

HEALTHY TOMORROW PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM

Project Title: Partnering for Early Access for Success – Project PEAS in A POD

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ABSTRACT

The Partnering for Early Access for Success **PEAS** project targets early childhood students and families in three Houston communities Fonwood, Mistral, and Ninfa Lorenzo. The three Houston communities geographically surrounding the schools have high prevalence of overweight and obese children and adults, high poverty levels and limited access to health care services. The **PEAS** project provides an opportunity to examine best practices and community partnerships to minimize the impact of social determinants of health as identified by the CDC, by improving access to care, increasing physical activity, and improving awareness of proper nutrition while also incorporating school readiness strategies.

Community partnerships are a key component of this project.

The services identified and provided by the PEAS project were to: (1) increase physical activity, proper nutrition, and the opportunity to access these services for students and families within the school community, home, and community to reduce childhood obesity, poor nutrition; (2) to increase the physical fitness and nutrition education for participating students and their families within the school community, that will promote and model nutrition education and physical fitness to children; (3) to decrease the barriers to accessing healthcare services, resources, and information; (4) to work with community organizations and service providers that are culturally and linguistically responsive to the needs of the three early childhood centers; (5) to increase opportunities for students to improve literacy skills in the school community.

The three Early Childhood Centers (ECC) initiated participation with Texas **Children's mobile van** which has provided well child exams, urgent exams, laboratory evaluations, immunizations, and pharmacy services. The medical services provided by the TCH mobile medical van serve as the actual primary care home for many students. One of the goals of the Healthy tomorrows Partnership for Children Program (HTPCP) is health screening for obesity and diabetes related

illnesses which are included in the well child exams. In addition, the school nurse on the three campuses have also conducted the Texas Risk Assessment for Type 2 Diabetes in children by screening for the acanthosis nigricans marker, a skin condition that signals high insulin levels. Children who are positively identified with the marker will then have additional assessments of body mass index (BMI), BMI percentile and blood pressure. Referrals are then initiated by the school nurse to the TCH mobile medical van which may serve as the actual primary care home for many students needed for health-related concerns for obesity and other illnesses. A Reach Out and Read program has also been included in the services to promote literacy and school readiness. During the scheduled visit, pediatricians will provide books to parents in English and Spanish to encourage reading to their children regularly.

The City of Houston Dental Program has provided on site dental screenings, dental sealants, fluoride varnish, and oral health education to students in the three early childhood centers. The **Houston Food Bank** has provided campus-based delivery of perishable and nonperishable food that will be used in the cooking classes. **Texas A& M AgriLife** program will provide educational programs in nutrition, diet and will assist families to make informed decisions about food, nutrition, and health. **Health and Physical education department through** the PE teacher will distribute and monitor pedometers and will incorporate pedometers into their curriculum with planned physical activities at each campus for students and parents. **HISD school nurses** have coordinated and facilitated services to the campuses which include parent notification, case management of referrals from to TCH, and collection of parental consents.

URBAN HARVEST has provided hands-on lessons in the school garden integrating science/nature/gardening and nutrition activities structured for early childhood program.

NARRATIVE

1. PURPOSE OF PROJECT AND RELATIONSHIP TO SSA TITLE V MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH (MCH) PROGRAMS: The Partnering for Early Access for Success (PEAS) project has four major program priorities: General Healthcare and Dental, Nutrition, Physical Exercise, and Literacy. Three Early Childhood Centers (ECC) were identified as participating sites based on the significant need for additional medical interventions and health related supports to decrease the prevalence of childhood obesity, poor nutrition, and the lack of physical activity among students and their families. Campus-based wrap-around services delivered by a multitude of community partners was established to enable participating students and families to overcome barriers to access to care (lack of transportation, lack of awareness to community-based services, lack of dental/medical insurance and inability to pay for medical care). The overall anticipated outcome for the PEAS project is to decrease the prevalence of childhood obesity, poor nutrition, and lack of physical activity among the students in the three ECC and their families.

