



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Open Doors Summer Pilot Evaluation

Foundational Data on Summer Programming and Post-Resident Youth

***Prepared for the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) by
Education Northwest***

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Introduction

Open Doors Youth Reengagement is the “statewide dropout retrieval system” (RCW 28A.175.100) for young people between the ages 16 and 21 in Washington state. The program operates in more than half of all districts statewide (Hodara et al., 2023) and the number of enrolled students continues to grow (Petrokubi et al., 2024). Open Doors serves a diverse student population with a high proportion impacted by disparities (Hodara et al., 2023) and a disproportionate number having previously experienced juvenile detention or incarceration (Shannon & Paradise, 2021; Petrokubi et al., 2024).

Washington House Bill #5187, Sec. 522, appropriates funds for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to conduct a summer program pilot with up to 12 Open Doors Youth Reengagement programs in the 2023–24 academic year. The pilot prioritizes schools and programs serving high numbers of youth who have previously experienced institutional education while in juvenile detention or incarceration—referred to here as “post-resident youth.” (PRY).

OSPI contracted with [Education Northwest](#) to evaluate the Open Doors Summer Pilot. This report (updating the original delivered in March 2024) is the first deliverable of this contract. The final evaluation reports will be available in June 2025.

Drawing on multiple data sources and a review of the national evidence base, this report includes:

- A summary of research on promising practices and outcomes related to summer programming, reengagement of post-resident youth, and barrier reduction
- Foundational data on the reach of Open Doors summer programming (2021–2023) and services for post-resident youth (2015–2023) across the state
- Statewide provider and partner perspectives on promising practices, opportunities, and challenges related to summer reengagement programming and reengagement of post-resident youth
- Data on the summer 2023 pilot sites, students served, and insights from providers and partners

A note about language

To align with the legislation that funded the Open Doors Summer Pilot, (House Bill #5187, Sec. 522) in this report we use the term “post-resident youth” to refer to a person who is under the age of 21, a former resident of an institutional education (IE) facility, and who may be a public-school student

or a person who is eligible to be a public-school student but is not enrolled in a school or otherwise receiving basic education services (RCW 28A.190.005).

Consistent language is necessary in reporting on work related to this legislation. However, we acknowledge that the term “post-resident youth” is limiting. The young people we talk about in this report are much more than the labels we apply to them. Therefore, we use [person-first language](#) as much as possible to communicate our respect for the dignity of all people. In the final evaluation report, we will include the perspectives and voices of Open Doors students, including post-resident youth themselves.

Policy context for the Open Doors Summer Pilot

Institutional education in Washington state

In Washington state, school-age students who reside in secure facilities are entitled to “basic education services” (WA State Law, RCW 28A.190.005, Findings—Intent—2021 c 164). OSPI supports school districts and educational service districts (ESDs) that provide education services in a variety of settings. These include four residential habilitation centers, two long-term juvenile institutions, six community facilities, 21 county detention centers, Department of Corrections facilities, and county and city jails. The Institutional Education Advocates Program supports young people in the process of transitioning from secure facilities into community-based learning settings or jobs. Education advocates work to eliminate barriers, develop educational plans, monitor academic progress, connect students to resources, and collaborate with school district staff members (Daniels & Lowe, 2020).

While the Washington state legislature has successfully implemented reforms that have reduced the overall number of young people who are detained, challenges in institutional education remain. Noting in a joint report to the legislature that the graduation rate for young people in Washington who spend time in detention is 14 percent (Daniels & Lowe, 2022), the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Secretary of Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families lay out the need for improved educational services for youth in detention. These recommendations include improvements in support for young people as they transition from detention into community-based schools and related learning programs such as Open Doors.

Open Doors Youth Reengagement

In 2010, state legislation (ESSHB 1418) directed OSPI to develop “a statewide dropout reengagement system and to provide appropriate educational opportunities and access to services

for students age sixteen to twenty-one who have dropped out of high school or are not accumulating sufficient credits to reasonably complete a high school diploma in a public school before the age of twenty-one” (RCW 28A.175.100).

OSPI oversees the administration of Open Doors programs. As outlined in the Open Doors Youth Reengagement Theory of Action (appendix A), these programs are intended to support innovative community partnerships to reach youth who are either not enrolled in high school or who are not on track to complete high school by age 21. Districts may operate their own program or partner with diverse providers (e.g., colleges, education service districts, for-profit entities, or community-based organizations) to offer instructional and comprehensive student support, including case management. Students may earn a GED and participate in postsecondary or work readiness education (GED-plus); earn a high school diploma; obtain career training; and/or earn college credits, certificates, or a two-year degree.

Programs receive about \$959 per month for each student it can demonstrate it is supporting in achieving academic progress. This means the program can claim a total of up to \$9,597 per student over 10 months.

Open Doors students

Young people enroll in Open Doors for a variety of reasons—experiences of negative school climate and bias, insufficient mental health resources, obligations to care for family members or children, or a desire for an online learning environment (Petrokubi et al., 2023). Historically, Open Doors has served a vulnerable population of young people and a disproportionate number of students furthest from justice. Nearly 80 percent of Open Doors students experienced economic insecurity and half identify as people of color. The program serves a higher percentage of male students and students eligible for additional educational services and supports than does the state’s public education system overall (Hodara et al., 2023).

Open Doors also serves a disproportionate percentage of post-resident youth compared with high schools statewide, as discussed later in this report. Given the high number of post-resident youth in Open Doors, (Shannon & Paradise, 2021), OSPI made the following recommendations in their report to the state legislature to improve outcomes for post-resident youth and all young people who participate in reengagement programs:

1. Strengthen the capacity of education advocates to collaborate with Open Doors case managers.
2. Fund Open Doors programs at a 1.2 Annual Average Full-Time Equivalent so all students in Open Doors programs have access to year-round programming and programming is fully available to post-resident youth.

- Allocate barrier reduction funding for Open Doors programs to allow resources to flow directly to meeting student needs such as transportation and fees.

Open Doors Summer Pilot

In 2022, legislative action (House Bill #5187, Sec. 522) resulted in proviso funding to OSPI for the recommendations outlined in the report mentioned above (Shannon & Paradise, 2021). The purpose of the Open Doors Summer Pilot is to provide summer academic and career skill support to students, especially post-resident youth. The pilot is an opportunity to connect systems involved in the education and care of youth during and after detention (see systems in figure 1).

The summer pilot project spans a single fiscal biennium, resulting in two years of funding. For the first year, OSPI identified five pilot sites to implement in summer 2023. An additional five pilot sites were funded for summer 2024, for a total of 10 sites in summer 2024.

Figure 1. Systems for the education and care of Washington youth during and after detention

Institution-Based		Community-Based
<p>OSPI Institutional Education OSPI oversees nine ESDs and 25 school districts to provide institutional education.</p> <p>Education Advocates support youth in transitioning into community-based learning settings and/or jobs.</p>	<p>DCYF Juvenile Rehabilitation DCYF operates three statewide secure residential facilities and eight community juvenile rehabilitation facilities.</p> <p>Transition Specialists support youth in transitioning into IE and back into community-based settings.</p>	<p>OSPI Open Doors Youth Reengagement OSPI oversees districts, ESDs, colleges, CBOs, and for-profit providers of reengagement programs for youth 16–21. Open Doors programs receive funds for 10 months of instruction and individual case management.</p> <p>Seven percent of Open Doors students experienced IE.</p>

CBO = community-based organization. DCYF = Department of Children, Youth, and Families. ESD = Educational Service District. IE = institutional education. OSPI = Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Summer pilot strategies

The Open Doors Summer Pilot is designed to encourage programs to innovate across the three key recommendations outlined in the legislative report cited above (Shannon & Paradise, 2021) that are expected to result in positive outcomes for all students, especially post-resident youth.

Summer learning

Summer pilot sites received additional state funds beyond the 10-month student apportionment allocation to provide academic and career programming for students in July and August. The specific funding amounts vary by the size of the program and sites are required to pass through

some funding to community partners. Summer 2024 pilot sites received planning grants to support the development of community partnerships to enhance summer programming focused on preparing students for postsecondary networking and success.

Service to post-resident youth

OSPI invited programs that serve a high percentage of post-resident youth to participate in the summer pilots. In 2024, OSPI provided multiple statewide trainings to enhance provider skills in supporting post-resident youth.

Barrier reduction

Pilot sites are allowed to use state funds during July and August to address student barriers to participating in education or work. Barrier reduction funds may be used for academics (e.g., testing fees, credential costs), clothing (e.g., work boots), food, or transportation (e.g., bus pass). These state funds are not typically available to Open Doors programs during the school year.

National perspectives

The evaluation team conducted a multi-disciplinary literature review to uplift evidence-based practices to serve post-resident youth and youth historically marginalized by education systems. This research informs the design of the summer pilot evaluation.

However, research in this area is limited. In our review we found little information on practices and outcomes at the intersection of youth reengagement summer programming, barrier reduction, and post-resident youth. There is a need for studies that examine the relationship between specific strategies and outcomes and that emphasize the assets and perspectives of young people impacted by these systems. This project can contribute to the field nationally in both areas.

Looking across three different bodies of literature—summer learning, education of post-resident youth, and barrier reduction—**we see evidence that reducing barriers to learning can promote positive academic outcomes and overall well-being** (figure 2). There is a modest body of evidence that year-round programming and barrier reduction support are beneficial. While not an exhaustive list, examples of research and evaluation projects with promising outcomes include:

- United Way (2021) found that Open Doors programs that offered year-round programming fostered student engagement and connection, particularly during the pandemic. However, programs needed to garner outside resources to support summer programming as OSPI only

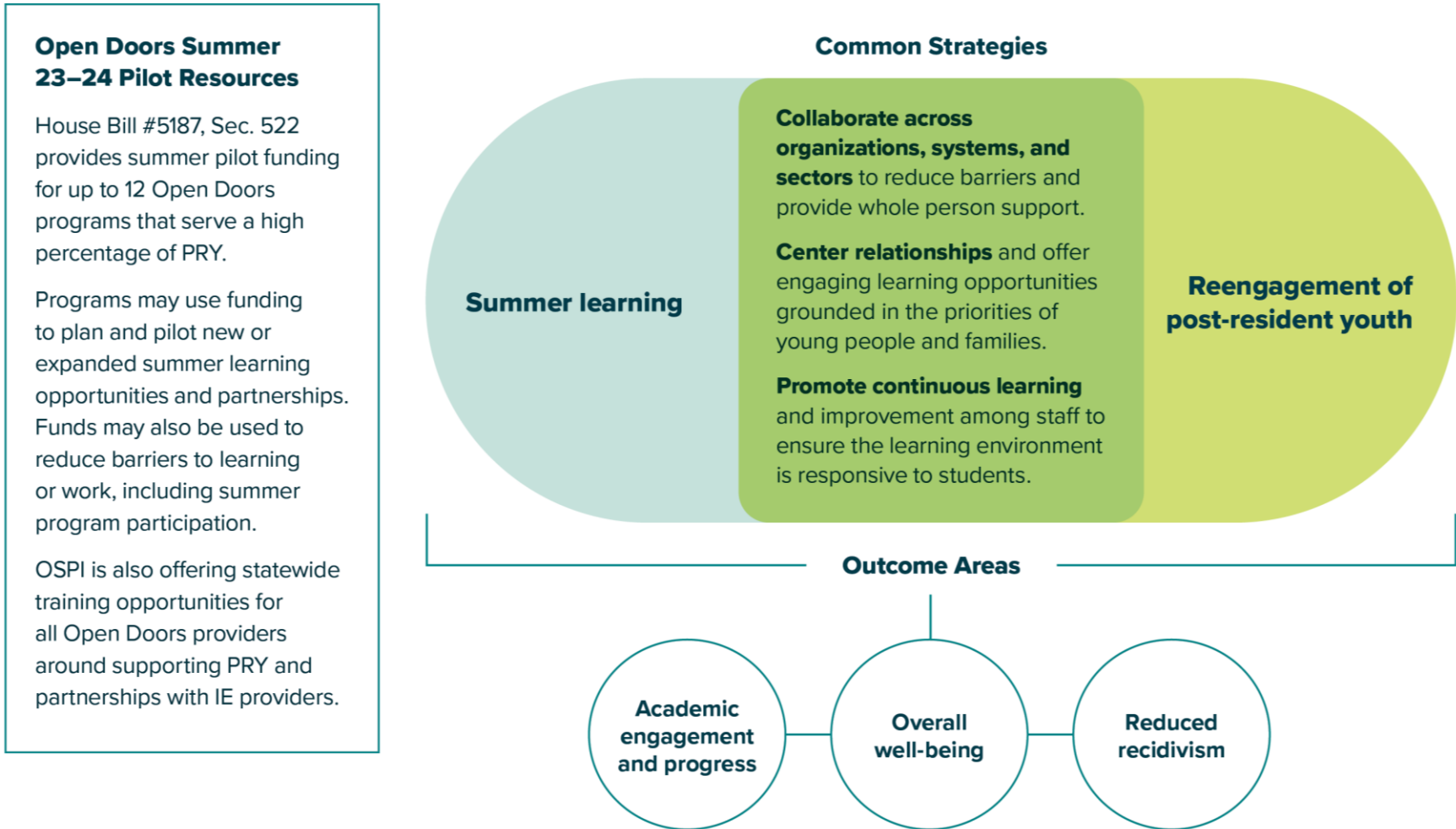
funded ten months of service to students. Therefore, programs spoke of the need for 12 months of continuous funding to meet all students' needs (United Way, 2021).

- Modestino and Paulsen (2023) found that students who participated in a summer youth employment program were less likely to disengage and more likely to graduate high school.
- Gelber et al. (2016) found that participating in a summer youth employment program reduced the likelihood of incarceration.
- There is emerging evidence that participation in integrated student support in K–12 education may be associated with decreases in grade retention and dropout and increases in attendance, math achievement, reading and English language arts achievement, and overall GPA (Moore & Emig, 2014; Moore et al., 2017).
- An evaluation of the impact of basic needs support for incarcerated youth found that access to reentry services reduced recidivism (Calleja et al., 2016).

In a Road Map Project report (Crumé et al., 2020) on why young adults in the Seattle Education Access Open Doors program leave school before completing a high school diploma, young people commonly identified lack of access to basic needs services and supports as a reason for disengagement. Research in postsecondary settings has shown that basic needs support that addresses college students' food, housing, childcare, transportation, mental and physical health care, and other basic needs is associated with positive outcomes for students. These include improved retention and credential completion (Valentine & Deal, 2023; Riggs & Hodara, 2024), course credit completion (Daugherty & Berglund, 2018; Riggs & Hodara, 2024) and passing developmental education courses (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2021).

Looking across these three bodies of literature, we identify three common strategies that are expected to promote the types of positive outcomes described above (figure 2). See appendix B for more detail on the research related to these strategies. Throughout this report, we highlight areas where the perspectives and experiences expressed by Open Doors providers align with the promising practices associated with these strategies.

