Road Map Project Academic Parent teacher Teams
(APTT) Initiative

# Readiness Evaluation Report: School Year 2023–24

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About Education Northwest

Education Northwest is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to helping all children and youth reach their full potential. We partner with public, private, and community-based organizations to address educational inequities and improve student success. While most of our work centers on the Pacific Northwest, our evaluations, technical assistance, and research studies have national impact and provide timely and actionable results.

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## Introduction

The Road Map Project Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Readiness Initiative (2022–2025) is
a partnership between the Community Center for Education Results (CCER), WestEd, Highline Public Schools, and Auburn School District. Education Northwest is the evaluation partner. The initiative is funded by the Stolte Family Foundation and the Ballmer Group. This report summarizes progress across the entire Initiative during the 2023–24 school year (SY2023–24), year two of implementation.

### Overview of the APTT Readiness Initiative

The Road Map Project piloted APTT in Highline and Seattle Public Schools from 2019 to 2022. Building on [lessons learned](https://roadmapproject.org/resources/academic-parent-teacher-teams-initiative-year-3-evaluation-report/) from the pilot of the APTT *program* in six schools, CCER launched the Readiness Initiative in 2022 to expand the scope and scale of this work with efforts to bolster the broader family engagement *system* in each district. As outlined in the theory of action (see appendix A) the Readiness Initiative intends to strengthen partnerships with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) families by building capacity at both the district and school level to adopt, implement, and sustain equitable family engagement practices such as APTT.

As part of the Readiness Initiative, WestEd facilitated new readiness sessions—organized around the *APTT Readiness Road Map*—with school and district leaders. The readiness sessions are intended to help leaders to cultivate supportive conditions for effective implementation of APTT and other family engagement strategies.

The WestEd [APTT](https://www.wested.org/service/family-engagement-academic-parent-teacher-teams/) program offers schools a model for engaging families as partners in learning. In APTT meetings, families learn about the foundational skills their child is learning in class, their child’s progress on those skills, and activities they can use at home to support their child’s progress. Families also participate in community-building activities with other families and set goals for their child.

WestEd staff members provide training and coaching to schools in planning and facilitating these individual and team meetings.

Given the limited focus on family engagement in educator preparation programs, APTT training and coaching is expected to provide a common foundation for educators to develop the mindsets, skills, and behaviors for two-way partnership with families. While the region chose to focus on scaling the APTT model, with the addition of the readiness sessions, the goal for the Readiness Initiative is for districts to use APTT as a lever to support systems change related to equitable family engagement more broadly (see appendix A).

### About this report

This cross-district summary report outlines the overall progress during the second year of the Readiness Initiative, which corresponds with school year 2023–24 (SY2023–24). The evaluation is organized around the theory of action (see appendix A) which is informed by the expertise of the core partners as well as research on implementation science[[1]](#footnote-2) and equitable collaboration for family engagement.[[2]](#footnote-3) The current report presents data from across the two districts on the evaluation questions outlined in table 1. See the district-level memos for Auburn (attachment A) and Highline (attachment B) for more detail on each district’s progress during SY2023–24.

Table 1. Evaluation questions, concepts, and data sources (SY2023–24)

| Evaluation question  | Key concepts  | Data sources  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. *How are districts and schools using APTT as a lever to scale, spread, and sustain equitable family engagement strategies?*
 | * Supportive systems conditions (shared vision, aligned structures, staff capacity, data)
* External supports (e.g., WestEd, CCER, Education Northwest)
 | * District staff focus groups
* School leader focus groups
* Teacher focus groups (Highline only)
 |
|
|
| 1. *What are families’ priorities for engaging in two-way partnerships with schools, especially BIPOC families?*
 | * Perceptions of APTT
* Recommendations and supports needed
 | * Annual family survey
* Exit surveys (Highline only)
 |
| 1. *What evidence is there that districts and schools are increasing their capacity for equitable family-school partnership, particularly with BIPOC families?*
 | * School leader and teacher capacity
* Family capacity
* Student benefits
 | * District staff focus groups
* School leader focus groups
* Teacher focus groups (Highline only)
* Annual family survey
 |

Source: Education Northwest.