The PEAS project was funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau at the Health Resources and Services (HRSA) and the American Academy of Pediatrics. The inter-professional relationship between HISD and the State Title V MCH program involved the Department of State Health Services providing technical assistance in the review of current district and departmental health and wellness policies and practices that support obesity prevention. This also included review of related Health and Wellness policy recommendations to the school board made by the School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) and representation on the PEAS Advisory Board. The state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Texas Pediatric Society (TPS), was well represented on this project by pediatricians on the Texas Children Hospital (TCH) mobile clinic who are members of the AAP state chapter. Specifically, Dr. Misra, Medical Director for the TCH mobile clinic, shared a commitment to the goals of the PEAS project through her emphasis on prevention as well as the participation in the *Reach Out to Read* program.

2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: **Goal 1: Decrease overweight/obesity rates in the community**

Note: Upon review, Objectives 1.1 and 1.2 were removed after year one because they required data tracking at later grades that was not feasible for this project.

Objective 1.3 The project will provide at least two weekly opportunities for parents and their children to receive instruction and support in exercise activities.

Physical education teachers implemented the use of Pedometers to track student activities during scheduled physical education classes. The PE instructor monitored and accumulated data for each individual student in order to document increase in physical activity during the school day. The pedometers were made available to parents before or after the school day to track their physical activities.

One physical education teacher also initiated exercise activities for parents. The barrier to providing exercise activities for parents at the other sites was lack of space. During year three of the project, in addition to the after-school Walking Club, Zumba or Yoga, which require less space, was supported by the PE teachers or a community partner.

Objective 1.4 The project will provide at least ten nutrition classes each school year of the program.

This objective was partially accomplished by two of the early childhood centers. Parent nutrition/cooking classes resumed in September 2019 for a total of seven sessions which ended in October 2019. One campus utilized a community partner *Finca Tres Robles* community garden in which parents picked fresh ingredients and vegetables from the garden and prepared a dish. Prior to meal preparation the parents were educated on the dish to be prepared. Campuses resumed *Color My Plate* nutrition classes and Nutrition Story time in Spanish during Spring of 2019. These classes were reinforced with the *Chop Chop* magazine which had simple and healthy recipes for students to prepare at home as a family unit.

Goal 2: Improve Access to Quality Health Care and Services

Objective 2.1 By the end of the project period, at least 95% of the participating students will have received dental treatment through the City of Houston's mobile dental services. This objective was partially met during the third year of the project with over 95% of students receiving dental treatment through the City of Houston's dental project. The school nurse at each of the sites successfully coordinated access to mobile dental health services during the fall/spring semester. In year three, 415 students received preventive dental care (sealants) and 1234 received oral health education. A barrier is lack of parental consents for targeted dental clinics. During school year 2018-2019 dental clinics were only scheduled once due to prior commitments with Project Saving smiles for the entire school district. The project coordinator prescheduled dental clinics at the inception of school year 2019-2020. Automated phone calls to parents to remind them of upcoming dental events and the importance in completing dental consents for dental services proved to be a successful strategy to address the issue of low parental consent return.

Objective 2.2 By the end of the project period, at least 85% of the participating students will have received health screenings and school-based health care through the Texas Children's Hospital mobile unit.

This objective was met during the fourth year of the project with 85% of students referred being seen by the Texas Children's Hospital mobile unit providers. In year three 426 three-year-old students were screened for the acanthosis marker. Referrals were made to TCH mobile clinic or students primary care providers. The most challenging barrier reported by the school nurses was under-utilization of the mobile clinic at the inception of project PEAS however by year four the TCH was well established with monthly visits to the three campuses. Several strategies were successful in increasing utilization including advertising on social media; incorporating other school activities occurring simultaneously with the mobile van visit; and inviting surrounding schools to participate.

Objective 2.3 The community partners will provide direct services to participants at least one time per month.

This objective was met during the fourth year of the project in which the Texas Children's Hospital Mobile was able to provide direct monthly services since initiation of PEAS project with 386 students receiving direct medical services in year three of project. Services for year four, school year 2019-2020 were in place. The early childhood centers used flyers and social media to reach out to parents with information about available services during scheduled school events throughout the school year.