Figure 2. Open Doors Summer Pilot strategies supported by research evidence



IE = Institutional education. PRY = Post-resident youth.

Source: Education Northwest summary of an interdisciplinary literature review on summer learning, reengagement of PRY, and barrier reduction.

Evaluation and report overview

The Open Doors Summer Pilot is a unique opportunity for the state of Washington to learn how investments in summer learning, barrier reduction support, and intentional services for post-resident youth may impact student experiences and outcomes. This initial report is part of a larger evaluation. This report provides foundational systems-level data about the state of summer programming and services to post-resident youth prior to the start of the pilot, as well as student participation data and insights from the summer 2023 pilot. Full results from the evaluation of summer 2023 and summer 2024 pilots will be available in June 2025.

Evaluation goals and timeline

The goals of the overall evaluation are to support learning about the pilot's impact by:

1. Providing foundational systems-level data on the **state of summer programming and services to post-resident youth** across the Open Doors system prior to the summer pilot.
2. Identifying **promising practices and challenges** related to summer programming, barrier reduction, and support for post-resident youth.
3. Assessing the **benefits of summer programming and barrier reduction support** for summer pilot students with various lived experiences and educational backgrounds, including post-resident youth.
4. Providing **useful and accessible evaluation products** to inform future policy and practice related to summer programming, barrier reduction, and support for post-resident youth.

Figure 3 outlines the overall timeline for evaluation activities. The final evaluation reports available in June 2025 will use mixed-methods data (e.g., K–12 data from CEDARS, qualitative data from site visits, interviews with post-resident youth) to describe progress and outcomes of the ten summer pilot sites in summer 2023 and summer 2024. The final evaluation will be informed by the input of an advisory committee of staff members and students from pilot sites.

Figure 3. Open Doors Summer Pilot evaluation activities and timeline (fall 2023–spring 2025)



Report overview

Report questions

This report primarily addresses the first and second goals of the evaluation and seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is known about promising practices and outcomes for summer reengagement programs and reengagement programs serving post-resident youth?
2. To what extent did the Open Doors system provide summer programming and programming for post-resident youth between school years 2015–16 and 2022–23?
3. How do different members and partners of the Open Doors system describe the opportunities, challenges, and practices of summer programming and programming for post-resident youth?
4. What are the identities, school experiences, and prior academic outcomes of students, including post-resident youth, who participated in the summer 2023 pilot programs?

New data collection

To understand Open Doors provider and partner perspectives on summer programming and services to post-resident youth, we collected the qualitative (focus groups, listening sessions) and quantitative (survey) data below between fall 2023 and spring 2024.

Summer 2023 pilot provider focus groups (fall 2023)

In fall 2024, Education Northwest facilitated online focus groups with a total of 16 staff members from the five summer 2023 pilot sites. These 90-minute focus groups discussed the partners, programming, and services supported by summer pilot funds as well as bright spots, lessons learned, and recommendations.

Statewide provider survey (fall 2023)

To understand how Open Doors providers across the state describe the opportunities, challenges, and practices of summer programming and programming for post-resident youth, we developed and administered a survey of all 85 Open Doors programs in fall 2024. Representatives of 53 providers responded to the survey for a response rate of 62 percent.

Listening sessions (winter 2024)

We also conducted two online listening sessions in February 2024. These sessions provided an opportunity for Open Doors providers from across the system to share their thoughts about opportunities, challenges, and recommendations to OSPI related to offering summer programming and serving youth who previously experienced detention.

State system partner focus groups (winter–spring 2024)

We facilitated a focus group with Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) staff members working in juvenile rehabilitation to understand potential intersection points with Open Doors. Additional focus groups and OSPI institutional education staff members followed in spring 2024.

Table 1. New mixed-methods data collected, fall 2023–winter 2024 (partially duplicated)

Data Source	Number of Individual Participants	Number of Programs	Program Participation Rate
Summer 2023 provider focus groups	16	5	100%
Provider survey	53	53	62%
Listening session 1: summer programming	47 registered	34	55%

Listening session 2: programming with youth who experienced detention	42 registered	35	49%
State system partner focus groups	10	N/A	N/A

Existing OSPI data

Our team analyzed various data from OSPI to understand statewide historical trends in summer programming and service to post-resident youth. We used program-level data to describe the survey sample and pilot sites and student-level data to describe student participation in the summer 2023 pilot. These quantitative data are described in more detail below.

Apportionment data

Open Doors providers receive 10 months of funding per student. We used apportionment data on the number of Open Doors students (full-time equivalent) claimed by each district per month in 2021, 2022, and 2023 to determine the number of students claimed by each district in July and August. We combined this data with the national Common Core of Data to report on district locale and size.

Limitations: Apportionment data does not capture all students enrolled in Open Doors during the summer months. Programs may continue to serve students in July and August for whom they cannot claim for state funding because the students participated for more than 10 months and have no apportionment left to claim.

Community Partnerships for Reengagement Initiative (CPRI) dataset

For our prior work on Open Doors through CPRI, we developed a dataset of average student characteristics and outcomes for every Open Doors program from 2015–16 to 2020–21. We used this past data to determine average characteristics and outcomes of the summer pilot programs and programs that responded to the survey.

Student-level K–12 data

Education Northwest has a fully executed data-sharing agreement with OSPI to access student-level data from CEDARS, the Open Doors End of Year file, and the summer pilot data collection spreadsheets from 2023 and 2024. For this report, we primarily used the CEDARS school enrollment and demographic files from 2014–15 through 2022–23, the Open Doors End of Year files from the same period, and the summer 2023 data collected from the pilot sites.

We used this data to understand post-resident youth enrollment in Open Doors and in the summer 2023 pilot programs, persistence from the 2022–23 school year to the summer pilot programs, and pilot student characteristics compared to the Open Doors and high school populations. To identify

students who are post-resident youth, we used CEDARS school enrollment data to identify students who enrolled in institutional education. There are four types of institutional education in the data: community facilities, detention centers, juvenile institutions, and adult facilities. Detention centers account for over 80 percent of students who enrolled in institutional education between 2014–15 and 2022–23.

We report findings using two different definitions of post-resident youth:

- Post-resident youth **recently** in institutional education: Students in the 2015–16 to 2022–23 school years who enrolled in institutional education in the same academic year or the year before they enrolled in Open Doors. This allows us to look historically at Open Doors’ service to post-resident youth from 2015–16 to 2022–23.
- Post-resident youth **ever** in institutional education: Students in the 2022–23 school year who enrolled in institutional education at any time between 2014–15 to 2022–23. All students in this sample have data from at least age 14, meaning it likely captures all their institutional education experiences and provides a full sample of post-resident youth in the 2022–23 school year and summer 2023. See Appendix c for a list of all IE settings represented in this analysis.

Finally, we also explore Open Doors service to post-resident youth by provider type and pathway. For this analysis, we linked information from the publicly available Appendix R spreadsheet on the pathways offered by each Open Doors program to student-level data. We also created a provider type variable in our data to identify whether the Open Doors program is a community-based organization, college, ESD, district, or for-profit organization.

Limitations: To facilitate comparison with statewide datasets, for this analysis we defined post-resident youth in terms of their participation in institutional education in Washington state. Open Doors also provided us with self-reported data from summer 2023 pilot students regarding their experience with juvenile justice and detention. However, these data do not always line up; possibly because students experienced detention or incarnation out of state or they were detained for too short a period to be enrolled in institutional education.

Our analysis of this self-reported data suggests that a higher number of students in the summer 2023 pilot may be post-resident youth than is evident from the institutional education data. Our summer pilot analysis includes 76 post-resident youth—60 students who self-reported as post-resident youth in the summer pilot data and had an enrollment in institutional education based on the CEDARS school enrollment file and 16 who had such an enrollment but did not self-report as post-resident youth. Our summer pilot analysis does not include 38 students who self-reported as

post-resident youth but did not have any enrollment in institutional education in the CEDARS enrollment file.

State of the system: Open Doors summer programming

In the next section, we provide an overview of the Open Doors system for summer programming. We start by providing information on the reach of Open Doors summer programming across the state. Then, we draw on findings from the focus groups, survey responses, and listening sessions to discuss the benefits, success factors, and challenges in offering summer programming.

Findings summary: Open Doors summer programming

- The number of students districts claim during the summer is on the rise and is concentrated in larger, more densely populated school districts.
- Most providers who responded to the survey reported offering some summer programming, with wide variation in depth and breadth of these offerings.
- Providers statewide say that summer programming can provide students with valuable continuity as well as new opportunities to connect and grow.
- Lack of funding is the main barrier identified by providers. Almost all providers would offer summer programming if 12 months of Open Doors funding were available.

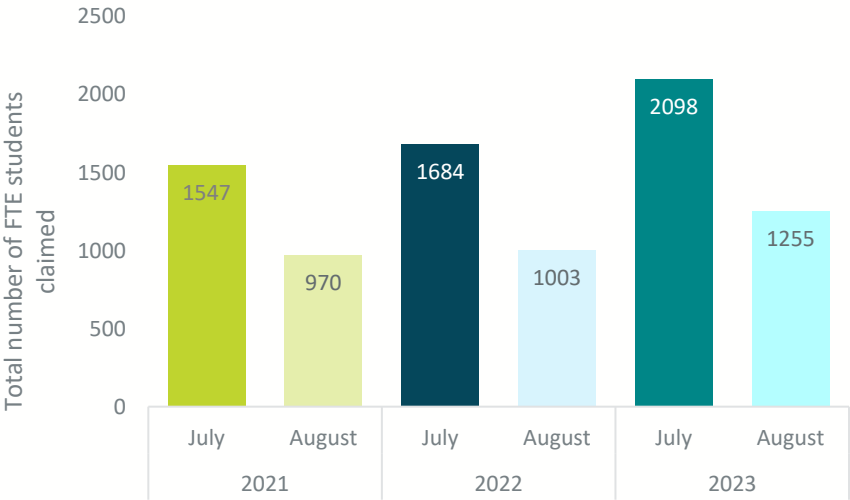
Reach of Open Doors summer programming (2021–23)

We describe the reach of Open Doors based on apportionment data and the provider survey.

The number of students districts claim during the summer has increased over time and is concentrated in larger, more densely populated school districts

Based on a review of apportionment data, we describe districts that claimed Open Doors students in July and August in 2021, 2022, and 2023. However, apportionment is not the same as enrollment. Some Open Doors programs served students during July and August who the programs did not claim for state funding because the students had participated in school for more than 10 months and there was no student apportionment funding left for the programs to claim. Therefore, it is important to note that apportionment data are not a complete portrait of the reach of the system. The number of Open Doors students that districts claimed in July and August increased over time (figure 4). In 2021–23, at least 39 percent of districts in the state have students participating in Open Doors during the summer months.

Figure 4. The number of Open Doors students districts claimed in July and August has increased over time (2021–2023)



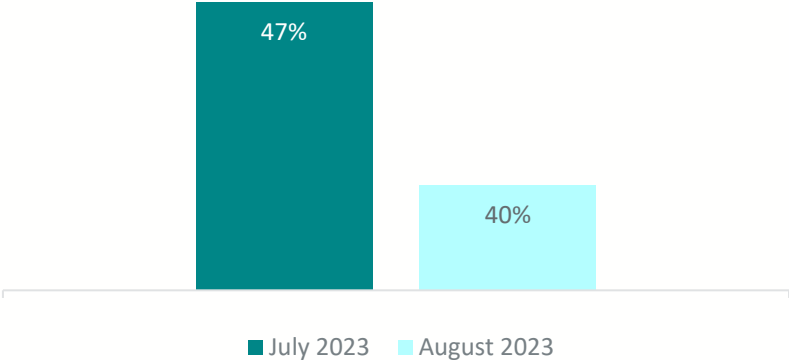
Note: This figure shows the total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students claimed in Open Doors during the summer based on apportionment data (by year and month).

Source: Education Northwest’s analysis of apportionment data from OSPI.

In summer 2023, 47 percent of districts offering Open Doors claimed apportionment for participating students, primarily in July (figure 5). In July 2023, Open Doors programs served

students from school districts across the state of Washington (figure 6). Students enrolled in Open Doors summer programming are concentrated in the Puget Sound region. However, this distribution of student enrollment is proportional to the district populations in these regions.

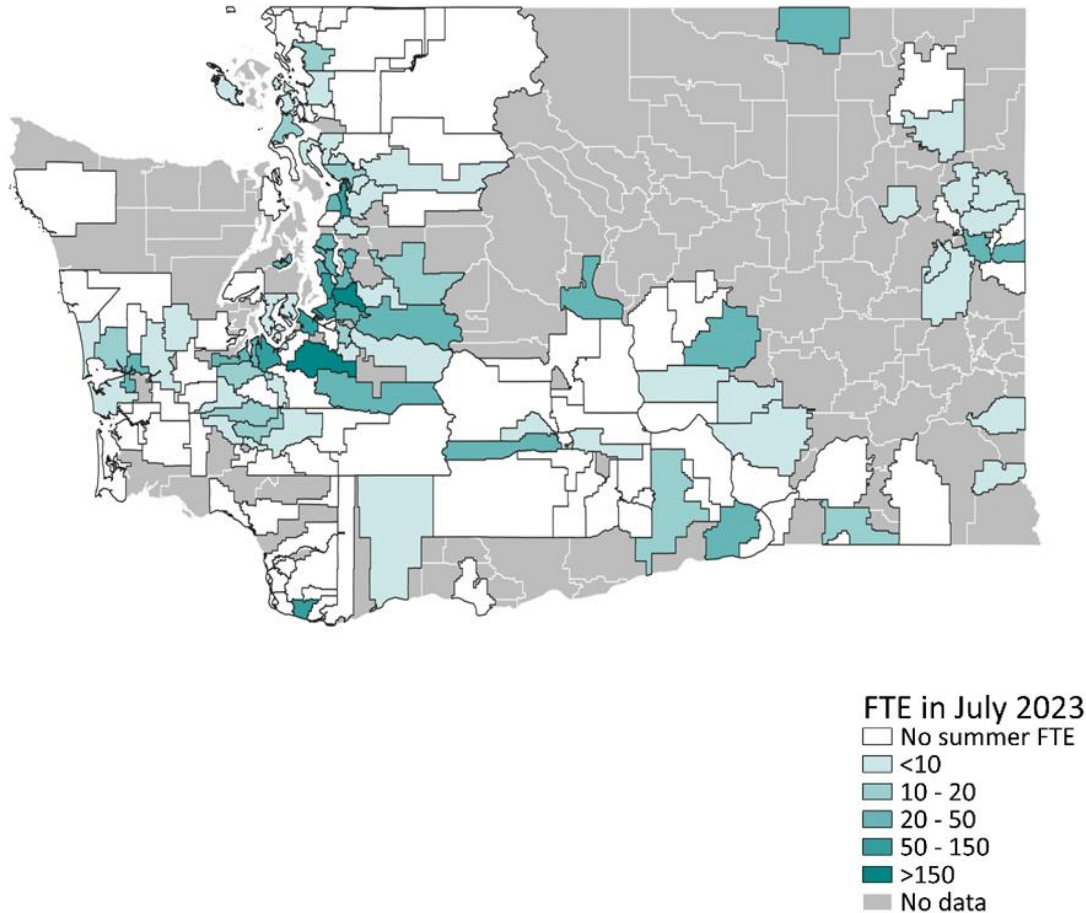
Figure 5. Almost half of districts with Open Doors programs claimed students in summer 2023



Note: This figure shows the percentage of districts with students claimed in Open Doors during the summer based on apportionment data (by month).