#### Qualitative data

To understand district and school progress on readiness activities, the evaluation team conducted interviews and focus groups with a total of 33 school and district staff members across the two districts (table 2). We asked district staff members to reflect on overall progress in the district related to family engagement. In Highline we asked new school leaders and teachers to share insights from their first year of APTT implementation and the support they received in this process. Since no schools implemented APTT in Auburn, we asked their school leaders about how they approach family engagement as a school and as a district, as well as the potential for APTT to support this work. We did not collect data with any teachers in Auburn due to the lack of school-level implementation.

Table 2. District and school staff interview and focus group participants, spring 2024

| Educator role  | Number of participants, Auburn | Number of participants, Highline | Total number of participants  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| District staff member | 8 | 7 | 15 |
| School leader  | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| Teacher implementing APTT at a new school | N/A | 9 | 9 |
| **Total participants**  | **10** | **23** | **33** |

Source: Education Northwest.

#### Family surveys

Education Northwest continued to facilitate data capacity-building activities with Auburn and Highline district staff members during SY2023–24. This included refining and conducting three family engagement surveys.

In Highline, three new and two pilot APTT schools administered a brief exit survey at the end of their APTT meetings to ask families about their experiences with the specific event and their recommendations for future events. During SY2023–24, we received 132 responses on exit surveys from five of six APTT schools in Highline (table 3). We developed a similar exit survey with Auburn, but they did not administer the survey.

While the exit survey focuses on immediate feedback on specific events, the annual survey provides an opportunity for families to reflect on their experiences and capacity development across the entire school year. The surveys include questions relevant to priority outcomes outlined in each district's measurement plan (e.g., capacity to support learning at home, connection with teachers and other families). During SY2023–24, Auburn received surveys from nine of 16 elementary schools in the district, for a total of 79 responses. Highline received over a thousand surveys across the district, with a total of 562 survey responses from all elementary schools, including 182 responses from the six APTT schools (table 3). For Highline, we focus on responses from APTT schools in this report; in the Highline memo (attachment B) we provide results for all elementary schools as context for these findings.

Table 3. Family survey participants, SY2023–24

| Survey  | Number of responses, Auburn (nine elementary schools) | Number of responses, Highline (APTT schools only)  | Total number of responses  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Annual family survey  | 79 | 182 from APTT schools | 261 |
| Exit survey  | Not administered  | 132 from APTT schools  | 132 |
| **Total**  | **79** | **314 from APTT Schools** | **393** |

Source: Education Northwest.

## Cross-District Summary

As discussed in the Road Map Project APTT Readiness Initiative: School Year 2022–23 Evaluation Report, each district entered this work from a different point in its family engagement journey. Highline started the readiness process in fall 2022 after implementing APTT in four schools during the pilot. Auburn started the readiness process in spring 2023 with the intent of launching APTT in schools for the first time in fall 2023. In this section, we provide an overview of implementation activities and common themes across the two districts during the second year of the Initiative.

### Implementation activities

The first year of the Initiative emphasized district-level capacity building and promoting school-level awareness and readiness to implement APTT. During year 2, WestEd continued to work with district staff members to support schools in learning about APTT and, in the case of Highline, implementing APTT in three new schools. CCER provided funding support while Education Northwest provided evaluation support. Table 4 summarizes the main activities for each year of the Initiative.

Table 4. Summary of district and school-level implementation activities across districts, years 1 and 2 (2022–2024)

| Level | Year 1 implementation activities(SY2022–23) | Year 2 implementation activities(SY2023–24) |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | * WestEd and CCER provided intensive training and coaching to district staff members on APTT and cultivating the systems conditions for family engagement
* Education Northwest provided evaluation capacity-building support (e.g., identifying priority outcomes to measure)
 | * WestEd provided technical assistance as needed to district staff members related to APTT implementation
* Education Northwest provided evaluation capacity-building support (e.g., family survey design and administration)
 |
| A green circle with a building and text  Description automatically generated | * WestEd provided information sessions about APTT for school leaders
* WestEd facilitated readiness sessions with leaders from two Highline schools to plan for teacher training and implementation in fall 2024
 | * WestEd provided information sessions about APTT for school leaders
* WestEd provided training and coaching to support implementation of APTT at three new Highline schools
* Highline district staff members supported APTT implementation at three pilot schools
* No Auburn schools participated in APTT training or implementation with WestEd
 |

Source: Education Northwest.