Goal 3: Empower families to be active participants in their children's healthy development

Objective 3.1 By the end of each year of the project, 75% of participating parents will self-report preparing healthy, nutritious meals at least four times per week.

This objective was met with cooking/nutrition classes for parents provided by AGRI-Life Texas A&M or La Finca Robles which used produce from its community garden for cooking/nutrition classes. Parents also received fruits and vegetable from the Food Bank mobile truck since the initiation of the PEAS program however for school year 2018-2019 services were interrupted due to contractual issues. School nurses then utilized other services through the food bank such as Backpack Buddies, and the milk and cereal program. In year four of the program the three ECC centers signed up with the mobile food bank to deliver perishable/nonperishable food items scheduled for three months during the school year. In addition, by end of year five, the partnership with Urban Harvest enabled schools to become self-sufficient in planting and maintaining fruits/vegetables in their school garden which was a source for reinforcing parents to continue healthy balanced meals at home. In addition, Chop Chop magazine in English and Spanish was delivered and distributed to all students in each center. Chop Chop magazine is an engaging tool that parents, and classroom teachers can use to teach children about how to prepare nutritious healthy foods. In addition to the cooking classes the magazine served to stimulate conversation

about healthy cooking and reinforce healthy household habits. Parents were encouraged to self-report cooking nutritious meals at least four times per week with minimum success.

3.2 At the end of each year of the program, the project will hold at least ten family and community engagement activities per semester at each site.

The centers have successfully initiated direct services events by including the staff, parents, and community to volunteer for the school garden and after school walking club. A strategy utilized by the three ECC is to combined schedule school events and incorporate PEAS activities. Pop up Banners were purchased to promote the PEAS program and encourage parental involvement.

3.3 By the end of the project year, 95% of the participating school-age children will be academically ready to enter Kindergarten as measured by end of year assessments in reading.

The evaluation conducted in year 3 showed gains in academic readiness on English and Spanish CIRCLE assessments relative to Alliteration, Rapid Letter Naming, and Rapid Vocabulary subtests for students in the project. Students at each ECC also achieved gains on the Spanish language Letter Sounds subtest. TCH medical mobile unit continues to provide scholastic books to all students seen in the mobile clinic to encourage reading and to reinforce to parents the importance of reading to their children.

Goal 4: Foster partnerships between families, providers, and communities

4.1 At least ten families per school will volunteer to distribute food or other activities through the Houston Food Bank.

This objective was met in year four of the project. Each campus established an active roster of volunteers to assist with the various PEAS activities such as packing the perishable/nonperishable food items donated by Food Bank for the Backpack Buddies program. In school year 2018-2019 one campus initiated their own food drive among their school community for canned foods. A church in the community also donated turkeys. Parent volunteers from PEAS project and PTO helped organize and

distribute baskets to fourteen families. Parent volunteers for PEAS activities increased as the PTO became more well established.

4.2 At least ten families per school will volunteer to oversee the community garden at each school.

Each ECC organized Garden Club committees to help recruit volunteers for the school's garden maintenance. One campus held an annual Fall beautification of their school garden with strong support from parents, students, and staff. Students received pumpkins and parents received seeds to encourage a home garden. A strategy used by two of the ECC was to have garden volunteers, staff, and students attend on a Saturday for garden maintenance. The centers will continue to recruit parent volunteers for this school event and other PEAS activities by utilizing their PTO (parent teacher organization) to assist as well collaborate with the HISD Family & Community Engagement (FACE)/HIPPIY staff for ideas to increase parent participation.

4.3 The number of community partners actively participating on the advisory board will increase by at least one partner each year of the project. The annual advisory board meeting was scheduled for each December of the project with the exception of year 5 and the following year due to COVID restrictions. Advisory board members typically discussed the activities of current participating community partners and reviewed and discussed implementation strategies of PEAS program at each campus. Urban Harvest came on board as a new partner in 2018. The advisory board routinely discussed sustainability in preparation for end of PEAS project. The services offered through the PEAS project brought valuable resources to the school community, education on nutrition, on site health care services, physical activity, and increased opportunities for literacy. The three ECCs served as the "pod" where service providers assisted families and students with focus on 3- and 4-year-olds and their families to address the targeted objectives.