Source: Education Northwest’s analysis of apportionment data from OSPI.

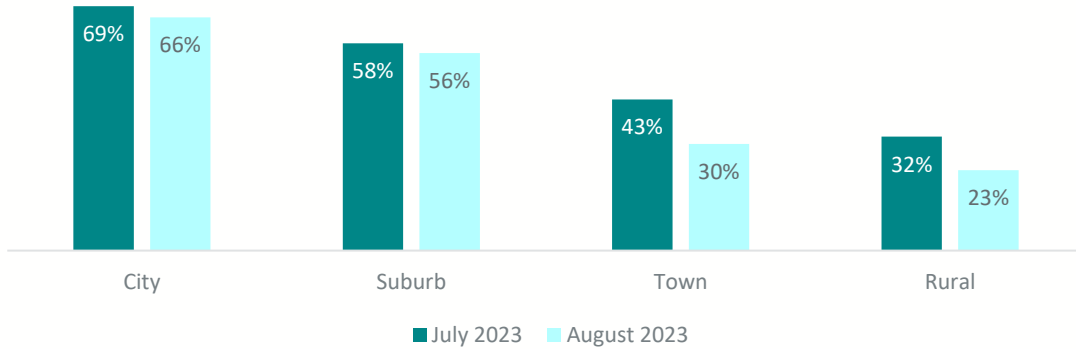
Figure 6. Districts that claimed apportionment for students in Open Doors in July 2023 were concentrated in the Puget Sound region with a distribution generally proportional to district populations



Source: Education Northwest’s analysis of apportionment data from OSPI and locale data from the Common Core of Data. Map was created using the Free and Open Source QGIS.

Next, we examined the percentage of districts in each locale (rural, town, suburb, or city) that had students participating in summer programming. A higher percentage of districts in more densely populated areas have students participating in summer programming (figure 7). Similarly, in the focus groups and listening sessions, Open Doors providers in rural areas spoke of competing demands of summer jobs in agriculture and tourism.

Figure 7. A higher percentage of districts in densely populated areas claim students participating in Open Doors in the summer than districts in less densely populated districts

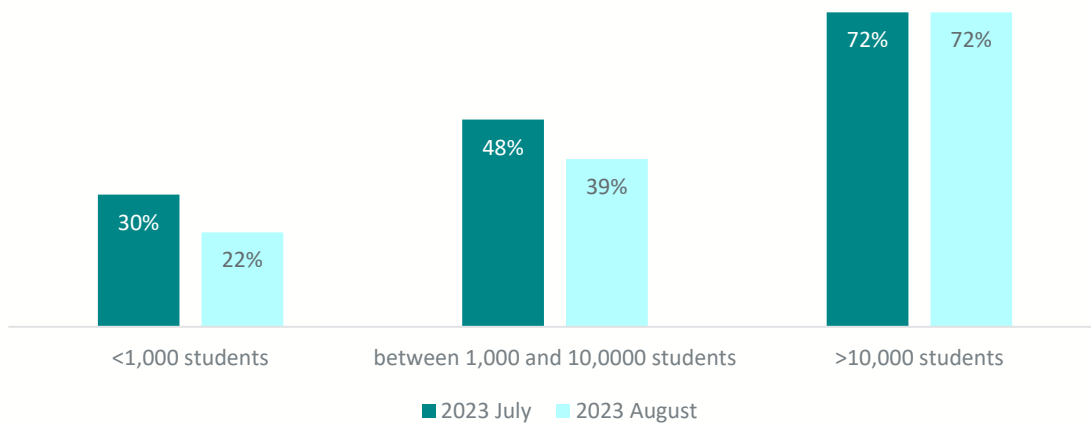


Note: This figure shows the percentage of districts with students claimed in Open Doors in the summer months based on apportionment data (by locale, year, and month).

Source: Education Northwest’s analysis of apportionment data from OSPI and locale data from the Common Core of Data.

Similarly, we found that a higher percentage of larger than smaller school districts have students participating in Open Doors in the summer months (figure 8). In focus groups and listening sessions, Open Doors providers reflected on how larger programs may be better positioned to absorb the additional costs of summer programming than smaller programs in rural areas of the state.

Figure 8. A higher percentage of larger than smaller school districts claim students participating in Open Doors in the summer months



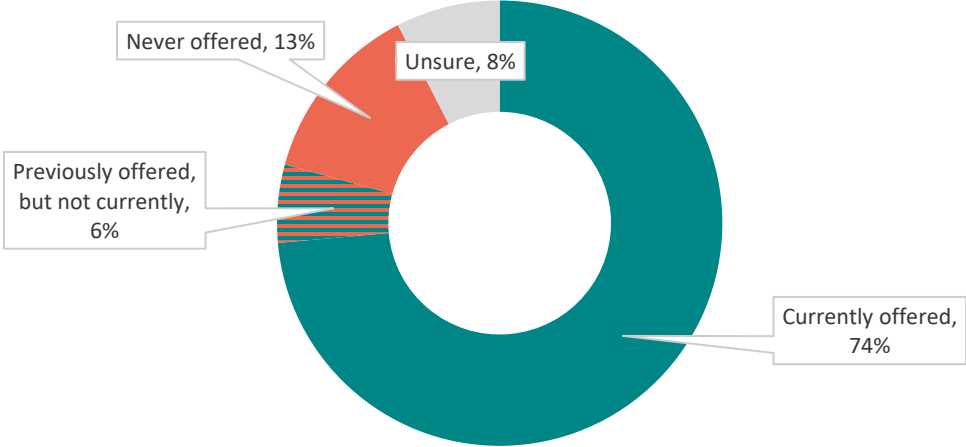
Note: This figure shows the percentage of districts with students claimed in Open Doors in the summer months based on apportionment data (by district size, year, and month).

Source: Education Northwest’s analysis of apportionment data from OSPI and district size from the Common Core of Data.

Most providers who responded to the survey reported offering some summer programming

Almost 80 percent of providers who participated in the Open Doors statewide provider survey currently or previously offered programming during the summer months (see figure 9). The student population of these programs is representative of the student population of Open Doors overall (appendix d). However, it is important to note that the survey does not provide information on the extent of summer programming provided.

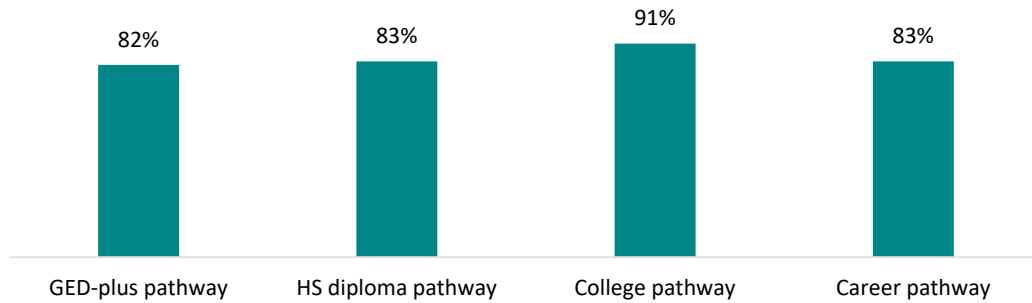
Figure 9. Eighty percent of providers who participated in the Open Doors statewide provider survey currently or previously offered programming during the summer months (N = 53)



Source: Education Northwest analysis of the 2023 statewide Open Doors provider survey.

We found limited variation in the distribution of programs that currently offer summer programming by program pathway. For each of the pathways, roughly 80 to 90 percent of the providers who took the statewide survey currently offer summer programming (figure 10).

Figure 10. There is limited variation by pathway in programs that currently offer summer programming (N = 53)



Source: Education Northwest analysis of the 2023 statewide Open Doors provider survey.

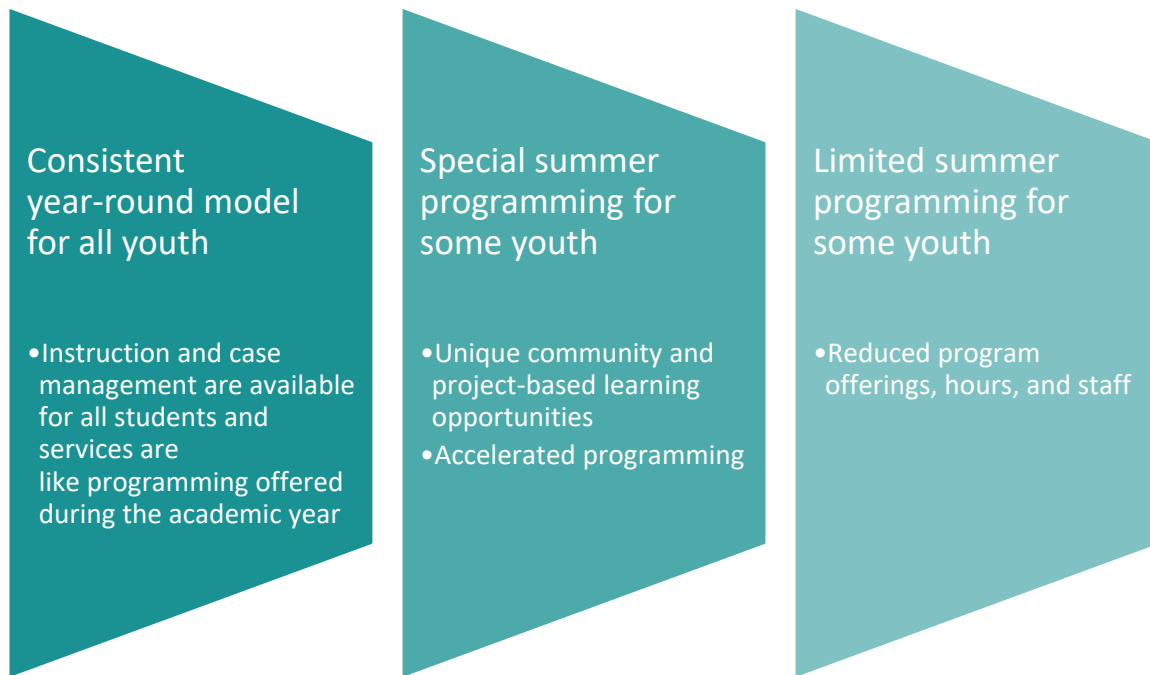
The depth and breadth of summer programming varies widely

In focus groups, listening sessions, and survey responses, Open Doors providers indicated wide variation in the type of programming they offered during the summer (figure 11). Some providers reported having the same offerings in summer and school year. These providers often spoke of the importance of consistency of learning opportunities for youth throughout the year.

Most often, differences involved reduced services and participation in the summer. In open-ended survey responses, providers cited the following differences between the summer and school year programming:

- Fewer students enrolled during the summer months
- Reduced hours and fewer staff members available
- Limited program options
- More project-based instruction, field trips, and work-based learning opportunities
- Accelerated programming

Figure 11. Providers describe a continuum of summer program offerings



Source: Education Northwest analysis of the 2023 statewide Open Doors provider survey and focus groups with summer 2023 pilot sites.

Benefits of summer programming

Summer learning is important for the academic and social and emotional development of all students. When schools close in the summer, achievement gaps increase and students experience a decline in social-emotional health (Goodyear et al., 2022). While there is limited research that rigorously examines the outcomes of youth who participate in summer programming or year-round schooling, existing studies point to the positive effects including lower rates of student absenteeism and increased academic learning, graduation rates, emotional well-being, and employment and career outcomes (Lynch et al., 2022; McComb et al., 2019; Modestino & Paulsen, 2023; Smith, 2011; Miller & Knoth, 2019). The positive effects of summer programming on youth outcomes are dependent on student attendance rates and instructional quality (Augustine et al., 2016; Modestino & Paulsen, 2023).

Open Doors providers report that summer programming increases student academic engagement, retention, and overall development and well-being

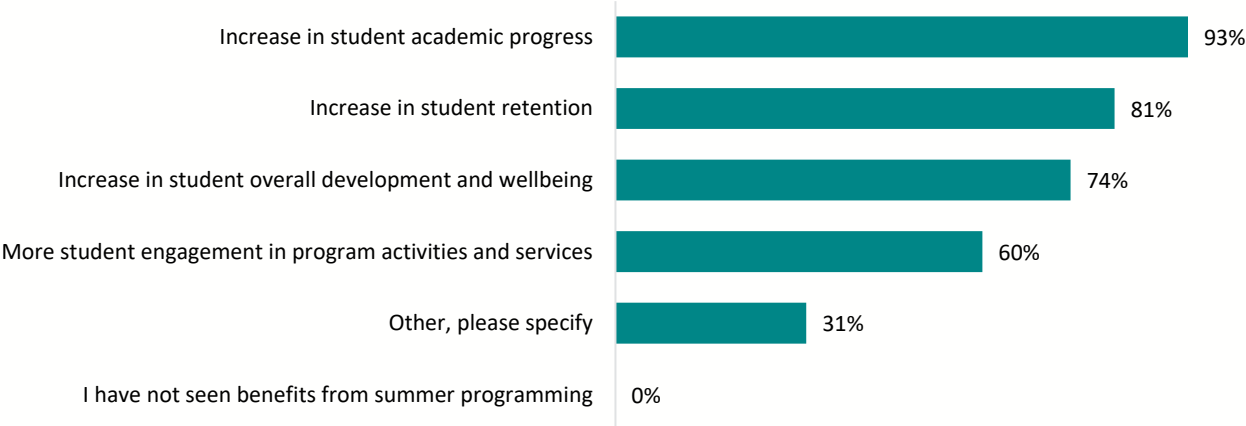
Providers described increased academic progress as the main benefit of summer programming (figure 12).

“Summer is a second chance to graduate during your expected year. In all reality, the more students are with us, the better off they are academically and socially.”

– Open Doors provider survey respondent

In addition, survey respondents described how summer programming increased youth engagement, family participation, and peer relationships. In survey responses and listening sessions, Open Doors providers described the importance of summer programming for older youth who are close to completing their pathway goal.

Figure 12. Open Doors programs that provide summer programming indicated benefits including increases in student academic progress and student retention (N = 42)



Source: Education Northwest analysis of the 2023 statewide Open Doors provider survey.

Success factors in summer programming

Summer programming can provide students with continuity and new opportunities to connect and grow

In focus groups, listening sessions, and survey responses, Open Doors providers described program strategies that support student success. The practices they identified align with the broader literature about summer programming and youth reengagement, including the importance of high-quality instruction, student-centered learning, family engagement, and barrier reduction (Augustine et al., 2016; Augustine et al., 2021; Bang et al., 2021; West, 2023).

