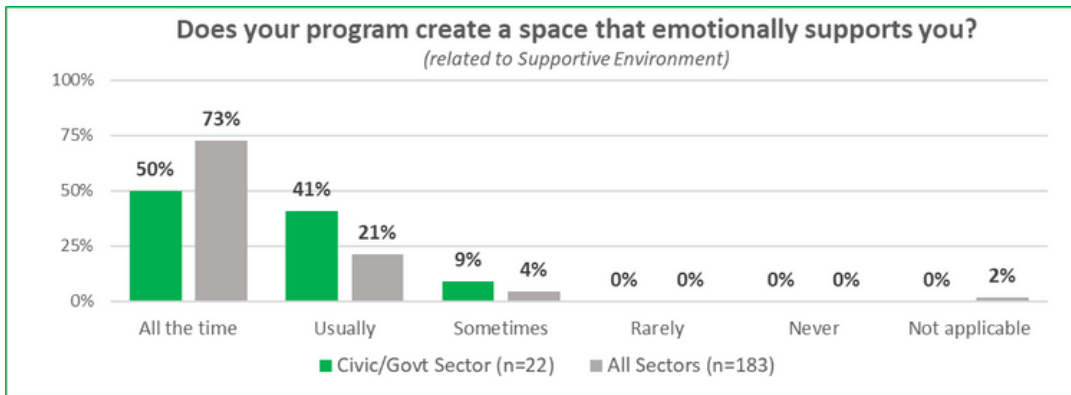


CIVIC/GOVERNMENT

Organizations and out-of-school providers in the Civic/Government sector have defined missions of student agency and support that lie within larger strategic goals of creating a safe and equitable environment for all residents. As such, the allocation, funding, and investment vary from the other sectors represented. Students engage in this sector for a particular purpose (i.e., government and/or leadership experience, community service), and the strong relationships they form may be a byproduct of their work.

Total number of students surveyed: 183

Number of students surveyed from Civic/Government: 22 (12%)

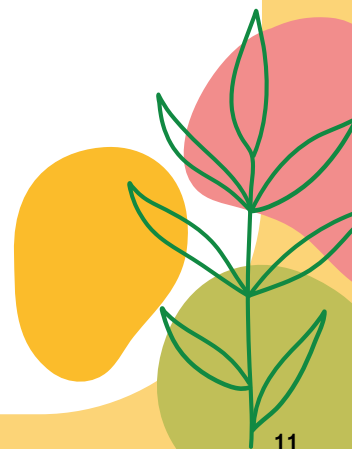


The civic/government self-evaluation figures show the most 'In Place' indicators on the first three domains of Supportive Environment, Program Quality, and Community Partnership and ongoing work around increasing areas of professional development, with an average of 6 indicators 'Partially In Place'.

The graph below highlights the highest average value for 'In Place' indicators in each domain. The total number of indicators is shown by the number in parentheses next to the domain. Each number within the grid represents the average number of indicators in that square.

For example, the average number of 'In Place' indicators for Supportive Environment is 3.0 for the Civic/Govt Sector and 5.0 for All Sectors Combined.

Benchmark of Quality Self-Evaluation (average values)						
Domain	Civic/Govt Sector			All Sectors		
	Not In Place	Partially In Place	In Place	Not In Place	Partially In Place	In Place
Supportive Environment (9)	2.0	4.0	3.0	1.2	2.8	5.0
Program Quality (10)	3.0	4.0	3.0	1.2	4.2	4.7
Community Partnership (9)	2.0	4.0	3.0	0.5	3.5	5.0
Continuous Improvement (6)	3.0	2.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5
Professional Development (9)	1.0	6.0	2.0	2.8	3.2	2.7