Logic Model



Goal 1: Decrease overweight/obesity rates in the community

Goal 2: Improve access to Quality Health Care and Services

Goal 3: Empower families to be active participants in their children’s healthy development

Goal 4: Foster partnerships between families, providers, and communities

Target Population and Needs	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
<p>Families with children in Three Early Childhood Centers in Houston Fonwood (North Houston) Lorenzo (East Houston) and Mistral (Southwest Houston)</p> <p>Low income, limited English speaking immigrant community with Spanish as primary language</p> <p>Limited Healthcare coverage</p> <p>Low use of preventive care</p>	<p>Program Director, Project Coordinator, School Nurses, Physical Education teachers, Outreach Workers, Community Partners</p> <p>Funding (5-year HRSA Federal grant)</p> <p>Pedometers with data tracking, exercise videos, gardening</p> <p>Preventive health care services (medical, dental, acanthosis)</p> <p>Prevention education provided in English and Spanish provided by community/In district partners</p> <p>Education curriculum promote literacy and school readiness</p>	<p>Monthly onsite visits TCH mobile unit, Dental Education & Screening, fall & Spring semester. Bilingual staff on site</p> <p>Houston ISD outreach worker/TCH community health worker will facilitate Health Care coverage registration</p> <p>Acanthosis Screening by school nurses for 3/4-year-old students</p> <p>Nutritional education classes for parents/students</p> <p>Parent focus group(s)</p> <p>Monthly tracking project activities</p> <p>Weekly delivery of Perishable</p>	<p>Number of individuals receiving Preventive health care services in nontraditional setting</p> <p>Number of new families signed up for healthcare coverage</p> <p>Number of participants in preventive health care education classes</p> <p>Number of focus group participants.</p>	<p>Participating families in Fonwood, Mistral & Lorenzo will understand the importance of preventive healthcare services</p> <p>Participating families will increase their family engagement in child’s healthy development</p> <p>Increase in follow up care for students referred for obesity/overweight as compared with at least one elementary school in same feeder pattern</p>

		nonperishable food items		
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3. METHODOLOGY: Each of the three Early Childhood Centers conducted monthly participation with the TCH mobile van and services since the inception of the PEAS project in the Spring of 2016. Although there was a break in service during the COVID pandemic, they were reinitiated as soon as feasible.

Scholastic books in English and Spanish were distributed to students and parents during their scheduled visits with the pediatrician. Outreach worker collaborated with health care providers on the TCH Mobile Unit and identified uninsured students who required assistance completing the Medicaid application.

Services and school calendars were coordinated with TCH service providers to ensure smooth delivery of services to students. This strategy was utilized by each of the three campuses to minimize disruption of medical services and classroom instruction.

The City of Houston Dental program provided on site dental screenings, dental sealants, fluoride varnish, and oral health education to students for each of the three Early Childhood Centers. The three Early Childhood centers continued participation with the City of Houston Dental department Project Saving Smiles during school 2017-2018, 662 dental screenings were conducted, and 980 students received oral health education. The following school year 2018-2019 the three ECC scheduled dental on site visits during the fall and spring semester with 1,212 students receiving Oral Health education and over 300 students receiving dental screenings. Each year of the PEAS project participating students were given a tooth timer during the oral health presentation so that students could be reminded about the importance of proper oral health. The three Early Childhood centers received a tooth model, toothbrush, and Dino the dragon for display by the school nurses during their oral health presentations. Students at one campus were excited to participate in a dental health month contest in which one of the students proudly represented their team by placing third among all participants.

The Houston Food Bank delivered perishable and nonperishable food items to each of the three Early Childhood Centers for the first two years of the PEAS program. Combining food distribution activity with other school activities has increased parental participation. This strategy was utilized by the three campuses as well as utilizing social media to promote events. One of the campuses utilized a community “La Finca” which is Co-sponsor by the Houston Food Bank. Participants received fruits/vegetables from the garden and staff from the Food Bank taught participants different cooking techniques. Classes were offered in English and Spanish by bilingual presenters.

