LIT (Leaders in Training) Internship Guide for PSESD Staff 2017-18

Creating and supporting meaningful, transformative high school student internships at Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD)

The purpose of this guide is to support PSESD staff to develop and implement meaningful, transformative high school student internships. It is designed to be used by staff stand-alone or in consultation with the LIT Advisory.

Based on the recommendations of the 2015-17 and 2016-17 PSESD high school student interns, PSESD has formed LIT (Leaders in Training) to support high school students and PSESD staff in internships that support PSESD’s commitment to racial equity. LIT is organized to support summer internships, at least for now.

LIT is staffed by consultants Roslyn Kagy and Marc Bautista and Cassandra O’Francia and Sarita Siqueiros Thornburg in Strategy, Evaluation & Learning. It is led by the LIT Advisory (Jeannette Belaski, Marques Gittens, Aurora Huerta, Kyla Lackie, Sarita, and Cassandra).

# Special thanks

This guide and the LIT program would not exist without the contributions and creative thinking of PSESD student interns. High school interns with PSESD’s 2015-16 Strategic Design Qualitative Research Internship (facilitated by Marques Gittens and Shayla Brown) laid the groundwork for this guide. High school interns with PSESD’s 2016-17 Student Involvement Internship (facilitated by Roslyn Kagy and Marc Bautista) built on the 2015-16 intern recommendations to develop this guide to help inform meaningful, mutually beneficial PSESD internships. Much gratitude to these committed interns for their wisdom, expertise, and guidance.

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| **2015-16 Strategic Design Qualitative Research Interns** | **2016-17 Student Involvement Interns** |
| Celine Nguyen, Kent Meridian HS, 10th Grade | Anisa Robinson, Garfield High School, 9th Grade |
| Diksha Khadaka, Foster HS, 12th Grade | Casey Braaten, Franklin-Pierce HS, 11th Grade |
| Easter Tuialuuluu, Big Picture HS, 9th Grade | Celine Nguyen, Kent Meridian HS/Green River College, 11th Grade |
| Farheen Khalid, Kent Meridian HS, 10th Grade | Gabriel Lagmay, Highline College |
| Karnveer Gill, Kent Meridian HS, 10th Grade | Jody Wong, Renton HS, 12th Grade |
| Lydia Sweet, Foster HS, 9th Grade | Karnveer Gill, Kent Meridian HS, 11th Grade |
| Mikayla Enebrad, Kent Meridian HS, 10th Grade | (Kaui) Umi Terukina, Mt. Rainier HS, 11th Grade |
| Purnima Kafley, Foster HS, 12th Grade | Khaim Vassar-Fontenot, Chief Sealth HS, 10th Grade |
| Rahel Ambachew, Mount Rainier HS, 10th Grade | Luna Orozco Jalbert, Sammamish HS, 10th Grade |
|  | Phuong Vu, Foster HS, 12th Grade |
|  | Sierra Sellers, Garfield HS |
|  | Tai Anthony McMillan, Renton HS |
|  | Talullah Cook, Kentlake HS |

# Why LIT?

* By having youth voice in programs and activities, adults can begin addressing actual needs and concerns of youth.
* Offering youth the opportunity to give feedback about existing programs can strengthen the outcomes of the program when adults begin addressing the concerns of the youth and working with them to improve programmatic outcomes.
* Creativity, energy, enthusiasm and innovative ideas are all benefits to adults when youth are collaborating as decision-makers.
* Adults can be energized by the fresh perspective youth have. Youth can create new ways of looking at problems. Youth often can see to the core of issues without cluttering them with past experiences or what or isn’t possible.
* It models the PSESD’s goal of “both/and” thinking and helps youth and adults move towards collective decision-making about education issues in our region.

# What is LIT?

LIT is a program of support coordinated and implemented across PSESD departments. Our operating assumption is that intentional supports for PSESD staff and students are necessary for meaningful, transformative high school student internships, and that inviting student internships into our work is necessary to becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization and also valuing and respecting youth voice. It is about including those impacted in the decisions that will affect them.