## District-Level Capacity: Common Themes and Considerations for Next Steps

During the first year of the Initiative, partners identified three key lessons learned: (1) readiness for APTT implementation largely depended on district-level staff members championing the initiative and their use of supportive systems; (2) alignment across roles is a critical systems condition at both the school and district level; and (3) the readiness, implementation, and impact of districtwide equitable family engagement strategies are contextual and gradual.

These lessons learned are still relevant in year 2 of the Initiative. In this section we outline some common themes and considerations for next steps related to district-level capacity building. Given that no Auburn schools implemented APTT, we cannot report on school-level implementation and outcomes across both districts. See the district-specific memos for baseline data for Auburn (attachment A) and progress data for Highline (attachment B) related to school-level implementation of family engagement.

Below we summarize common themes and future considerations across the two districts.

#### District staff members continued to work with WestEd to present APTT as an option for schools, with schools expressing interest even if they do not commit to full implementation

Each district offered information sessions for school leaders to learn about the APTT model. In both districts, staff members are starting to see schools integrate elements of APTT into their family engagement approach, inspired by what they learned about APTT. For example, in Auburn, one school leader prepared and led APTT-style meetings with families and invited teachers to observe.

##### Future considerations

This suggests that some of the underlying principles and practices of APTT resonate with schools. Districts can build on this interest in SY2024–25 as they seek to scale the model to more schools. To support this, the evaluation can provide in-depth examples of how established schools are integrating APTT into the culture and structure of their school.

#### APTT implementation was more limited than expected, in part due to schools’ concerns about capacity

No Auburn schools adopted APTT, and the three new Highline schools opted to phase in the model by starting with a single grade. Leaders at the new schools in Highline feel supported by the district, but teachers express concerns about their time and capacity for APTT. In Auburn, some schools did not adopt APTT because of the perceived demands on teacher time.

##### Future considerations

Given that this has been a persistent concern since the pilot, including data on implementation in the pilot schools in the SY2024–25 evaluation may provide insight on how schools effectively address these challenges over time.

#### District family engagement staff members have the potential to serve as coaches and connectors to help schools improve family engagement

In both districts, the role of the family engagement teams continues to evolve: Highline staff members are shifting to work more collaboratively with other district departments across schools while Auburn staff members are largely based inside schools. Working across schools is an opportunity for district staff members to promote school-to-school learning and align family engagement strategies with other district priorities. In both school systems, not all school staff members were aware of how the district family engagement team could support them to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of their family engagement efforts, beyond logistical support and funding.

##### Future considerations

Further building the capacity of family engagement staff members, and awareness of their role as a resource for educators to improve their practice, is an important priority for the final year of the project so that districts can sustain implementation of APTT without external support.

#### The districts increased their capacity to collect data from families across their district; the next step is to ensure that the data are representative and utilized

Both districts participated in the design of exit and annual surveys aligned with their family engagement goals and strategic plans. District staff members can work more closely with schools to integrate surveys into family engagement activities and utilize the results for quality improvement. This includes timely outreach to families and providing surveys in multiple languages.

##### Future considerations

In SY2024–25, Education Northwest can support districts in developing plans for ongoing administration, analysis, and use of the family surveys. This is also an opportunity for cross-departmental collaboration.

## Appendix A: Road Map Project APTT Readiness Initiative Theory of Action (2022–2025)

Source: Education Northwest.

## Appendix B: District Summaries

This appendix presents summaries of findings for each district related to each of the three guiding evaluation questions. See the district-level memos for Auburn (attachment A) and Highline (attachment B) for more detail on each district’s progress during SY2023–24. Below we present findings for each evaluation question starting with Auburn and followed by Highline. In each section, the pink icon indicates themes at the district level while the green icon indicates themes at the school level.

### 1. How are districts and schools using APTT as a lever to scale, spread, and sustain equitable family engagement strategies?