The *Chop Chop* magazine was ordered and distributed for the fall and winter editions. Spring editions were also ordered and distributed. *Chop Chop* is an exciting tool for teaching kids about food, cooking, nutrition, and health. Schools distribute the magazine to their students as part of wellness and nutrition education program. *Chop Chop* is filled with nutritious, great-tasting, ethnically diverse, and inexpensive recipes. It also has fun food facts, games, and puzzles. Magazines are ordered in English and Spanish which helps reinforce the importance of healthy eating.

Through the Department of Health and Physical Education (HPE), physical education teachers incorporated use of electronic data tracking pedometers into their physical education curriculum at each of the three-centers participating in the PEAS program. PE teachers utilized the pedometers during designated physical education time to keep individual data for each student participating. Pedometers were also available for staff and parents to track their physical activities before or after school activities. The program was so well received that additional pedometers were purchased for distribution to parents to use during their walking group activities and as incentives for participation in focus groups. During the 2018-2019 school year students at one of the ECCs participated in their first marathon, completing 8 miles. All three campuses implemented a walking club for parents/staff and one of the campuses included a Zumba class for parents. The school nurse at one campus in which there was not a PE teacher served as the coordinator for physical activities for students, staff, and parents until the new teacher implemented a

physical activity group for parents during spring semester. In addition, the PTO committed to assist with implementing an exercise program for parents.

The school nurses in these schools coordinated and facilitated services to the campuses which included parent notification, case management of referrals to TCH mobile, and collection of parent consents. They also completed monthly reports of scheduled events for their campuses. Meetings were held with project coordinators to discuss school events, challenges, and keeping timelines according to project guidelines.

School nurses also conducted Acanthosis screening of 3-4 yr. old students to measure the Body Mass Index of the students and sent parent referrals for health concerns related to obesity screenings. Parents were informed about the availability of the TCH mobile as a “no cost” resource for follow up.

Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension Service provided parent nutrition/cooking classes some of which were interrupted during the pandemic and resumed at two of the three campuses. At one campus nutrition classes were implemented briefly in September and ended in October with seven parent sessions. The other campus offered one session of “Dinner Tonight” which focuses on healthy diets and low carbohydrates. The third campus implemented cooking classes in the Fall with a community partner *Finca Tres Robles*, which offers use of their community garden for parents to pick fresh fruits/vegetables, select ingredients, and prepare a specific dish. Prior to meal preparation the parents were taught about the nutritional contents of dish to be prepared. The *Chop Chop* magazine was used to reinforce the use of healthy recipes for students to prepare at home as a family unit. Parents were given pedometers and cooking utensil as incentives for participating in the cooking classes, and a certificate of participation typically at the end of each school year.

The three ECC campuses received the My Plate educational kits to facilitate nutrition classes for students and reinforce the nutrition classes provided by the dietician from HISD Nutrition Services. Texas A&M

Agri-Life provided virtual classes in English and Spanish during the Covid 19 pandemic to the parents in the three Early Childhood centers. These online classes, known as “Wellness Wednesdays” focused on various health issue such as diabetes and hypertension. Parents were taught ways to improve their eating habits and the importance of having an active lifestyle for their overall health.

Urban Harvest provided a Science, Health and Nutrition Garden Partnership featuring hands-on lessons in the school garden integrating science/nature/gardening and nutrition activities to enhance learning objectives in subject areas of science, math and, reading readiness with real life experiences. This provided opportunities for teachers to teach students to grow food, study plants, nutrition and learn about wildlife. One Garden Instructor per Campus worked with at least one classroom teacher and their students with ongoing gardening science and nutrition enrichment instruction during the allotted scheduled time. Specific science enrichment objectives were met utilizing the Outdoor Classroom structured for Early Childhood including increased participation for school garden and outdoor classroom stewardship, working together to achieve common goals and problem solving in the garden to reinforce the skills taught in the classroom. The three Early Childhood Centers also organized garden committees to recruit garden volunteers and provide garden maintenance throughout the school year.