## Supports for students

* Orientation (April - May)
* Learning community of students (meets bi-monthly)
* Navigating professional environment supports
* Weekly check-ins with LIT partners and Internship Facilitator (Roslyn)
* Collecting feedback on students’ experiences

## Supports for staff

* Information session (January 23, 2018)
* Outreach and recruitment of interns
* Orientation (May 2018) (includes further development of internship with students)
* Summer learning group
* Funding for student stipends (@$15/hour)
* Shared cubicle space if needed
* Support for developing a project based on department need and capacity to provide support
* Determining if an internship program would work for your department

# Human Resources Role

Human Resources will continue to be our agency resource for reviewing potential internships and completing hiring paperwork. HR is the lead for all hiring in the agency; LIT is a support to staff and students to grow meaningful, transformative high school internships.

# LIT Ecosystem

LIT is energized by the contributions of many. Staff can be a Partner or Contributor, or join the LIT Advisory.

LIT

LIT Squad

LIT Peer Mentors

LIT Facilitator

LIT Partners

LIT Contributor

LIT Advisory

Human Resources

## Roles

**LIT Peer Mentors:** Returning students who help select, train, and mentor new students

**LIT Partners:** PSESD staff who develop and host student internships

**LIT Contributor:** PSESD staff who don’t host an internship, but contribute in other ways including:

* Donate cubicle space
* Fund an intern
* Lend a laptop
* Provide a short-term project to an intern in partnership with the LIT Partner

**LIT Squad:** New student interns, grades 10, 11, and 12

**LIT Facilitator:** Currently Roslyn Kagy, providing extra capacity and overseeing the LIT Peer Mentors and consulting on the development and implementation of LIT

**LIT Advisory:** PSESD staff who collaborate to develop and implement LIT in partnership with the LIT Peer Mentors. The LIT Advisory is open to all staff.

**Human Resources:** Helps staff ensure that all internships comply with applicable regulations and that hiring paperwork is completed. All internships are developed in partnership with HR.

# How to use this guide

High school student interns were invited to develop recommendations for high quality student internships at PSESD. This guide presents their recommendations to staff in their words. Staff are invited to hear these student perspectives and apply them to their planning and implementation of high school student internships. The text of this guide comes from the 2016-17 High School Student Involvement Internship participants, with some supplemental additions by the 2017-18 LIT Advisory.

## Background on 2016-17 internship

The interns shared their experience developing their recommendations:

*In March of the internship we met with staff from the PSESD to learn more about their work. We had a lot of questions about the PSESD and their departments. We wanted to know what projects they lead, what their day-to-day looks like, and how they currently do or don’t work with youth. We also talked about how they would benefit from more direct contact with youth.*

*We learned that most of the staff at the PSESD don’t have direct contact with young people. Most staff at the PSESD support adults…. And the adults support youth. Most staff we talked to said they would benefit a lot from working more with youth and that they would like to collaborate more to develop projects. We also learned that some departments are more prepared to work with youth than others.*

The interns also reflected on how their internship reflected the Transforming Institutional Values

**Collaboration & Cooperation**

* *We designed our dream schools using only team members with our SAME personality. We learned that it is hard to develop ideas if you don’t have diverse skills and values in the room*
* *Each week we did multiple team building exercises where we learned how to cooperate and collaborate and communicate individually, in pairs, and as a whole team*
* *We presented at a regional conference for over 600 students and families. We divided in teams and had to collaborate to develop a curriculum & plan for our workshops*
* *In the final 4 weeks we divided into two teams to do research and develop our presentations and recommendations. This allowed us to take on new roles & work independently and collaboratively*

**Abundant Worldview**

* *We met with middle school students to broaden our worldview and make sure the decisions we made were informed by more people than just us*
* *The PSESD exists to serve young people…If you make decisions about young people on a regular basis you should be in regular contact with young people (at the PSESD and at our districts and schools) We need checks/balances for how the PSESD is using their resources and power, and how the adults in power at school districts across the region are using their resources and power to make sure that resources are being used responsibly*