Table A-1. District- and school-level progress in building supportive systems conditions for APTT and equitable family engagement, SY2023–24 – AUBURN

| Systems conditions | A pink circle with a building and a flag  Description automatically generatedSummary of district-level progress | A green circle with a building and text  Description automatically generatedSummary of school-level progress |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Shared vision and priorities for family engagement and APTT | * No schools implemented APTT in SY2023–24, although some schools are adopting related practices and discussing readiness.
* More work is needed to communicate a clear vision of APTT to district and school leaders. Ideas from cross-departmental focus groups include coordinating the APTT program with school improvement plans.
 | * Some school staff members participated in information sessions with WestEd
 |
| Aligned organizational structures to support implementation | * Departments across the district need greater collaboration to align varied family engagement strategies and expectations for staff members.
* The district increased the number of family engagement liaisons (FELs) in schools. As the role of the FEL is refined, updates need to be communicated to district staff members and school leaders.
 | * Some schools are reporting lessons learned from implementing APTT-like strategies (e.g., need for interpretation)
 |
| Capacity to implement family engagement and APTT | * More training and capacity building are needed to prepare FELs to support future implementation of APTT in Auburn schools.
 | * Some school staff members participated in information sessions with WestEd
 |
| Data for continuous learning and improvement  | * District staff members are conducting community cafés to gather input from families and collaborate on developing exit and annual surveys aligned with their measurement plan. The district administered the annual survey.
 | * The district received data from nine of 16 elementary schools
 |

Table A-2. District- and school-level progress in building supportive systems conditions for APTT and equitable family engagement, SY2023–24 – HIGHLINE

| Systems conditions | A pink circle with a building and a flag on it  Description automatically generatedSummary of district-level progress | A green circle with a building and text  Description automatically generatedSummary of school-level progress (new APTT schools)  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Shared vision and priorities for family engagement and APTT | * District staff members said APTT is increasingly visible across the district with six schools implementing APTT (including three pilot schools sustaining without support from the Initiative) and three more schools launching in fall 2024
* District staff members observed more schools weaving APTT principles and practices, if not the full program model, into the fabric of their schools
 | * New APTT school leaders are working to develop a shared vision for APTT with teachers as part of their family engagement approach, with varying results
* Leaders can do more to communicate the details of their APTT vision and plan with both the school staff and families and engage them in leadership of APTT
 |
| Aligned organizational structures to support implementation | * Cross-departmental collaboration related to family engagement is growing, and new school leaders feel that they have clear district support
* District family engagement specialists support sustained implementation in the three pilot schools
* There is not yet a cross-school cohort in place for APTT schools
 | * New schools are effectively accessing district and external resources to provide child care, translation, and interpretation to facilitate family participation
* Teachers shared concerns about the amount of time needed to plan APTT meetings and prepare materials that are accessible for all families
 |
| Capacity to implement family engagement and APTT | * District staff members increased their familiarity with the APTT model, understanding of their role, and capacity to support schools with implementation
* It is not clear yet how district restructuring will affect the roles of family engagement specialists with APTT
 | * On exit surveys, families at new schools agreed that APTT meetings were inclusive of their family and relevant for their child, although less so for multilingual families
 |
| Data for continuous learning and improvement  | * While new family engagement survey data are being collected and used at the district level, more work is needed to help schools use data for continuous improvement
 | * All new schools reported academic growth for students in APTT classrooms and are starting to use data for continuous learning and improvement
 |

### A green circle with a building and text  Description automatically generated2. What are families’ priorities for engaging in two-way partnerships with schools, especially BIPOC families?