One campus used a creative strategy of hosting an annual Saturday Fall Harvest Day in October for staff, parents, and community members to come out and weed and prepare the school garden for seeding. Parents received plants and seeds to start a home garden and pumpkins were distributed to all participating students. Due to the success of the Fall Festival, with strong support from parents, students, and school this has become an annual event. Urban Harvest delivered spring garden plants, adopt a grow Kits, and herbs for schools to distribute to families to grow at home during Spring 2021.

4. EVALUATION: A formal evaluation was completed after year three of the project and is included in the appendix. Key findings in the evaluation (*Research Educational Program Report: An evaluation of Partnering for Early Access for Success (PEAS) – Project Peas in HISD, 2018-19*) indicated that among the 1,170 students enrolled at the three targeted Early Childhood Centers, 356 were provided health-

related services, including immunizations and well child exams by physicians at Texas Children's Hospital Mobile (TCH). Other findings from the report indicated that 473 students were screened by the school nurse for Type 2 Diabetes (Acanthosis Nigricans screening), preventive dental care, including sealants were provided to 415 students, while 1,234 students received oral health education. Additionally, more than 80% parents who responded to a survey agreed that Project PEAS helped them access medical services for their families. A paired sample analysis conducted as part of the evaluation of the program's impact on reducing overweight/obesity revealed an increase in the percentage of normal and healthy weight children (55.2% to 72.4%) and a decrease in the percentage of overweight/obese children (37.9% to 27.6%) from baseline (2015 – 2016) to 1 year after program implementation (2016 – 2017). There were also noted gains in academic readiness for Project PEAS students on English and Spanish language CIRCLE assessments relative to Alliteration, Rapid Letter Naming, and Rapid Vocabulary subtests. Students at each ECC school also achieved gains on the Spanish language letter Sounds subtest. The ability to conduct further formal evaluations was limited due to the impact of COVID during year 4 and 5 of the grant in which all services were severely impacted.

5. RESULTS/OUTCOMES: A variety challenges sometimes unique to each campus impacted outcomes throughout the project. For example, a delay in hiring a school nurse at 2 of the campuses during the first year of the project contributed to a delay in implementing program components including scheduling the mobile healthcare provider. During the fall of the second-year fall of the project (2017), the Houston area was severely impacted by Hurricane Harvey which devastated many communities and ultimately disrupted all services. Referrals for the 2018-2019 school year increased significantly from the previous year increasing from 293 to 756, possibly reflecting the widespread devastation during the previous year and greater need for services. Participation continued to increase during year three with 1025 early childhood students being served at the 3 sites.

As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic in the Spring of 2020, Covid 19 Houston ISD operated campuses virtually from March thru October 2020. The TCH mobile medical van implemented services limited to

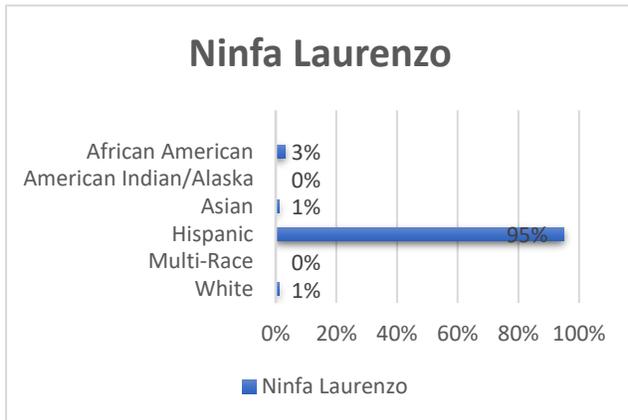
immunizations in Spring 2021, serving only 161 students. Twenty-four students were serviced during the final extended year of 2021 -2022 due to providers having organizational limitations as well as mitigation protocols implemented by HISD that restricted campus access by vendors outside of HISD.