- **Consistent, year-round programming supports strong relationships between Open Doors staff members and students and fosters student engagement.**
Open Doors providers reflected on the importance of continuity in relationships and access to learning opportunities for students to build momentum and make progress on their goals. An Open Doors student may not return after the summer break, so consistent programming is critical for youth engagement.
- **Barrier reduction supports student engagement in learning.**
Open Doors providers found that offering barrier reduction support and career-connected learning opportunities motivated students to join and stay engaged.
- **Summer programming offers unique opportunities to connect students to career and work-based learning.**
Summer allows for flexibility in program content, approach, and enrichment activities, such as through creative, inquiry-based forms of learning (Bang et al., 2021). Open Doors providers partner with local employers and community-based organizations to provide students with paid career-based learning opportunities.
- **Eliciting youth input helps to identify summer programming priorities that match student interests.**

A student-centered approach including soliciting input from students and families about programming can increase student engagement (West, 2023). Open Doors providers ask youth to identify activities they want to focus on during the summer months and use that information to design programming.

“Our summer programming is a six-week program where our youth have weekly field trips and community events focused on interests that they have expressed, identity development, post-secondary planning, workforce development, and community building. During these six weeks we still have GED session to study for subject tests. We noticed that [during the summer] youth develop a closer connection to each other, our staff, and a desire to plan for the future.”

– Open Doors provider survey respondent

Challenges in offering summer programming

While Open Doors providers spoke of the benefits of providing summer programming, most also experienced challenges. Below we describe the challenges identified by Open Doors providers in survey responses, focus groups, and listening sessions.

Providers identified lack of funding as the main barrier

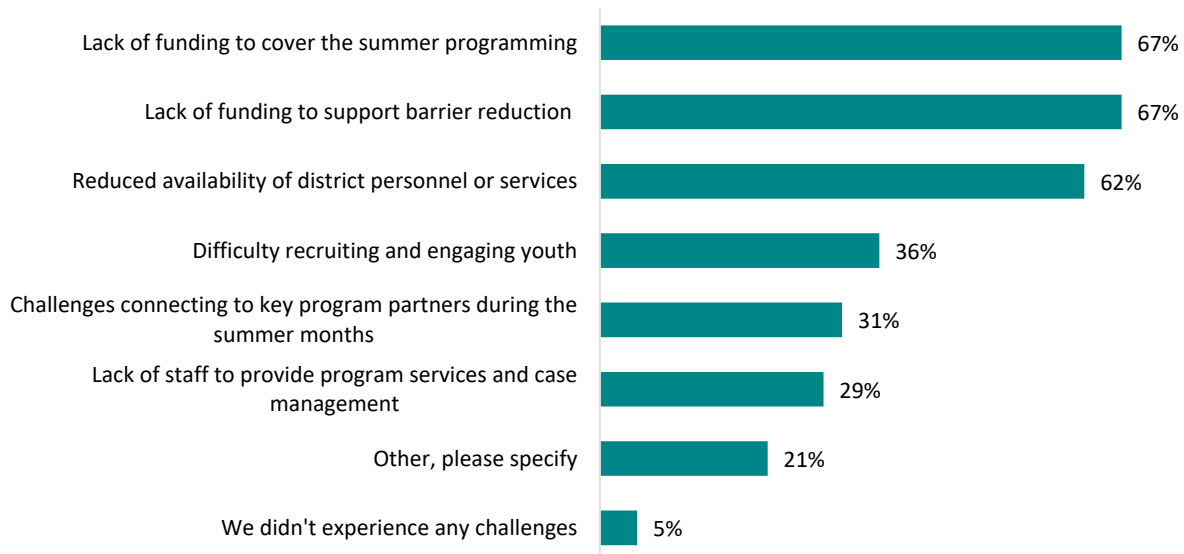
In the survey we asked Open Doors providers about the challenges they encountered in implementing summer programming. The most frequently experienced challenges related to funding to cover the programming itself and to support barrier reduction and reduced availability of district personnel or services. Similarly, of the survey respondents who did not offer summer programming (N = 10), 90 percent indicated that funding to cover program costs and staff prevented them from doing so.

“The main thing, by far, is the lack of funding. The only way we were able to run summer programming in the past was when we had a good year and could shift funding to the summer where we essentially donate service. We limit what we offer based on the funding available, and we see this as a massive inequity.”

– Open Doors provider survey respondent

Nearly all the survey respondents indicated that they would offer summer programming if 12-month apportionment became available. Lack of funding is the primary challenge, followed by reduced availability of district staff during the summer. Fewer providers reported barriers in recruiting and engaging youth, connecting to key program partners during the summer months, and a lack of staff to provide program services (figure 13). Other challenges that providers identified include difficulty creating a year-long schedule to include staff time off, offering the opportunity to students beyond those highly motivated to stay in school during the summer, engaging instructors and students during the summer months, and accessing special support services, such as multilingual instructors, from the district.

Figure 13. Lack of funding was the most frequently identified barrier to implementation for Open Doors programs that provide summer programming (N = 42)



Source: Education Northwest analysis of the 2023 statewide Open Doors provider survey.

Competing commitments can impact students' ability to participate in summer programming

Transportation, employment, and other student and family needs can create challenges to maintaining youth attendance in summer learning (Augustine et al., 2021). Open Doors providers found that students often had competing commitments that impacted their ability to participate in Open Doors summer programming, including caring for siblings or employment. Some students also faced transportation challenges. As one program provider wrote in the survey, “Many of our youth are working, need support with transportation, or are supporting family with childcare, which makes their schedules inconsistent.” As a result, some programs noted that the students who could participate in programming during the summer months were self-selected and were highly motivated or close to graduation or degree completion.

“We do not enroll new students over the summer months. We just offer it to highly motivated students who want the opportunity to keep working over the summer months.”

– Open Doors provider survey participant

Limited staff and partner availability during the summer can impact student enrollment and access to services

Staffing challenges during the summer months, including within Open Doors or district and community partnerships, can impact student enrollment and access to services.

- **Finding available staff.**
Providers spoke of challenges in staffing their Open Doors programs during the summer months, particularly for staff members who are hired on traditional school contracts. Providers also cited funding staff during the summer and creating a year-long schedule to include staff time off. In addition, providers faced challenges taking on additional costs to keep their facilities open during the summer.
- **Maintaining district partnerships.**
District staff members often do not work during the summer. The lack of support from the district can limit student referrals to Open Doors and create challenges in enrolling new students into the program. Further, access to English language, special education, and individualized education plan resources are limited by contract barriers.
- **Finding community-based organization partnerships.**
While partnerships with community-based organizations and employers play a critical role in providing Open Doors participants with barrier reduction support and career-connected

learning opportunities, providers reflected on challenges in finding partnerships that were aligned with their program goals and student needs.

State of the system: Open Doors programming with post-resident youth

In this section we describe the state of the Open Doors system related to programming for post-resident youth. First, we present findings from our analysis of student-level K–12 data to provide an overview of the level of service for post-resident youth offered by Open Doors programs, both historically and in the school year prior to the launch of the pilot. We relate that data to responses from the 2023 Open Doors statewide provider survey to understand changes in the level of service over time. Next, we draw on findings from the focus groups, survey, and listening sessions to discuss the benefits, success factors, and challenges for programs related to adequately serving post-resident youth.

Findings summary: Post-resident youth in Open Doors

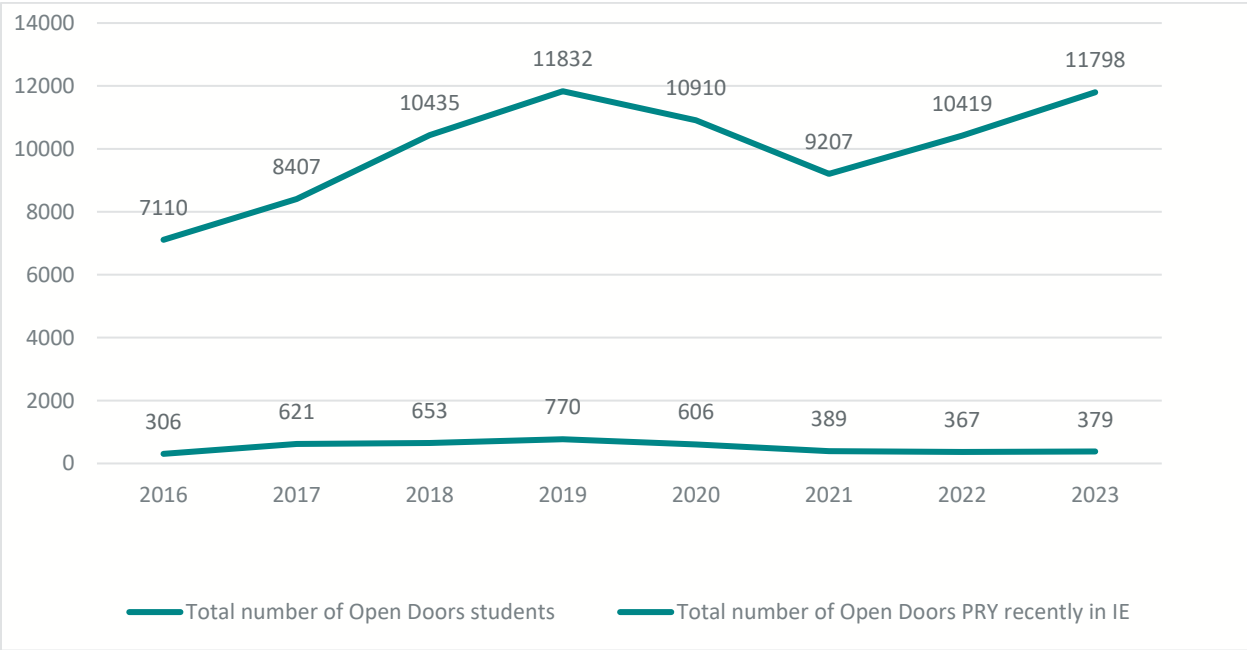
- Open Doors programs, particularly ESDs and districts, have historically served a significant number of post-resident youth with recent experiences in institutional education.
- Open Doors served a significant portion of Washington’s post-resident youth in 2022–23, enrolling one in five post-resident youth students statewide. The total number of post-resident youth in Open Doors decreased during the pandemic.
- Most post-resident youth were enrolled in ESD- or district-run programs and in GED-plus or high school diploma pathways. Community-based organization and career pathway programs serve a disproportionate number of post-resident youth.
- About three-quarters of providers who responded to the survey reported that they currently serve or previously served post-resident youth and have a connection with institutional education.
- Providers and partners call for more intentional funding, program and staff capacity building, and better coordination across agencies to better support post-resident youth.

Level of service to post-resident youth in Open Doors

Open Doors programs, particularly ESDs and districts, have historically served a significant number of post-resident youth with recent experiences in institutional education

Using CEDARS K–12 data, we looked at trends over time in the level of service to post-resident youth who participated in institutional education in the same year, or the year before, they enrolled in Open Doors. We find that Open Doors has served a significant number of post-resident youth since the early years of the program (figure 14). Like overall Open Doors enrollment, participation in Open Doors among post-resident youth (who had recent experiences in institutional education) started to decline in 2021. While the overall number of Open Doors students has rebounded to pre-pandemic peaks, the number of recent post-resident youth enrolled has changed little since 2021.

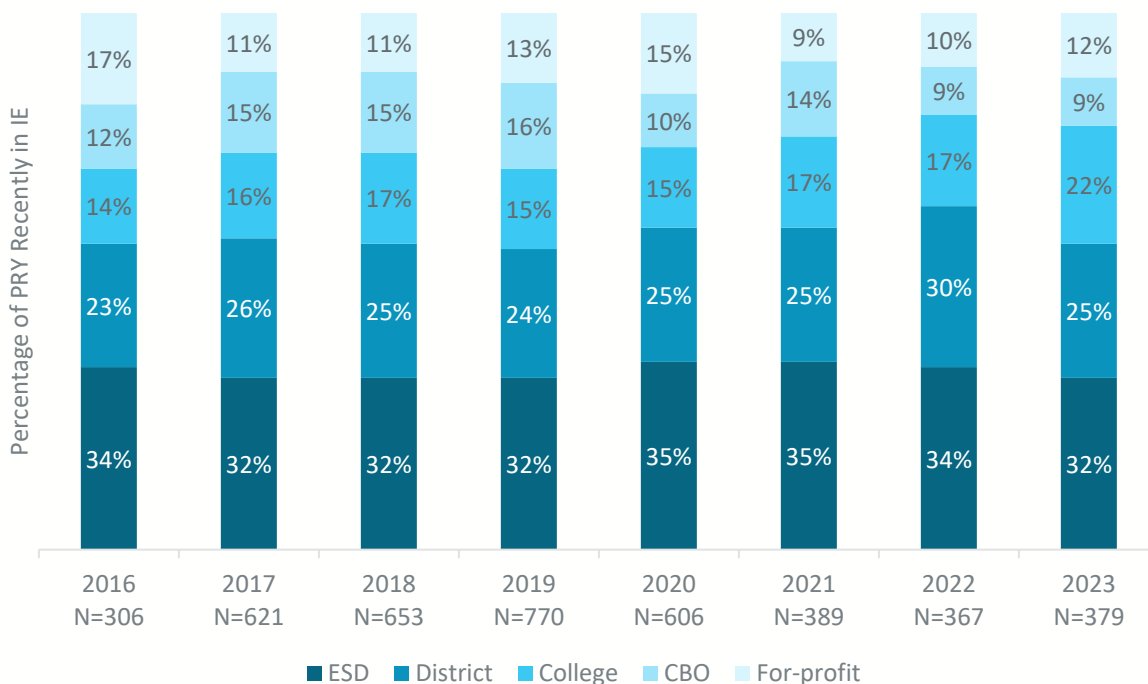
Figure 14. The total number of PRY recently in IE who were enrolled in Open Doors decreased during the pandemic



PRY = post-resident youth. IE = institutional education.
Note: Definition of PRY recently in IE = Enrolled in institutional education in the same year or year before enrolled in Open Doors.
Source: CEDARS enrollment data and Open Doors End of Year data for school years 2015–16 through 2022–23.

Since the 2015–26 school year, over half of post-resident youth in Open Doors participated in either ESD- or district-run programs (figure 15). Each year, ESDs and districts each served about a quarter of these students. Since 2021, college programs served a growing percentage of post-resident youth, up to almost a quarter in 2023.

Figure 15. ESDs and districts consistently served more than half of PRY recently in IE, (2015–2023)



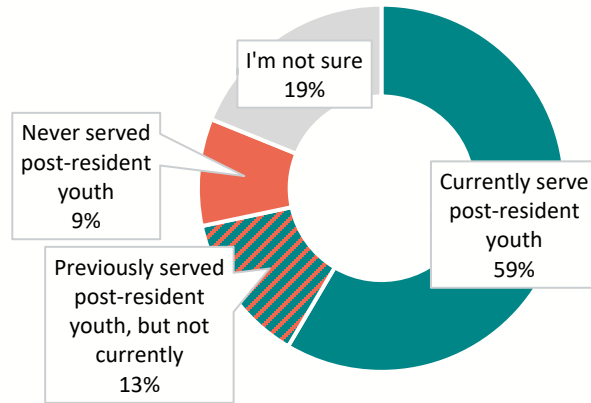
PRY = post-resident youth. IE = institutional education.