Table A-3. Family participation and priorities – AUBURN

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Auburn priority outcome | Summary for nine elementary schools (baseline)  |
| * Families, including BIPOC and multilingual families, report improved communication and a more welcoming school climate
 | * Baseline family engagement data suggests that Auburn schools’ two-way communication needs improvement. While families report that they are well-informed by schools, more than a third feel left out of school decision-making processes and planning.
* Early notifications for opportunities to offer input are important to families.
* Auburn families, across demographic characteristics, generally feel welcome in schools. A higher percentage of BIPOC and multilingual families who responded to the survey report feeling welcomed by their schools across most domains.
* Families would like schools to be more responsive to family input, celebrate student progress, and provide more opportunities for families to engage in their child’s learning.
 |

Table A-4. Family participation and priorities – HIGHLINE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Highline priority outcome | Summary for all APTT schools  |
| * All *families*, especially families of students with disabilities and/or students learning English, feel that the APTT strategies and goals are relevant for their child
 | * Most families at APTT schools report positive experiences with activities at their child’s school, although a higher percentage of families of students receiving special education services report negative experiences
* Families would like more time to connect with teachers individually about their child’s overall progress, including and beyond academics
* Families identified opportunities to improve outreach as well as inclusion during events to ensure the events are responsive to the needs and priorities of all families
* Families who attended APTT nights are interested in participating in similar meetings in math, literacy, arts, and science

**APTT-specific feedback** * Almost all families who participated and took an exit survey found APTT meetings to be relevant and inclusive, with room to improve the experience for multilingual families and families of students with disabilities
* All families interacted with their child’s teacher during APTT meetings, especially families of students with disabilities and/or students learning English
* Almost all families interacted with other families, but a lower percentage reported exchanging insights about their child during these interactions
 |

### 3. What evidence is there that districts and schools are increasing their capacity for equitable family-school partnership, particularly with BIPOC families?

#### A yellow circle with black text and a black and grey logo  Description automatically generatedTeacher capacity for partnership

Table A-5. Teacher capacity – AUBURN

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Auburn priority outcome  | Summary for nine elementary schools (baseline) |
| * Teachers increase their awareness of family expertise and capability to bring this expertise into the classroom
* Teachers increase confidence and capacity to talk with families in an accessible way about student areas of growth and how they can collaborate to support student progress
 | * Baseline family engagement data suggest that Auburn families feel most comfortable connecting with teachers and school office personnel.
* To help teachers work better with families, families and district staff members suggest teachers communicate more frequently with families to celebrate students. Building trust with families is important to successful partnerships.
 |

Table A-6. Teacher capacity – HIGHLINE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Highline priority outcome  | Summary for new APTT schools  |
| * Awareness of family expertise and capability and bring this expertise into the classroom
* Provide families with opportunities to share their expertise in groups and in individual meetings (two-way relationships)
* Facilitate family-to-family connections
 | * Most teachers said they gained new insights into their families’ priorities and are increasing their capacity to build two-way relationships with families
* Families reported that APTT provided an opportunity to interact with their child’s teacher and other families, with room to deepen both types of interactions
 |

Family capacity for partnership

Table A-7. Family capacity – AUBURN

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Auburn priority outcome  | Summary for nine elementary schools (baseline) |
| * Families, including multilingual families, increase their capability and confidence to communicate with their child’s teacher
* Families, including multilingual families, increase their capability and confidence to support their child’s learning at home
 | * Baseline data suggest that Auburn family survey respondents, including BIPOC and multilingual families, generally feel capable and confident to communicate with their child’s teachers regarding their child’s academic progress and their needs.
* Families want to be included in their child’s learning and to support their child’s teacher at home. However, some families, specifically multilingual families, report not having the activities to support their child’s learning at home. APTT programs may provide families with the resources and activities needed to support teachers.
 |

Table A-8. Family capacity – HIGHLINE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Highline priority outcome  | Summary for APTT schools  |
| * Families increase their capability and confidence to support their child’s learning at home
* Families increase their connection to teachers and other families
* Families increase their capability and confidence to advocate for their child
 | * A high percentage of families in APTT schools reported capacity to support learning at home, in line with elementary schools overall. Families of students in special education report lower levels of capacity in most areas compared with the overall average for APTT schools.
* Families in APTT schools report positive connections to teachers with fewer reporting positive relationships with other families at their school.
* A higher percentage of families of students learning English, multilingual families, and Asian families report connections with teachers and other families across all domains compared with the overall average for APTT schools. Families of students in special education report higher levels of connection with teachers and lower levels of connection with other families compared with the average for families in APTT schools.
* A higher percentage of families at APTT schools (89 percent or higher) report capacity and confidence to advocate for their child compared with elementary schools overall.
 |

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