**Both/And Thinking**

*We started with very broad brainstorms after each project and presentation. Then we collectively narrowed down our ideas. We started with MANY ideas instead of ONE idea. We believe there are many forms for increasing youth voice, and many forms for successful internships*

**Transparent Communication & Decision-Making**

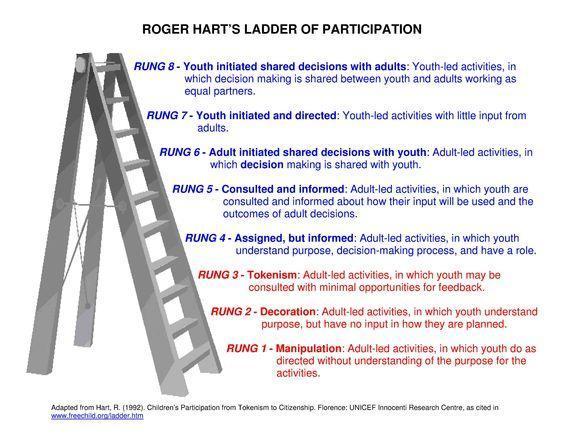
* Every week at the end of our sessions we gave feedback to Roslyn & Marc. We had to share what we like and what we would change about each session. This helped us shape our internship & our leaders modeled transparency
* When we developed our workshop for CollegeCon we had to plan and prep as a team and then make a lot of in-the-moment decisions when we were facilitating to make sure the workshop was responsive to the middle schooler in our sessions
* Our final presentation was designed to share our learning and thinking and recommendations with the Board. We hope to inspire you to develop a plan for including youth as stakeholders at the PSESD who can shape policy, decision making, and funding decisions. By including youth in different areas of the PSESD you will be more accountable and transparent about your decision-making processes & increase communication & trust in the community

# History of High School Student Interns at PSESD

High school interns have been part of PSESD’s work for some time, within programs and agency-wide. The internships have mostly been adult-directed. However, the PSESD could further enable youth voice by commissioning youth-directed projects and supporting youth-led outreach and engagement, as well as implementing diverse internships connected to PSESD staff, and equipping youth with opportunities to provide feedback. This would result in the PSESD staff working with youth frequently to inform their work. These proposals would empower youth voice to a level of direct involvement in the PSESD’s impact.

# Ladder of Youth Participation - where PSESD internships generally fit

Youth voice is the distinct ideas, opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and actions of young people as a collective body. Roger Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation breaks down youth participation into 8 steps on a ladder. Each step includes different roles and outcomes for youth and adults. The students discussed their own experiences with youth voice and youth leadership to see which types were most common, and which types youth enjoy the most, and which types result in the most CHANGE.



Many of the students had experience with many types of youth leadership throughout their lives: from level one (kindergarten), youth level 8 (youth organizing). The top of the ladder leads to youth empowerment. The bottom of the ladder can lead to youth oppression.

Karnveer, a Junior at Kent Meridian, who participated in the 2015-16 was also part of the 2016-17 internship. His account of his experience is below:

*So I was a part of the PSESD internship last year, which lasted about 3 months. There was about 15 of us, with 2 adults that directed us and led us into the direction that they wanted. We focused our internship on attendance and graduation rates and how we could improve them. We used survey and focus groups in order to gather data from students from our high school, to understand the problem. We then presented our findings to the board, and asked for accountability from the board, in order to ensure that our ideas were heard/executed. About a month after our presentation, we all received a letter which told us what the board did with our recommendations. Youth didn’t have a lot of choices in this internship last year, and the internship was designed and led by adults. Youth shaped the recommendations. Last year this internship was a level 5.*

Sierra, a freshman at Garfield, shared her experiences with a different program:

*I am in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the Young People’s Division from about the ages of 2-24 or when graduate college. We are mainly Youth led and have the adults support which makes this a level 8 on the ladder. All of the international kids meet every 4 years to determine the issues youth are facing, what are priorities are, and to plan for the next years. Youth lead all of this work, but the adults are there for supervision & support. Our goal is to build responsibility and leadership and develop our skills. We have regional, national, international and also local projects and we focus on social justice. This program is a level 8 on the ladder*

The students recommended that PSESD high school internships be on a level five or six on the ladder at this time.