Note: Definition of PRY recently in IE = Enrolled in institutional education in the same year or year before enrolled in Open Doors.

Source: CEDARS enrollment data and Open Doors End of Year data for school years 2015–16 through SY2022–23.

In the survey, we asked respondents whether they currently or previously served post-resident youth. About 60 percent currently serve post-resident youth and 13 percent previously served post-resident youth but no longer do so.

Figure 16. About three-quarters of Open Doors providers currently serve or previously served PRY (N = 53)



PRY = post-resident youth.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of the 2023 statewide Open Doors provider survey.

In contrast to the CEDARS data, we found limited variation in the distribution of programs that serve post-resident youth by program pathway. For each pathway, roughly 60 percent of the providers who took the statewide survey serve post-resident youth.

Open Doors served one in five post-resident youth in 2022–23—a significant portion of the population

Next, we take a closer look at levels of service to post-resident youth during the school year prior to the summer 2023 pilot. For this analysis, we focus on post-resident youth who were enrolled in institutional education at any time since 2014.

In the 2022–23 school year, Open Doors served one in five post-resident youth students statewide—a significant portion of the population (figure 17). That year Open Doors served 19 percent (793 students) of the 4,207 high school students statewide who were post-resident youth. Additionally, post-resident youth made up a higher proportion of Open Doors students (7%) compared with comprehensive high school students statewide (1%).

Figure 17. Open Doors served one out of five PRY students statewide in 2022–23

Post-Resident Youth



PRY = Post-resident youth.

Note: Definition of PRY = Enrolled in institutional education at any time between 2014–15 and 2022–23.

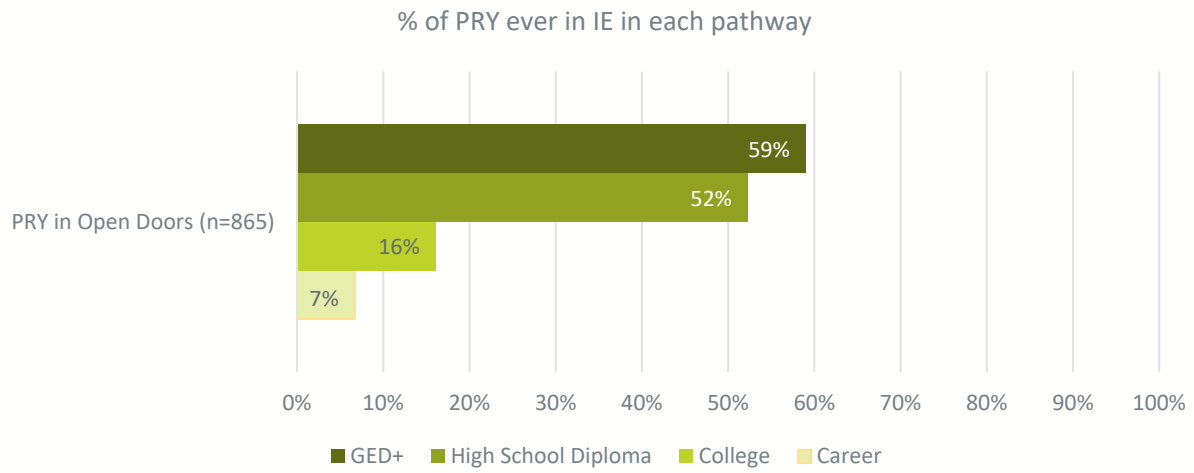
Source: CEDARS and Open Doors EOY data.

Most post-resident youth were enrolled in ESD- or district-run programs and in GED-plus or high school diploma pathways, while CBO and career pathway programs serve a disproportionate number of post-resident youth

Looking at the data from the 2022–23 school year, we see variation in enrollment of post-resident youth by pathway. Most Open Doors post-resident youth statewide were enrolled in programs that offered GED-plus (59%) or high school diploma (52%) pathways during the 2022–23 school year (figure 18). These trends are generally in line with overall Open Doors enrollments statewide, with high school degree and GED-plus programs enrolling the largest numbers of students in 2022–23.

However, the proportion of students enrolled in each pathway who are post-resident youth varies. GED-plus pathway programs served the highest proportion of post-resident youth, with post-resident youth making up 10 percent of all enrolled students (figure 19). However, while career pathway programs serve the smallest number of students statewide (6%), they serve the second highest proportion of post-resident youth as eight percent of all students enrolled in the career pathway are post-resident youth.

Figure 18. In 2022–23, nearly two-thirds of PRY were enrolled in a program that offered a GED-plus pathway



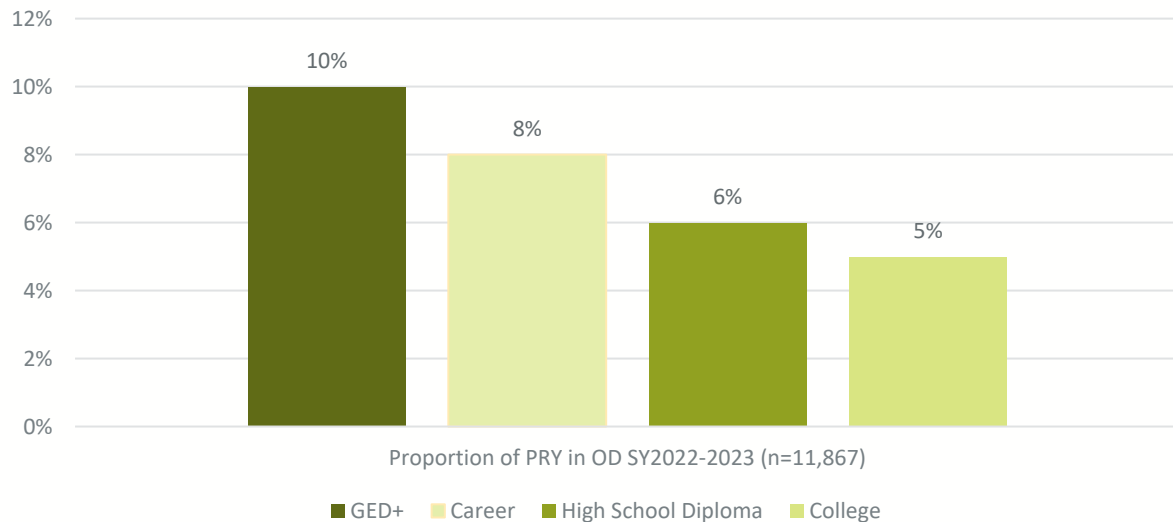
PRY = Post-resident youth.

Note: Definition of PRY = enrolled in institutional education at any time between 2014–15 and 2022–23. Open Doors students can be in a program that offers more than one pathway.

Example interpretation: 59% of Open Doors PRY students enrolled in a program that offered the GED-plus pathway.

Source: CEDARS and Open Doors EOY data.

Figure 19. GED-plus or career pathway programs served a higher proportion of PRY in 2022–23



PRY = Post-resident youth.

Note: Definition of PRY = Enrolled in institutional education at any time between 2014–15 and 2022–23. Students can be in more than one group if their program offered more than one pathway.

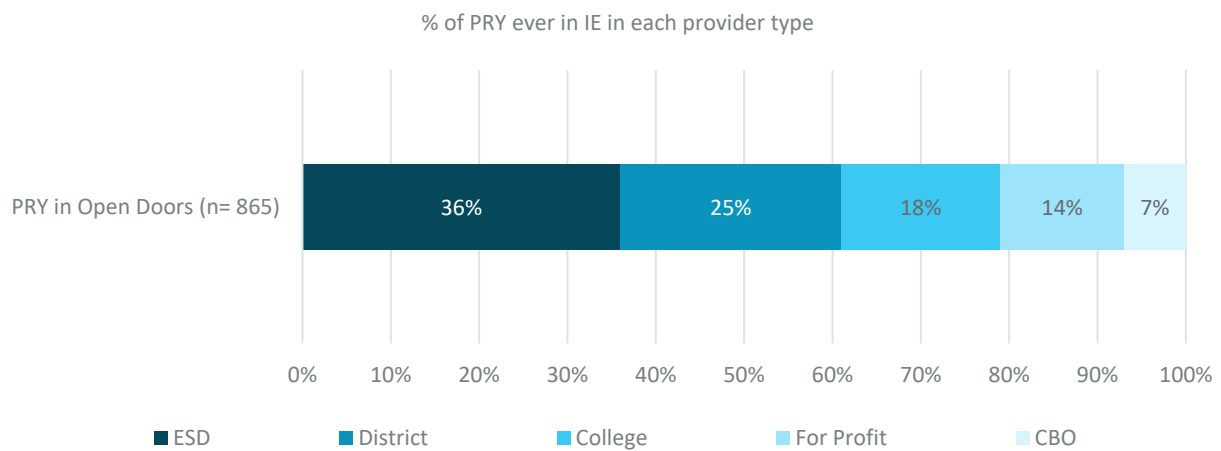
Example interpretation: 10% of the students enrolled in a GED-plus Open Doors program were PRY ever in IE.

Source: CEDARS and Open Doors EOY data.

In keeping with historical trends in terms of service for post-resident youth, most were in ESD- or district-run Open Doors programs (figure 20). However, CBO and ESD providers served the highest proportion of post-resident youth (12% and 13%, respectively; figure 21).

Enrollment of post-resident youth differs in some ways from the overall enrollment patterns for Open Doors students statewide. While ESDs (19%) and CBOs (4%) served a lower percentage of students compared with all other provider types in 2022-23, they served relatively high proportions of post-resident youth.

Figure 20. In 2022–23, PRY were mostly enrolled in ESD or district Open Doors programs



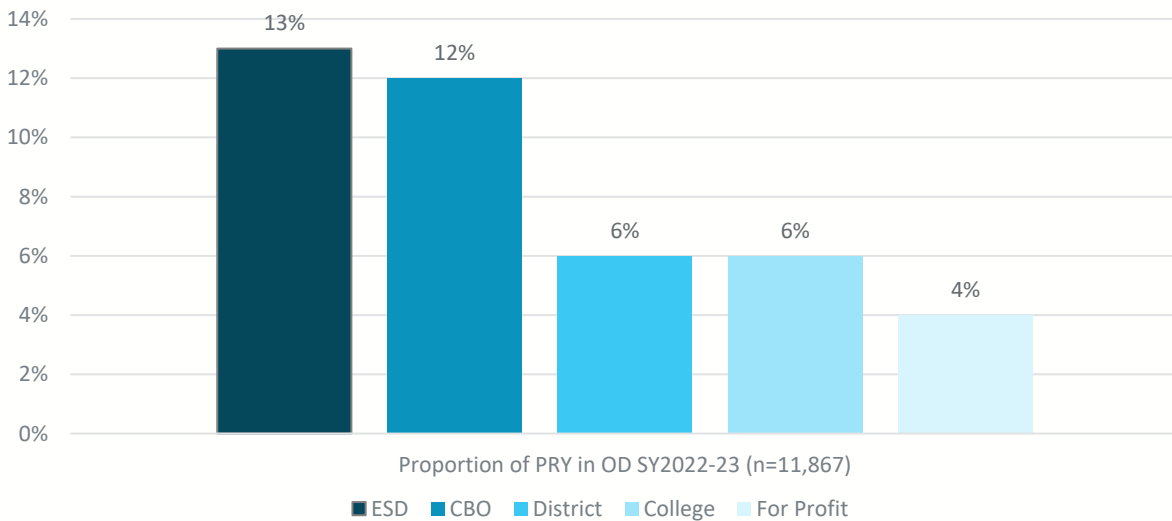
PRY = Post-resident youth.

Note: Definition of PRY = Enrolled in institutional education at any time between 2014–15 and 2022–23. Students can be in more than one group if they enrolled in more than one program during this period.

Example interpretation: 36% of Open Doors PRY students enrolled in an ESD program.

Source: CEDARS and Open Doors EOY data.

Figure 21. ESD and CBO providers served a higher proportion of PRY in 2022–23 than did other provider types



CBO = Community-based organization. ESD = Educational Service District. IE = Institutional education. PRY = Post-resident youth.

Note: Definition of PRY = Enrolled in institutional education at any time between 2014–15 and 2022–23. Students can be in more than one group if they enrolled in more than one program during this period.

Example interpretation: 13% of the students enrolled in an ESD Open Doors program were PRY ever in IE.

Source: CEDARS and Open Doors EOY data.

Provider and partner perspectives on reengagement of post-resident youth: Success factors

Young people involved in the justice system are considered “at-promise” in terms of the accomplishments and successes their future may hold (Dempsey et al., 2021). In responses to the statewide provider survey, focus groups, and listening sessions, Open Doors providers spoke of the importance of a **strengths-based approach** to working with post-resident youth. They also described the value of **collaboration** among Open Doors, institutional education, and other state systems of support in promoting positive academic and social and emotional outcomes for youth who had previously experienced detention or incarceration.

While there is limited research, institutional education and juvenile reentry programs are shown to positively impact youth outcomes—particularly academic and employment outcomes—as well as recidivism rates (House et al., 2018). A literature review of the impact of institutional education

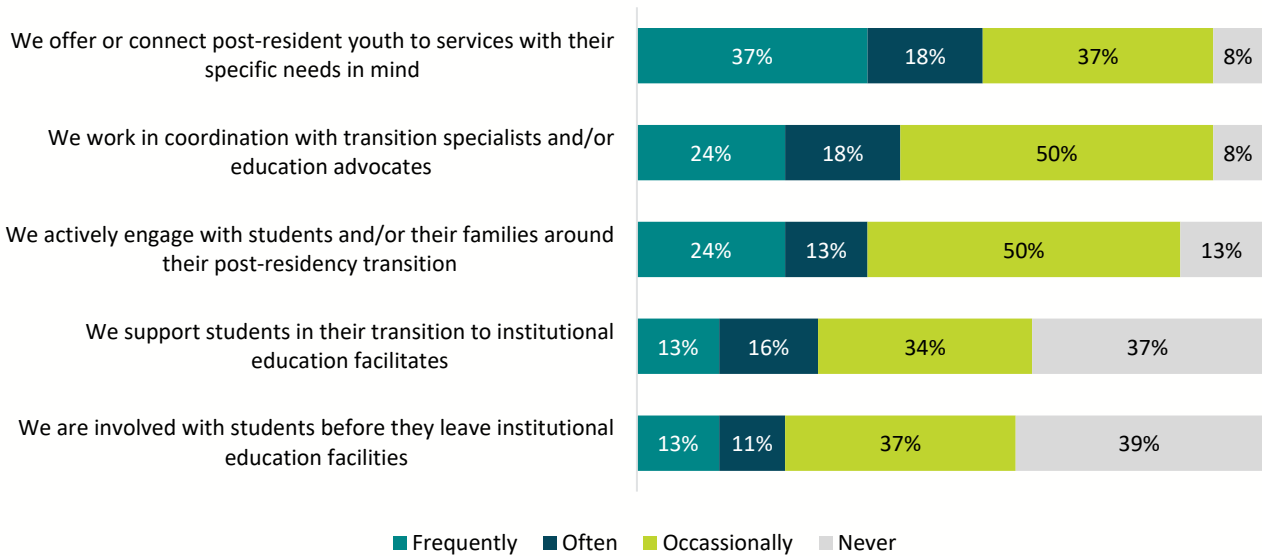
programs found evidence of short-term gains in academic skills and reduced rates of recidivism (Development Services Group, 2019). The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency reviewed meta-analyses evaluating the impact of juvenile reentry programs on recidivism. They found that juvenile reentry programs had at best a small impact on recidivism (Development Services Group, 2017). Researchers have advocated for an examination of outcomes beyond recidivism, including social and emotional outcomes like social connectedness, to determine the effectiveness of transition services (Dempsey et al., 2021).