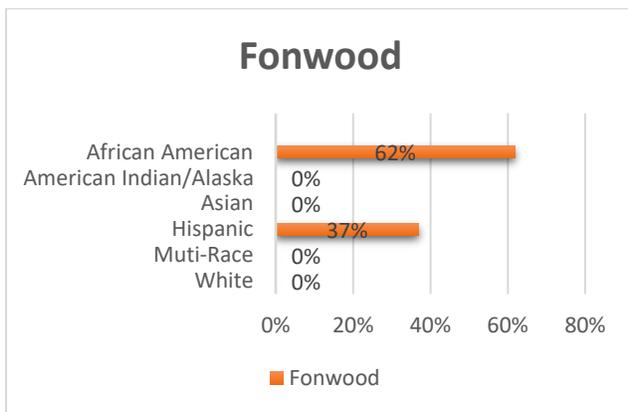
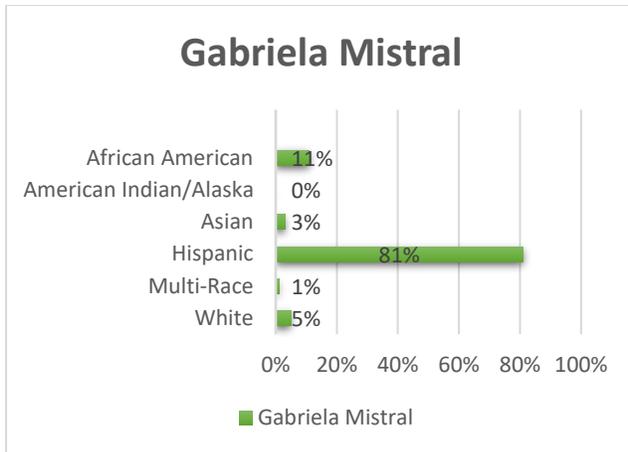
Obtaining parental consents for designated activities was an ongoing challenge that required creativity and persistence that recognized the unique communication attributes of each school community. The school nurses utilized a variety of social media strategies to advertise school events to increase parental participation. While lack of parental consent initially limited dental services provided to students at all three campuses during early implementation of the PEAS program, as parents became more aware of the services, parent consent and student participation increased each year until impacted by the two natural disasters. During final last two years of the project only 111 students received oral screenings and 518 students received oral health education virtually for school year 2021 – 2022.

Hurricane Harvey impacted service delivery in the Fall of 2017 with overwhelming need across the City of Houston. The Houston Food Bank services were necessarily redirected to the community at large. The Houston Food Bank continued to provide services through their *Backpack Buddies* program at all three campuses providing perishable and nonperishable food items in backpacks to eligible students at the end of each week to support families throughout the weekend. More than 30 families were regularly served in this manner each week during the 2018-2019 school year. The Food Bank truck routinely visited two of the ECC campuses providing food distribution to over 280 families. One of the campuses also participated in the” Milk and Cereal” program which is an extension of the Food Bank. The school nurse at each of the three campuses attended the Food Bank conference at the beginning of the school year 2019-2020 and received information regarding the various Food Bank programs. During Hurricane Harvey and the COVID -19 Pandemic School Nurses extended their nutrition services outreach by collaborating more closely with district-based services, scheduling nutrition education classes with the district’s dietician for the remainder of the project time school year 2021 -2022. The *My Plate* curriculum also filled the gap in nutrition education.

COVID-19 mitigation protocols severely restricted gatherings and visitors in the schools impacting the physical activity component for parents and prevented schools from scheduling site-based cooking classes for parents. There was also a lack of parent/staff volunteers to maintain the school garden during this time. Urban Harvest was approved as a community provider participating in the PEAS project with two of the Early Childhood Centers initiating services in February 2018 in which an instructor worked with the classroom teacher using hands-on lessons in the school garden integrating science/nature/gardening and nutrition activities to reinforce subject areas in science, reading, and math. These two campuses had an existing school garden in place. The third campus had its initial consult in October 2018 to evaluate for a future garden which followed with construction of the garden bed as well as initiation of classroom curriculum. Gardening services were completely halted during the Spring of 2021 due to the pandemic and were not resumed with Urban Harvest during the 2021-2022 school year due to lack of approval.