# Advice for working with youth

During the internship, the students talked about how they as youth are treated and they came up with things they want and don't want while working with adults.

* Don't use youth as decoration, as photos on your brochure or to present to the board once a year.
* Internships should be mutually beneficial: They should transform PSESD practices, and also build skills for youth.
* Youth contributions need to be honored and recognized: They should be paid or stipended or given school credit.
* Youth voice opportunities should be thoughtfully planned and supported: They shouldn’t be last minute or unorganized. Youth should be contributing in meaningful ways.
* Shared power and respectful interactions between youth and adults: Youth shouldn’t be treated as little kids or cute or funny, they should be valued as members of the team with real experiences and valuable contributions.
* Relationships matter: Youth will participate if adults are respectful and make connections.
* Clear communication: Interns want to know what they are doing and why. They want to be supported. Don’t give them a project and walk away.
* Projects with clear goals and timelines: Youth are balancing families, school, jobs, and extracurricular activities…they want to know what to expect from the internship before it starts.
* Internships should provide youth with opportunities to take on leadership roles and not just do task-oriented work.
* LIT partners should provide support, resources, and answers: Interns want to be interns to learn!
* Respect and trust youth leadership: Youth have been a part of many adult-led projects & programs their whole life, and know what does & doesn’t work! Let them help make your programs stronger.
* Provide opportunities for feedback: Interns want to make opportunities for youth bigger and better, and they need a way to give feedback about what the experience was like.

# What students want out of an internship

* Students want a strong orientation: Strong introduction of what the internship entails.
* A mentor: Somebody that interns can talk to and ask for advice from.
* Professionalism skills: Youth want a program that will help them develop a strong work ethic, learn responsibility and accountability, and build collaboration and communication skills.
* Student want opportunities to share and present: Give interns the chance to share their voice, present their findings and research, and do interactive projects.
* Students want lots of learning: Chances to learn new skills, and improve existing ones, but also take on new challenges - real world learning is important!
* Students want accountability: Youth want to get updates on the progress of intern projects after the internship is over, and they want to be in the know about how their projects are being put to use and the results they are producing.

# Internship Structure and Model: What students want

The PSESD should structure and model the internship to fit the needs of both parties. The structure of the internship should be:

* Internships need to be accessible and low barrier: The application process can’t be so restrictive, and supplying Orca cards or transportation can help more students participate.
* It should include specific department internships so students can go deep into one area.
* It should be inclusive and collaborative: Invite youth to PSESD meetings and events and vice-versa with invitations to staff to intern meetings (not just a separate project when staff aren’t present).
* Youth leading projects: Give youth responsibility to use what they learned to take charge in a project.
* High Schools students mentor Middle School students: It would be cool to have interns mentor middle schoolers on college access as part of a project for the PSESD.
* Students who have completed an internship could take on a leadership role in a second year of the internship and maybe help lead year one interns or help with orientations or trainings - helping Roslyn & Marc support the new interns.
* Share skills and training: PSESD representatives can serve as mentors and give interns an inside look as to what it’s like working at the PSESD

# The internship Model that should be used

* Have a group of diverse youth from different backgrounds, ages, schools, and school experiences to lead youth projects that they feel would help problems facing their school and community.
* Interns liked having students from many schools and districts, different ages, genders, races, languages, and abilities.
* The internship should be action oriented: For example students could lead focus groups to collect information and data for the PSESD or help develop district- wide communications and outreach to students around financial aid or college.