Provide early support and engagement with youth in their transition from institutional education to Open Doors

Research indicates that early support and engagement with youth who have experienced detention is associated with positive academic and social and emotional outcomes (Bullis et al., 2004). Ideally, the transition preparation should start before the youth is released from institutional education, and a liaison or peer mentor who understands the transition process is critical (Chaney & Schwartz, 2020; Clark et al., 2016).

Nearly half of Open Doors providers report in survey responses that they frequently or often work in coordination with transition specialists or educational advocates. About 37 percent of providers actively engaged with students or their families around their post-residency transition. Fewer providers (about a quarter of respondents) are frequently or often involved with students before they leave the institutional education facilities (see figure 22).

Figure 22. Nearly half of Open Doors providers who serve post-resident youth report that they frequently or often collaborate with transition specialists or educational advocates (N = 38)

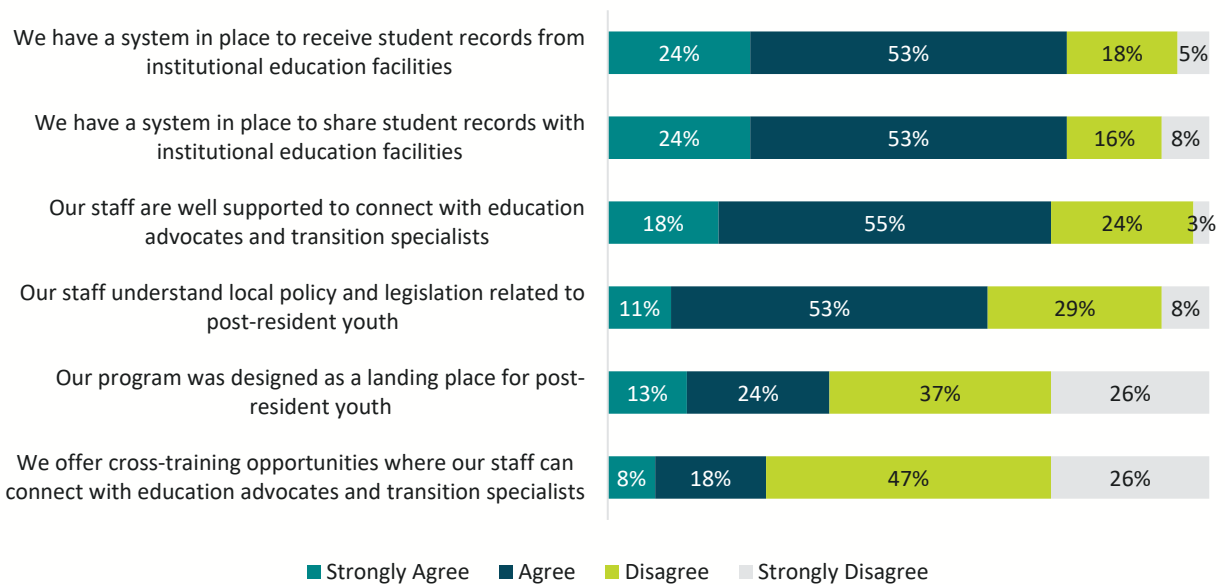


Source: Education Northwest analysis of the 2023 statewide Open Doors provider survey.

Bolster program and staff capacity to serve post-resident youth

Comprehensive professional development on how to support post-resident youth before, during, and after their transition from detention can support academic growth and well-being (Chaney & Schwartz, 2020; NDTAC, 2023). About three-quarters of Open Doors providers report having some capacities in place to support post-resident youth. For example, over three-quarters of providers who serve post-resident youth have a system in place to receive and share student records from institutional education facilities. A similar proportion of providers understand the unique needs of post-resident youth and are well positioned to connect with educational advocates and transition specialists. However, only a quarter of providers offer cross-training opportunities for staff members to connect with educational advocates and transition specialists (see figure 23).

Figure 23. About three-quarters of Open Doors providers who serve PRY indicate that they have key capacities in place to support post-resident youth (N = 38)



PRY = Post-resident youth.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of the state-wide Open Doors provider survey.

Collaborate and coordinate services across organizations, systems, and sectors for youth who have experienced detention

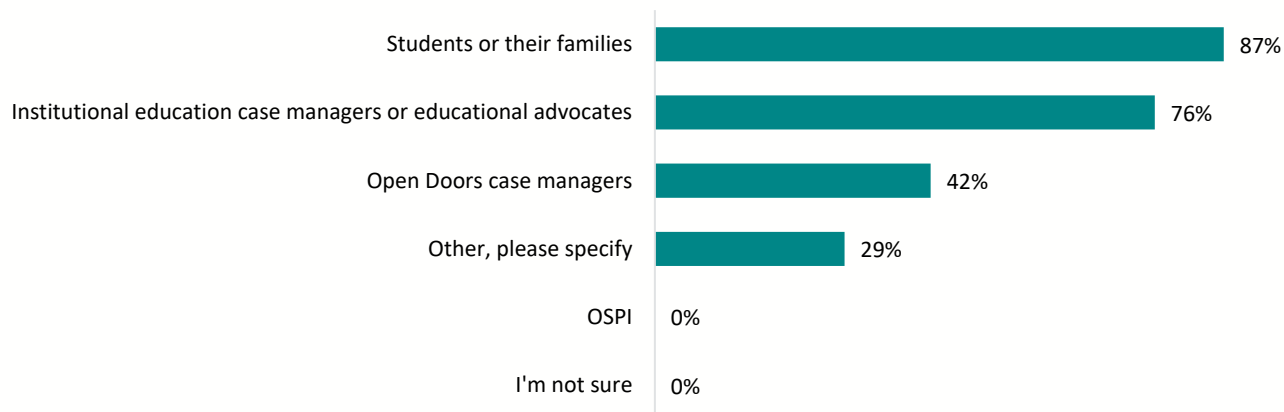
Cross-system relationships and perspectives are critical in supporting post-resident youth, especially those who are also involved in the child welfare system or are receiving mental health or special education services (Clark et al, 2016; House et al., 2018, NDTAC, 2023). In survey responses, focus groups, and listening sessions, Open Doors providers spoke of three ways they partner to support students who experienced detention: referrals and transition to Open Doors, ongoing collaboration with institutional education and other state agencies, and collaboration with employers and community-based organizations for student career learning opportunities.

Form partnerships to refer students who previously experienced detention to Open Doors and facilitate a smooth transition process

Most Open Doors providers who serve post-resident youth learn about the students’ previous academic experiences through conversations with the student or their families (figure 24). In

addition, three-quarters of providers report that their students are referred by institutional education case managers or educational advocates.

Figure 24. For most Open Doors programs who serve PRY, students or their families share information about their previous experiences with institutional education (N = 38)



PRY = Post-resident youth.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of the 2023 statewide Open Doors provider survey.

Strong, ongoing, partnerships with institutional education can facilitate enrollment, placement, and case management

A “warm handoff,” or intentional transfer of care, between two service providers can reduce communication breakdowns, provide continuity, and lead to improved outcomes (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2023; Sargeant et al., 2008). Providers find that students benefit from this kind of transfer between institutional education and Open Doors staff members. Institutional education can provide information about students’ previous educational history to tailor academic and case management services.

“Our educational advocate connects with the student and their teachers to help ensure the student is making progress in school. They also work with the families, probation officers, electronic monitoring, and the courts.”

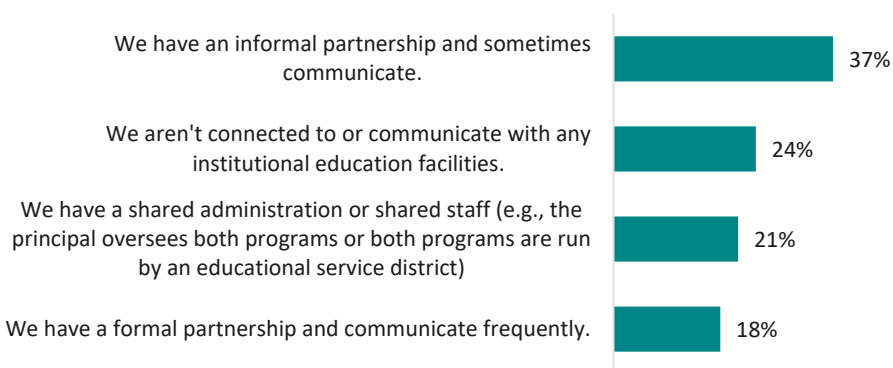
– Open Doors provider survey participant

About three-quarters of providers who serve post-resident youth have shared administration or a formal or informal partnership with institutional education. Nearly a quarter of providers report that they are not connected to or communicate with institutional education staff members.

“Our Open Doors program is... on a shared campus with two alternative high schools. We share administration, counseling, and transition support. Students access college and career counseling and transition support from those shared staff. Improving access to this [support] is one of our main goals moving forward for all the students we serve.”

– Open Doors provider survey participant

Figure 25. About three-quarters of Open Doors providers who serve PRY say they have some type of connection with institutional education (N = 38)



PRY = Post-resident youth.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of the 2023 statewide Open Doors provider survey.

Open Doors providers say they partner with local community-based organizations and employers to provide career-connected learning opportunities

In survey responses, focus groups, and listening sessions, Open Doors providers spoke of the importance of connecting post-resident youth with opportunities for job exploration. Programs leverage partnerships with community-based organizations (i.e., Choose 180, People for People, Catholic Charities), industry partners (i.e., WorkSource), and local government programs (i.e., Washington Connections, Northwest Youth Services, County Human Services) to provide post-resident youth with internships, career opportunities, employment and training, and resources.

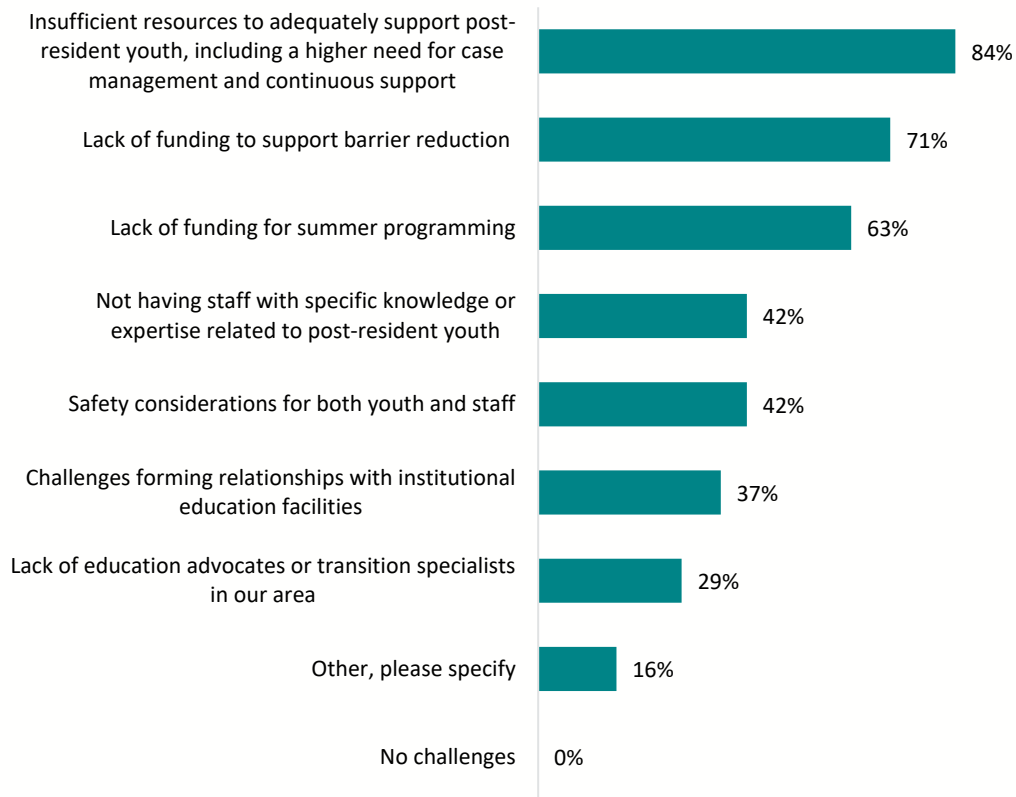
Provider and partner perspectives on reengagement of post-resident youth: Challenges and gaps

Open Doors providers implement strategies to support post-resident youth that are aligned with the literature. However, in the listening sessions, survey responses, and focus groups, providers spoke of challenges in adequately supporting their students who previously experienced detention. We outline these challenges below.

Insufficient resources and funding are the primary barrier to supporting youth who previously experienced detention.

In the survey, we asked Open Doors providers about the challenges they faced in adequately supporting their post-resident youth. The most highly selected challenges were related to insufficient resources, lack of funding to support barrier reduction, and lack of funding for summer programming (see figure 26).

Figure 26. For Open Doors programs serving PRY, insufficient resources and lack of funding were the most frequently identified barriers (N = 38)



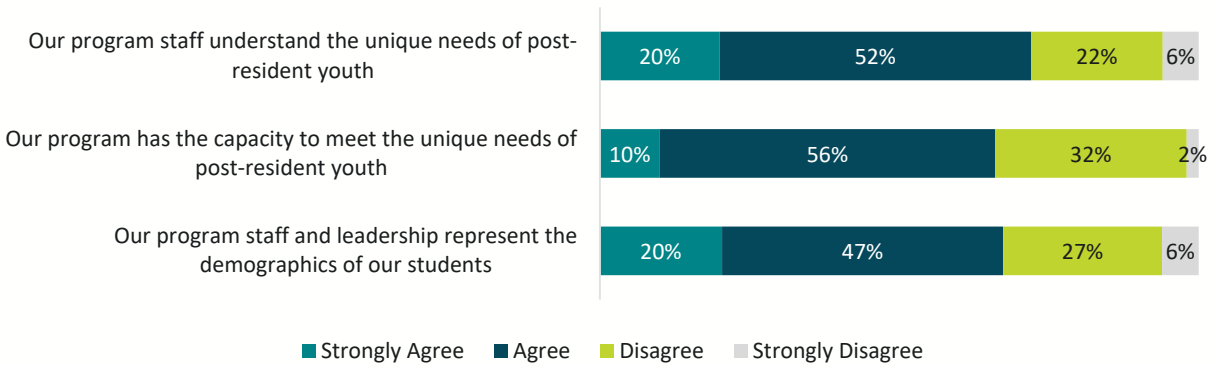
PRY = Post-resident youth.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of the 2023 statewide Open Doors provider survey.