School Demographics:





6. **PUBLICATIONS/PRODUCTS:** A wide variety of approaches were used to increase program visibility, awareness, and participation. A specially designed tablecloth, pop up banner and polo shirt with the PEAS logo were provided to the campus service providers to display during PEAS activities on their campuses. The participating schools were provided with PEAS T-shirts with community provider logos for parents who participated in Walking Clubs and Zumba classes. The nurse and PE teachers wore their PEAS shirt during special events and distributed stress balls in the shape of the PEA with the PEAS logo to increase visibility of the program. Aprons were utilized as incentives for parents participating in the nutrition/cooking classes. Students received water bottles at the three campuses at the end of each school year as a reminder to keep active during summer months.

7. **DISSEMINATION/UTILIZATION OF RESULTS:** The three school nurses participated in the Texas Action for Healthy Kids Fall Summit in 2019 and presented the PEAS project during their tabletop

discussions. The three ECCs also displayed their PEAS tablecloth during special events at their campuses (Open House, parent night, reading/math fairs) and handed community partner information and discussed activities available to students/parents. Prior to each PEAS event, the principal would conduct campus wide parent call outs with reminders and encouragement to participate in the PEAS activities. A power point presentation was presented by the nurses at the three ECC during the annual PEAS Board meeting illustrating their PEAS activities on their campuses as well as getting input from the board members on methods and strategies for meeting goals/objectives.

8. FUTURE PLANS/SUSTAINABILITY: Texas Children's Hospital (TCH) mobile clinic and City of Houston Bureau of Dental services have a long-standing history of partnering with Houston ISD and are both committed to continue providing on-site health services to the three participating Early Childhood Centers (ECC) and the neighboring feeder schools. The gardening and nutrition component of the PEAS project will continue in collaboration with Houston ISD Nutrition Services Food and Agriculture Literacy Department utilizing the *Get Growing Houston* interdisciplinary program which inspires students to have more than a consumer relationship with food through the development of critical thinking and experimental learning. Students are taught how food is produced and distributed, as well as the impact of food and agriculture on personal, family and community health. *Get Growing Houston* also operates the Food and Agriculture Literacy Center (Mykawa Farm) as an educational tool to support campus-based nutrition and agriculture learning. The center provides teachers the space and opportunity to provide hands-on-learning experiences for students to better understand concepts related to food systems, ecosystems, and the impact of technology and climate on the production of food. Two of the feeder schools in the Fonwood ECC feeder pattern have existing gardens on their campuses and are looking forward to partnering with the Nutrition department and participate in the *Get Growing Houston* program. To sustain the nutrition component of the PEAS in a POD project school nurses currently participating in the PEAS project held a meeting with their feeder campuses school nurses to discuss the implementation of the MyPlate curriculum on their campus for the incoming Kindergarten students, who had previous

exposure to this curriculum. Each of the 3 feeder elementary schools agreed to implement this component of the PEAS project with support and guidance from the three school nurses currently participating in the PEAS project. Educational supplies including MyPlate bulletin board kit, MyPlate Meal Plate, MyPlate Stickers and Eyewall peel and stick images (exercise, hygiene, nutrition) were distributed. The *Chop Chop* magazine will continue to be distributed to the participating ECC during the Summer 2022 as well as Fall/Winter 2022 for the upcoming school year 2022-2023. In addition, the neighboring feeder elementary campuses will be able to borrow the electronic pedometers from the ECC for use by PE teachers during their physical education classes or with parent activity groups (walking club, Zumba) classes.

ANNOTATION

The focus of this project is early childhood development and school readiness. School nurse will facilitate medical home care coordination with case management. As well as on site dental care for students with prior consent. In addition, nutrition education for students and families in conjunction with planned activities to address overweight/obesity in the school community, with emphasis in early childhood prevention. The services addressed in the PEAS project have empower each campus to serve as a pod where students and families can receive medical care from a mobile clinic, dental care, nutrition classes and exposure to books and physical activity. All services are provided with respect to the culture and linguistic needs of the students and families.

KEY WORDS

Access to dental care, access to health care, consent, nutrition, obesity, physical activity, school-based programs, school nurses, screening. Early Childhood Centers (ECC), Mobile clinic.