# Roles

## Supervisor Roles

* Supervisor should hold at least one orientation before the internship begins. It can focus on training about dress code and proper behaviors at work, paperwork and processes.
* Supervisors or internship leads should also provide a series of team-building and skill building activities similar to what we did in the 2016-17 internship prior to the internship starting.
* Offer job shadow so interns can know what employees do in the real working environment.
* Assign different types of projects to interns. For example, a one-person project or a group project.
* Invite Interns to participate in “in-the-field” work. If the LIT Partner is going to a community meeting or giving a presentation invite the intern to come with.
* Let interns work with multiple managers, so they can receive a wide range of feedback.
* Give ongoing supportive feedback and advice on how well the intern does and how to improve.
* Ask interns to write evaluation on the meeting content, and the project instruction.
* Meet with interns on a weekly basis to check-in, provide feedback, encourage and give interns reminders when needed.
* Provide an opportunity for Interns to meet with their supervisor/team at the end of the internship to do a reflection & give feedback.

## Student Roles

* Interns will commit to complete the entire internship.
* Interns will ask questions when they don’t understand something or need help with project.
* Interns will actively participate in every activity.
* Interns will show respect to supervisor and other interns.
* Interns will be punctual and try not to miss more than 3 meetings. If they must miss meetings, trainings, etc. they will communicate with their LIT Partner.
* Use this internship as an opportunity to build and refine skills.
* Build connections and network in the field of education.
* Participate in a final meeting to provide reflection & feedback on internship.
* Intern will independently complete and turn in their timesheets by the last day of each month.

# Logistics and Scheduling

## Logistics

Working out the logistics of an internship is key to making sure that the process goes smoothly for everyone. Here are some of the ideas students have for the internship to run smoother and improve experiences:

* Easy and more frequent payment method: If you were to incorporate a payment method where interns are paid on a bi-weekly system, and set up features like direct deposit near the beginning of the internship, you’ll see an overall boost in interest and engagement from the interns.
* If interns cannot receive payment they should receive CTE credit for their work with the PSESD.
* Accommodating Laptops: The 2016-17 interns found that the internship requires a lot of work at a computer. It would beneficial if interns were equipped with laptops so they can take their work on the go with them if needed. This would also help during actual internship meetings when multiple people need to share or co-edit files with each other. Tablets were challenging to use for the 2016-17 internship because the internship projects required extensive use of a keyboard and Google Docs.
* Minimizing Paperwork: The interns found at the beginning of the internship, there was a lot of paperwork involved. We understand that it’s necessary, but finding a way to potentially minimize the paperwork and/or time needed to complete the paperwork is important.

## Scheduling

* Multiple Phases of internships: For some students, the 2016-17 time requirement has been a struggle to balance out with the activities they have currently. Consider the possibility of having two internships; one during the winter and one during the summer. This would help people who know their schedule best, or can make the adjustments to their schedules in the future to reserve time for the internship.
* Integrate Interns into the PSESD one weekday of the month to make the internship meaningful.

# Sample Engaging Projects

What follows are some example high school intern project descriptions.

**Puget Sound College & Career Network (PSCCN): College Funding Communications Mini-Internship**

Join PSCCN this summer to advise our upcoming campaign to encourage more high school seniors to complete the financial aid forms for college. By August, we plan to have finished materials to share with schools and programs including stickers, banners, and posters. We want your feedback on design ideas (we are working with a professional designer), campaign strategies, and your help collecting feedback from more young people throughout the summer.

***Family engagement in postsecondary:***

How does your family get information? How do you recommend families get informed? What avenues of communications would you recommend?

Project: Outreach, recommendations for next steps

Details:

- 10-15 hours including some hours at the PSESD Renton Office and some at your own location.

- Work is mostly independent

- June 27 from 1-4pm in-person meeting at PSESD Renton Office

- Weekly in-person dates in July, flexible depending on your and our schedules (during business hours of - 9am-4pm between Monday-Friday)

- Hours paid hourly, paycheck to be received monthly

## For more information

Please contact Sarita Siqueiros Thornburg (sthornburg@psesd.org) or Cassandra O’Francia (cofrancia@psesd.org)