While most Open Doors staff members say their programs have the capacity to meet the needs of post-resident youth, others could use more support

About three-quarters of Open Doors providers indicated that their program staff members understand the unique needs of post-resident youth, that their programs can meet the needs of these youth, and that their program staff members and leadership represent the demographics of their students. However, a quarter of Open Doors programs feel they need more capacity and staff to adequately serve post-resident youth (figure 27).

Figure 27. A quarter of all Open Doors programs feel they need more capacity to adequately serve PRY (N = 50)



PRY = Post-resident youth.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of the 2023 statewide Open Doors provider survey.

A lack of coordination and partnership among districts, institutional education, and other agencies can impact services for post-resident youth

District partnerships

Providers spoke of challenges in bridging communication gaps with school districts to help them identify who previously experienced detention and understand their past educational experiences. However, there can be a stigma around youth experiencing detention, resulting in youth choosing not to self-identify to their home districts. These information barriers can negatively impact Open Doors program engagement and services for youth.

Partnerships with institutional education

In addition, providers experience information and communication barriers with institutional education. Providers spoke of the need for more understanding around what education looks like for youth in institutional education. Further, providers faced barriers in communicating and coordinating services across various statewide systems, including Open Doors, institutional education, juvenile justice, detention centers, and DCYF.

Summer 2023 pilot

This section describes the summer 2023 pilot sites, the students served, their summer programming, and their partners. Data from focus groups with staff teams from each site offer perspective on bright spots, success factors, and lessons learned related to the first year of the pilot. Data on student outcomes will be available in the final evaluation report.

Findings summary: Summer 2023 pilot

- Providers selected for the summer 2023 pilot reflect statewide trends in their level of service to post-resident youth. Sites varied in their previous experience with summer programming, with some programs serving students from smaller and less densely populated districts that were historically less likely to offer summer programming.
- Many of the students served by the summer pilot providers persisted in summer 2023 from the school year program, and the summer pilots also newly engaged youth, including post-resident youth, who were not previously in high school or Open Doors.
- Summer 2023 pilot sites served vulnerable students, including a high proportion of students with lived experiences of homelessness; challenges that may be addressed through programming and barrier reduction support.
- Summer funding provided pilot sites with a level of consistency critical to sustaining youth engagement and academic progress. Pilot sites say that the funding strengthened their relationships with youth and that barrier reduction funding attracted students to summer programming and supported their overall stability and well-being.
- Pilot sites used the funding to strengthen existing partnerships and explore new ones.
- The primary challenges summer 2023 pilot site staff members identified were the short start-up time and concerns around sustainability.

Overview of summer 2023 pilot sites

In June 2023, OPSI selected five programs to participate in the summer 2023 pilot. Sites included three ESDs and two districts representing urban, suburban, and rural communities in regions across the state. Four pilot sites offer the GED-plus pathway while one serves students working towards a high school diploma. Programs varied in size and in the number of credits students had upon enrollment, with an average age at enrollment of 17. Table 2 summarizes pilot sites' program characteristics based on data from 2022-23.

Table 2. Program characteristics of summer 2023 pilot sites (2022-23)

Program	Pathway	Provider Type	Community Type	Number of students in SY2022-23	Average Age at Enrollment	Average Cumulative High School Credits Earned at Enrollment
ESD 101 Next Gen Zone	GED	ESD	Rural, Town, Suburb, City	401	17	7.17
ESD 105	GED	ESD	Rural, Town, Suburb, City	173	17	7.79
ESD 113 Gravity	GED	ESD	Rural, Town, City	815	17	7.32
Coupeville Open Academy	HS Diploma	District	Rural	82	17	9.2
Seattle Interagency (Orion and Columbia Centers)	GED	District	City	71	17	7.08

ESD = Educational service district.

Source: Appendix R, Open Doors EOY file, and NCES locale codes

Providers selected for the summer 2023 pilot reflected statewide trends in service to post-resident youth

On average, summer pilot programs served a higher proportion of post-resident youth in the 2022–23 school year (13%) compared with non-pilot programs (7%).¹ Providers selected for the summer 2023 pilot served 9 percent of the 831 post-resident youth enrolled in Open Doors in that school year. Sites included three ESDs, one district, and one CBO—reflecting the providers who serve the highest percentage and proportion of post-resident youth statewide in 2022–23.

The summer 2023 pilot sites are all based at agencies that also operate institutional education and/or education advocate programs. In one program, Open Doors instructors also teach institutional education classes. These preexisting relationships facilitate referrals and communication to ensure students receive continuous support during their transition from institutional education to Open Doors. One provider described this as a “reciprocal relationship” that helps ensure young people have access to the resources they need.

Summer 2023 pilot sites varied in their previous experience with summer programming

Prior to the pilot, two sites offered continuous, year-round group programming for all students while other sites offered more individualized summer support. In these programs, participation during the summer is an established expectation for students; and one that providers plan and budget for in advance. The other sites historically offered limited summer support for few students; determined on an individual basis by student need and funding availability. These programs vary in terms of the level of programming offered during the summer, from offering a “safe space” for students to continued case management and academic support. Additionally, some pilot sites serve students from smaller and less densely populated districts that are less likely to offer summer programming.

¹ The definition of post-resident youth is ever enrolled in institutional education between 2014–15 and 2022–23.

Summer 2023 pilot sites identified previous experience as key to their readiness to use this funding to bolster existing programming and partnerships

Relevant previous experience cited by program representatives included hiring staff to provide more intensive academic or case management services during the summer, expanding the range of work experiences available to students and/or exploring new partnerships to do so, and providing stipends for students. While two programs offered formal career-connected learning opportunities for all students (e.g., internships, career credentials) others worked through partners to help students with job or internship placements on an individual basis. Most commonly, programs described using barrier reduction funds to support clothing, school/work supplies, and transportation. Some also used the funds for testing fees, securing state identifications, and food. Table 3 summarizes the summer 2023 pilot sites’ activities.

Table 3. Summer 2023 pilot sites programming and partnerships

Program	Summer 2023 Programming	Types of Partners	Examples of Partnership Activities
ESD 101 Next Gen Zone	GED instruction and testing Case management	Institutional education District Justice system CBOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation • Intensive case management for post-resident youth
ESD 105	GED instruction and testing Case management Career connected learning	Institutional education District ESD CBOs College Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internship placement • Training for students • Space for learning activities • Basic needs support
ESD 113 Gravity	GED instruction and testing Case management Career connected learning	District CBOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internship placement • Career counseling and job placement • Basic needs support
Coupeville Open Den	HS instruction and testing Case management	Institutional education CBOs Local government Justice system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic needs support • Career counseling and job placement
Seattle Interagency (Orion and Columbia Centers)	GED instruction and testing Case management	Institutional education CBOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic needs support

Source: Education Northwest analysis of summer 2023 pilot site provider focus group data.

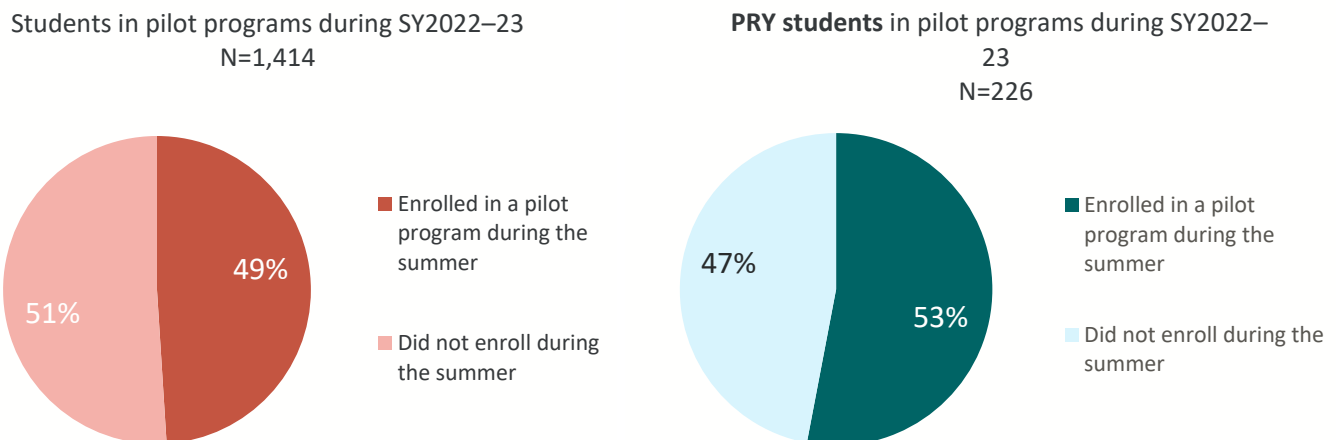
Summer 2023 pilot students

The five summer 2023 pilot sites served 607 students, including 76 post-resident youth who were identified in the CEDARS enrollment file as ever participated in institutional education. An additional 38 students who participated in the summer pilot self-reported as post-resident youth but were not in the institutional education records, for a total of 114 post-resident youth served in summer 2023 (see page 12 for more details).

Summer 2023 pilot sites provided continuity for their existing students and reconnection for new students

Overall, the summer 2023 pilot sites continued to serve just over half of the students who had been enrolled in their program during the previous school year while serving a slightly higher percentage of their post-resident youth students (figure 28).² This is promising data in terms of the potential for summer programs to provide continuity of support for students most at risk of disengagement.

Figure 28. About half of students enrolled in the pilot program during the 2022–23 school year also enrolled in the summer 2023 pilot



PRY = Post-resident youth.

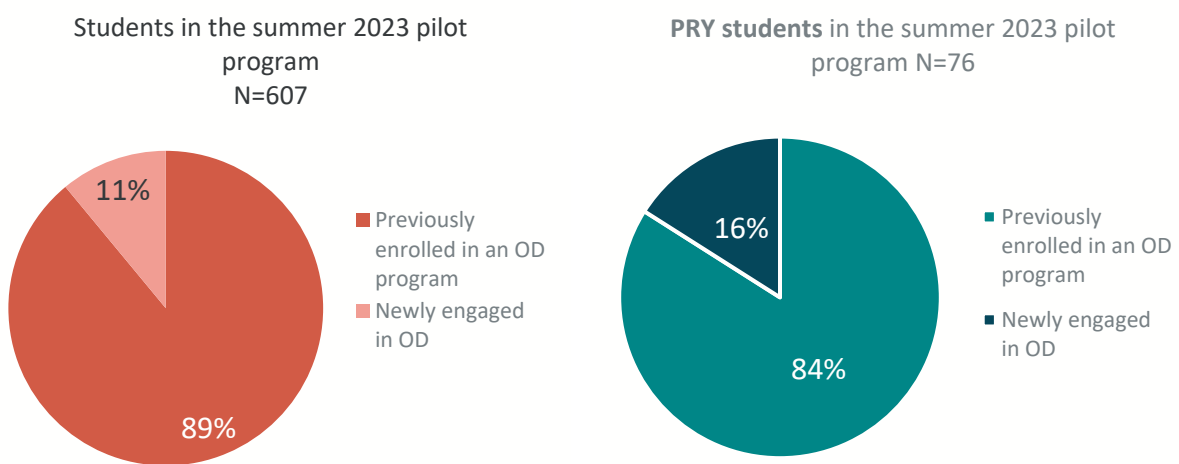
Note: Definition of PRY = Enrolled in institutional education at any time between 2014–15 and 2022–23.

Source: CEDARS, OD EOY files, and OSPI summer pilot data.

² We identified students who were in the summer pilot programs in the 2022–23 school year by identifying Open Doors students enrolled in those same providers in 2022–23 school year using the Open Doors End of Year data.

Additionally, 15 percent of post-resident youth and 11 percent of the students who participated in the summer 2023 pilot sites enrolled in the Open Doors program for the first time during the summer (figure 29). These data suggest that by operating during the summer, summer 2023 pilot programs were able to reengage students when they were ready, rather than waiting until the start of the next school year. Further, a small number of students who were not enrolled in Open Doors during the school year were not enrolled in high school at all in 2022–23. This finding highlights the importance of the Open Doors summer pilot program for reengaging disconnected youth.

Figure 29. Among summer 2023 pilot participants, 11 percent were newly enrolled during the summer program, and even higher for PRY



PRY = Post-resident youth. OD = Open Doors program.

Note: Definition of PRY = Enrolled in institutional education at any time between 2014–15 and 2022–23.

Source: CEDARS, OD EOY files, and OSPI summer pilot data.

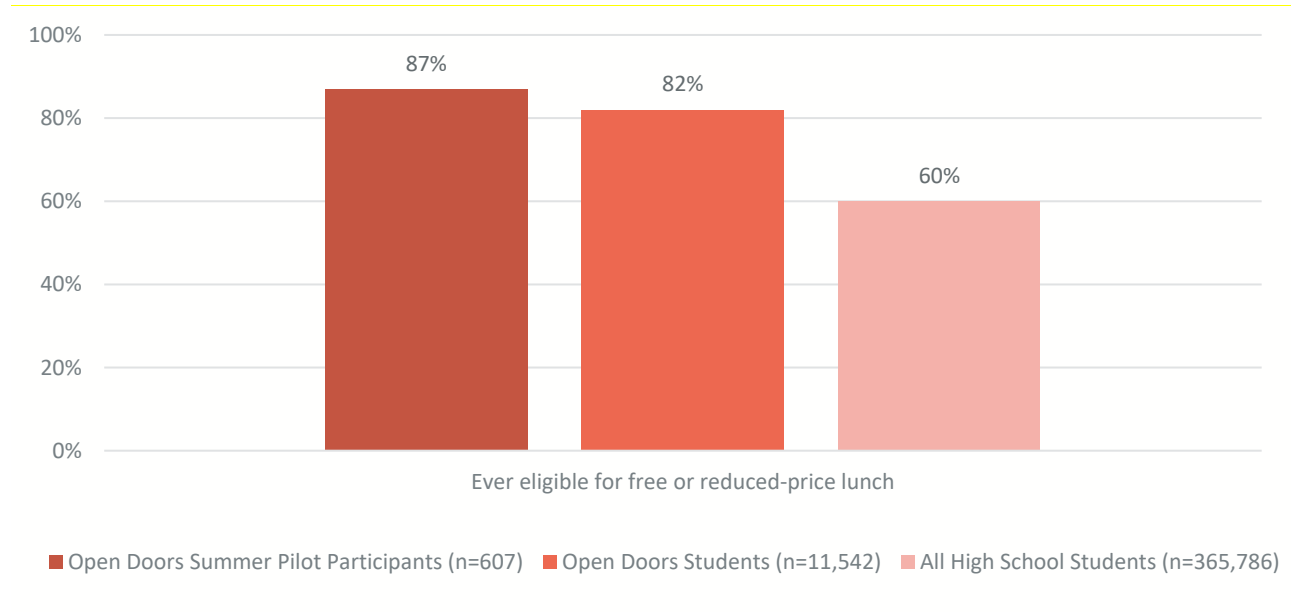
Summer 2023 pilot sites served vulnerable students.

