

Tacoma Whole Child Initiative – Tier II Coaching Interventions

Project Abstract

The Tacoma Whole Child Initiative (TWCI) is a partnership between the Tacoma Public School District and the Center for Strong Schools at the University of Washington Tacoma. Now in its fourth year, TWCI was designed to support the social and emotional well-being of students in Tacoma (an urban, ethnically-diverse, low income community with comparatively high rates of child abuse and neglect) through a district-wide, uniform multi-tiered system of supports. This project addresses the next phase of TWCI - implementing advanced tiers of behavioral health supports in middle school classrooms through mentoring and coaching interventions.

This 3-year project proposes to conduct an efficacy study of *Check & Connect Plus*, an intervention pairing evidence-based programs Check & Connect and Edge Coaching, on the engagement and social emotional competence of high-risk 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Check & Connect addresses student engagement through relationship building and mentoring, problem solving, capacity building and persistence. Edge Coaching addresses executive functioning skills, with specific emphasis on helping students with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It is estimated that 20% of the student population in Tacoma will screen into and benefit from intensive Tier II interventions, making these advanced tiers critical components of TWCI's overall success. This randomized study will screen 2,500 middle school students, with an anticipated sample size of 450 students in need of Tier II interventions. The goal is to significantly reduce disciplinary issues, increase school engagement and show growth in positive social behavior and academic skills. These interventions will continue to develop Tacoma's students with a growth mindset, who are social strong, emotionally resilient, and self-determine.