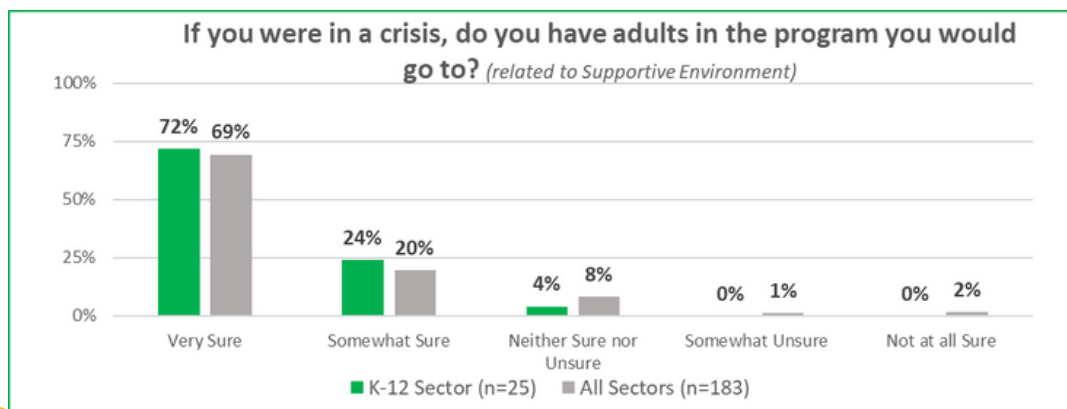
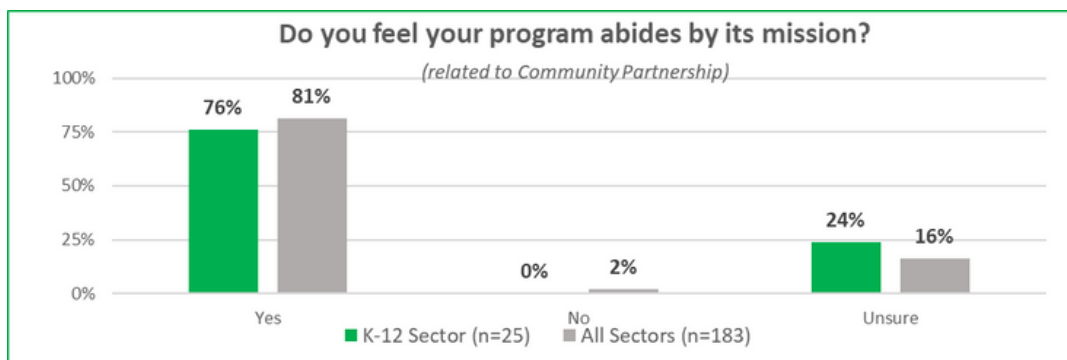
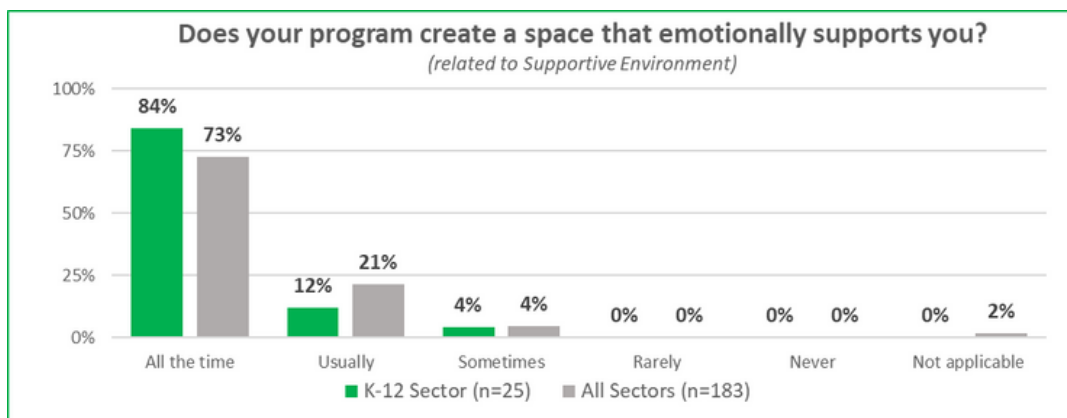


K-12 EDUCATION

Some of the core beliefs and practices of organizations in the K-12 sector support the creation of affirming environments for their students.

Total number of students surveyed: 183

Number of students surveyed from K-12 Education: 25 (14%)

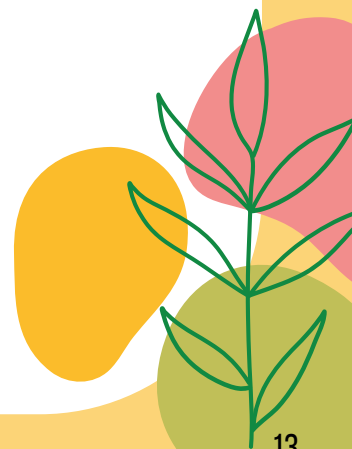


This sector reported the most indicators as 'In Place' in the domains of Supportive Environment and Community Partnerships, reflecting the student responses in those areas. Students may feel removed from some of the inner workings of the organizations as they feel more unsure than the rest of the sectors about whether the program abides by its mission and how it uses the data it collects.

The graph below highlights the highest average value for 'In Place' indicators in each domain. The total number of indicators is shown by the number in parentheses next to the domain. Each number within the grid represents the average number of indicators in that square.

For example, the average number of 'In Place' indicators for Supportive Environment is 4.5 for the K-12 Sector and 5.0 for All Sectors.

Benchmark of Quality Self-Evaluation (average values)						
Domain	K-12 Education Sector			All Sectors		
	Not In Place	Partially In Place	In Place	Not In Place	Partially In Place	In Place
Supportive Environment (9)	1.5	4.0	4.5	1.2	2.8	5.0
Program Quality (10)	1.5	5.5	3.0	1.2	4.2	4.7
Community Partnership (9)	0.5	5.0	3.5	0.5	3.5	5.0
Continuous Improvement (6)	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.5
Professional Development (9)	5.5	2.0	0.5	2.8	3.2	2.7



NEXT STEPS

Each of the three sectors – Community Based Organizations, Civic/Government, and K-12 Education – and the organizations and programs within them play a vital role in creating holistic support systems for youth and communities in East King County.

While each brings its own unique tools to the task of supporting students in those organizations, systems continue to work in ways that pose barriers for the development and thrival of certain demographics of youth. This work is focused on bringing diverse stakeholders together to assume shared responsibility and commitment towards reviewing and modifying current systems and building more equitable ones, so every youth has the opportunity and support to build skills, mindsets, and habits to thrive to and through their post-secondary journey of choice.

In the next phase of Implementation – Small Test of Change 201 – each participating organization will compare its own self-evaluation to the student survey results to create an action plan with youth consultation to increase social-emotional support for the students in their organization. The process of creating an action plan to address any challenges or gaps in service aims to hone the Benchmark of Quality tool and make it more replicable in a variety of demographic contexts and geographies.

How can you contribute to creating and strengthening an equitable collective safety net to support the thrival of your youth to and through their post-secondary lives?

Student responses to what contributes to sense of belonging in a program.



APPENDIX



[Benchmark of Quality FAQ](#)



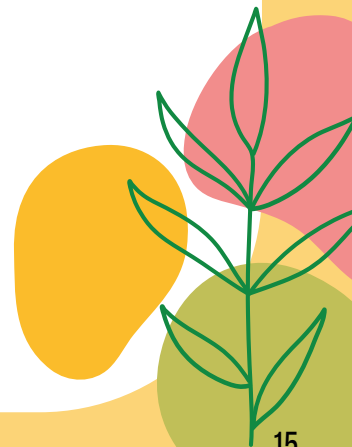
[Benchmark of Quality Glossary](#)

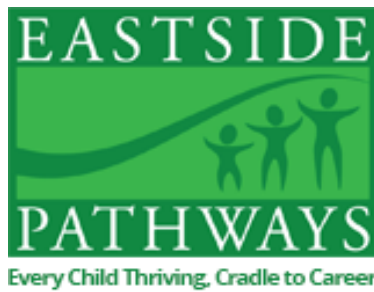


[Sector Graphs](#)

Looking to learn more? Contact:
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