Data suggests that the summer 2023 pilot sites successfully engaged students furthest from educational justice, often at a higher rate than Open Doors programs statewide do during the school year.

A higher percentage of summer pilot students were **eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL)** compared with the overall statewide Open Doors and high school populations (figures 30 and 31). At 43 percent, summer pilot students were considerably more likely to have **experienced homelessness** than the overall Open Doors and high school populations (figures 32 and 33). While the percentage of post-resident youth who were eligible for FRPL was slightly lower than for the

overall population of post-resident youth in Open Doors and in high schools statewide (figure 31), more than half of these students had experienced homelessness (figure 33). These findings are in line with insights shared by summer 23 pilot providers who noted that their programs offered students critical access to food and shelter during the summer months.

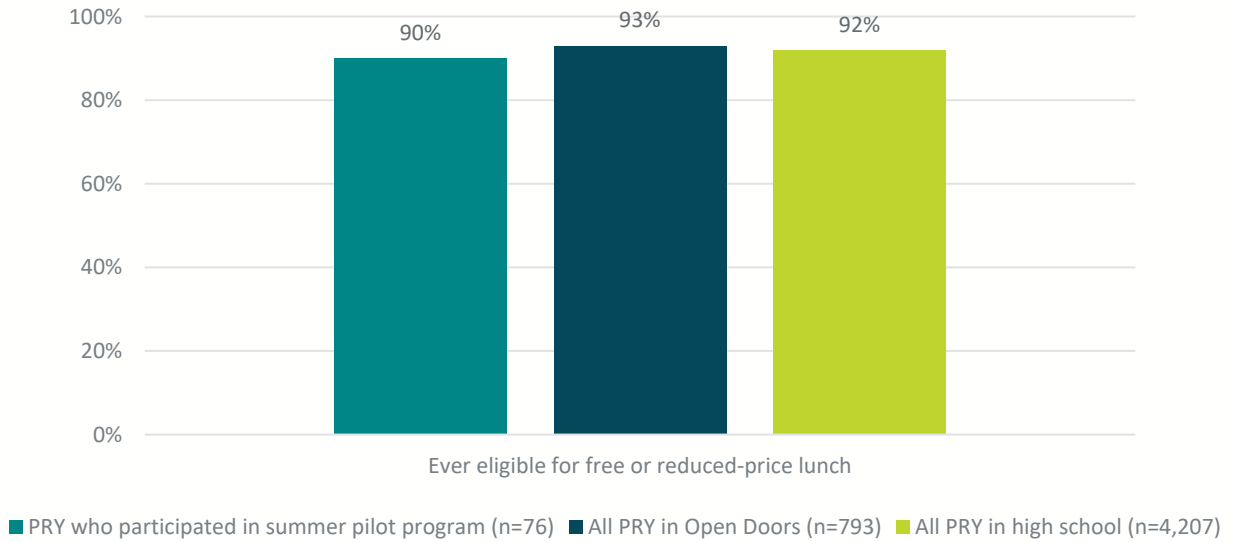
Figure 30. A higher percentage of summer 2023 pilot students were eligible for FRPL compared with the Open Doors and overall high school populations



FRPL = Free and reduced-price lunch.

Source: CEDARS, OD EOY files, and OSPI summer pilot data.

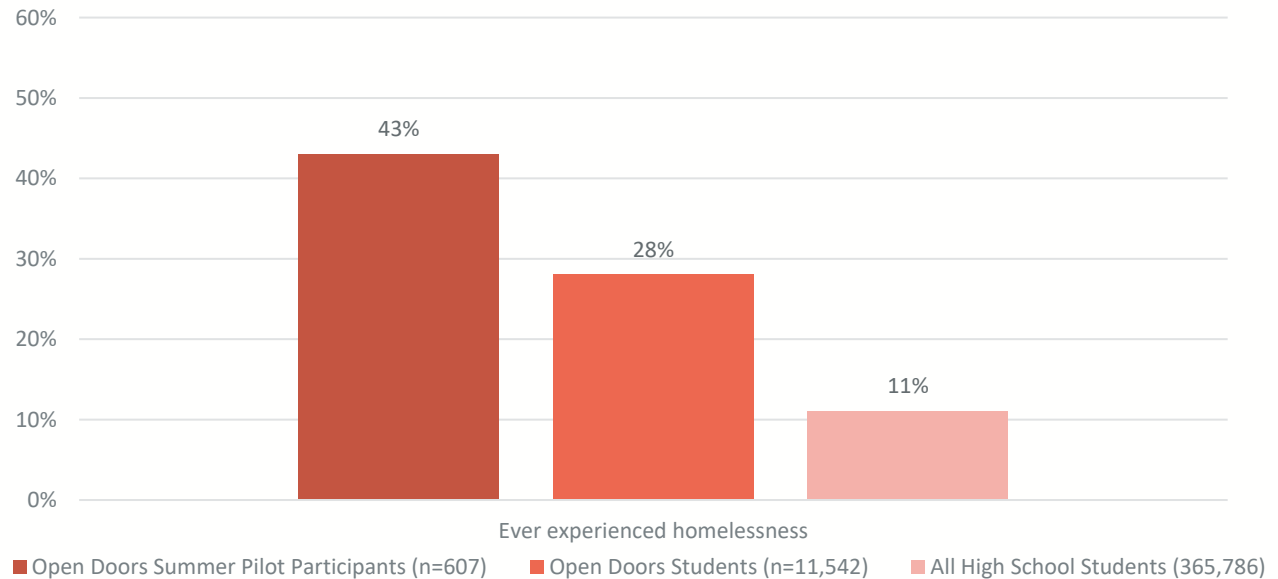
Figure 31. PRY had high rates of FRPL across systems



FRPL = Free and reduced-price lunch. PRY = Post-resident youth.

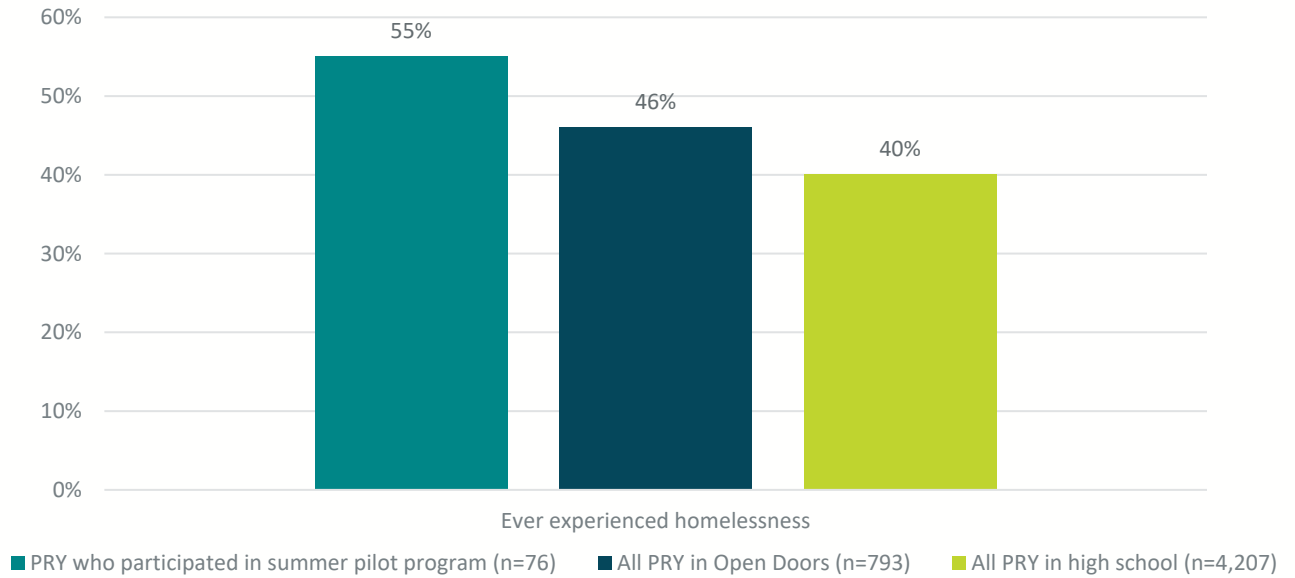
Source: CEDARS, OD EOY files, and OSPI summer pilot data.

Figure 32. Summer 2023 pilot students were more likely to have experienced homelessness than the Open Doors and overall high school populations



Source: CEDARS, OD EOY files, and OSPI summer pilot data.

Figure 33. PRY in summer 2023 pilot programs were more likely to have experienced homelessness than PRY in Open Doors and the high school population



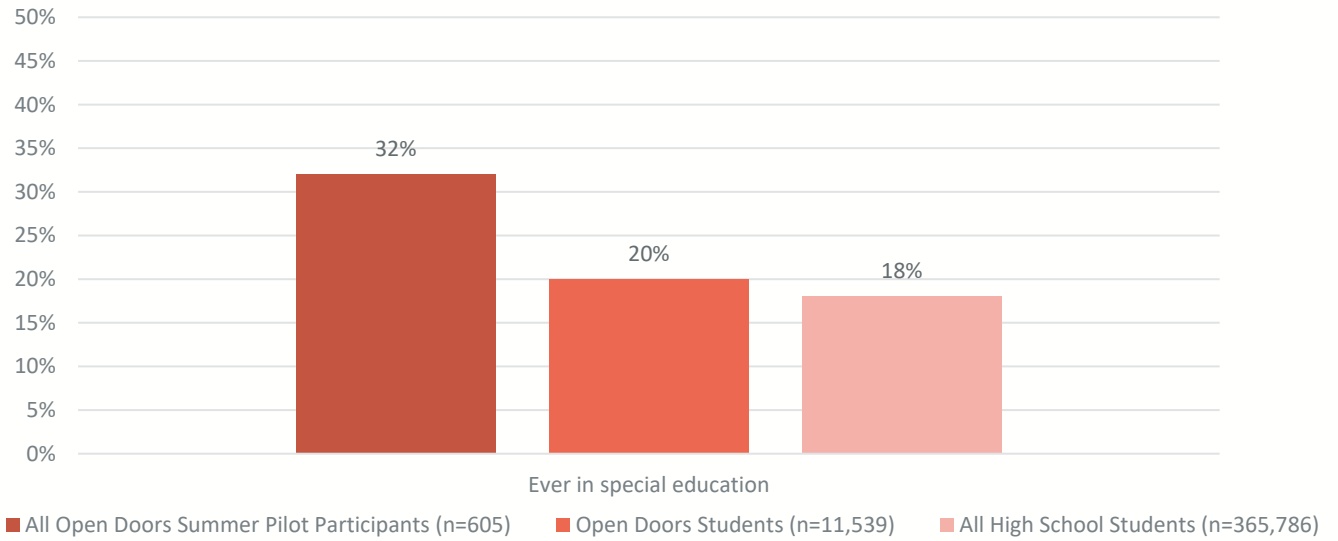
PRY = Post-resident youth.

Note: Definition of PRY = Enrolled in institutional education at any time between 2014–15 and 2022–23.

Source: CEDARS, OD EOY files, and OSPI summer pilot data.

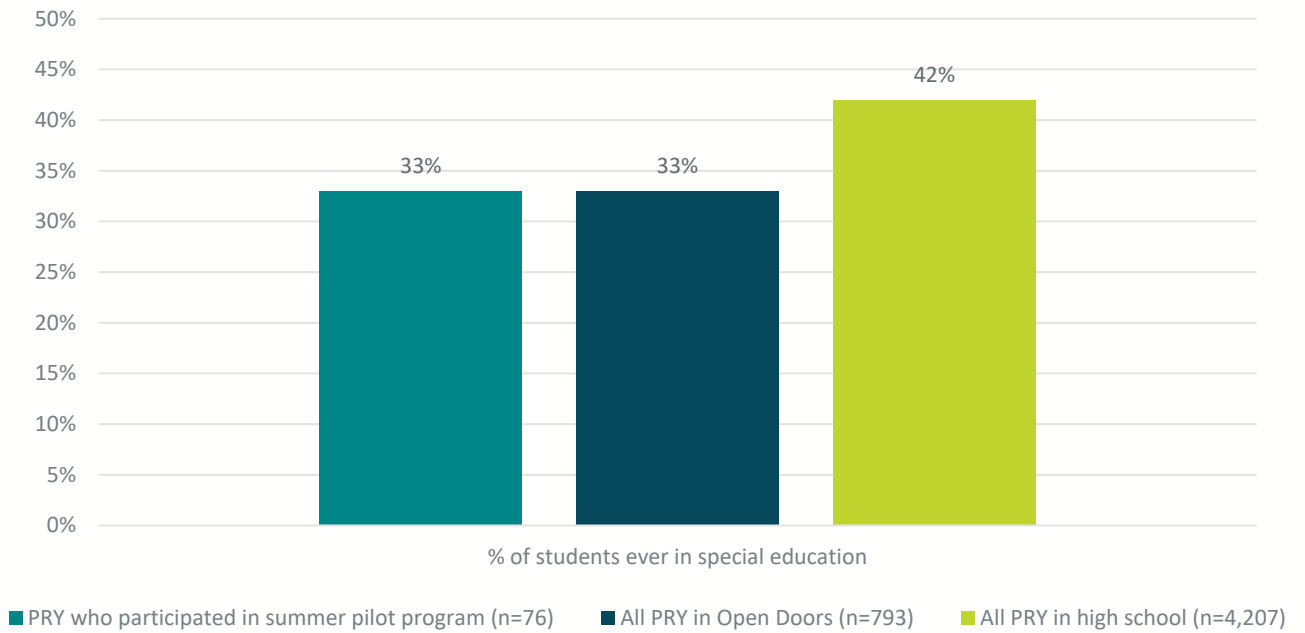
About a third of summer 2023 pilot students were eligible for **special education**, a considerably higher rate than for students in Open Doors and high school populations statewide (figure 34). Looking at rates for post-resident youth, Open Doors students in the summer 2023 pilot—and in Open Doors more generally—were less likely to be in special education than were post-resident youth statewide (figure 34).

Figure 34. Summer 2023 pilot participants were more likely to have been in special education than the Open Doors and overall high school populations



Source: CEDARS, OD EOY files, and OSPI summer pilot data.

Figure 35. PRY Open Doors students were less likely to be in special education than the overall PRY high school population



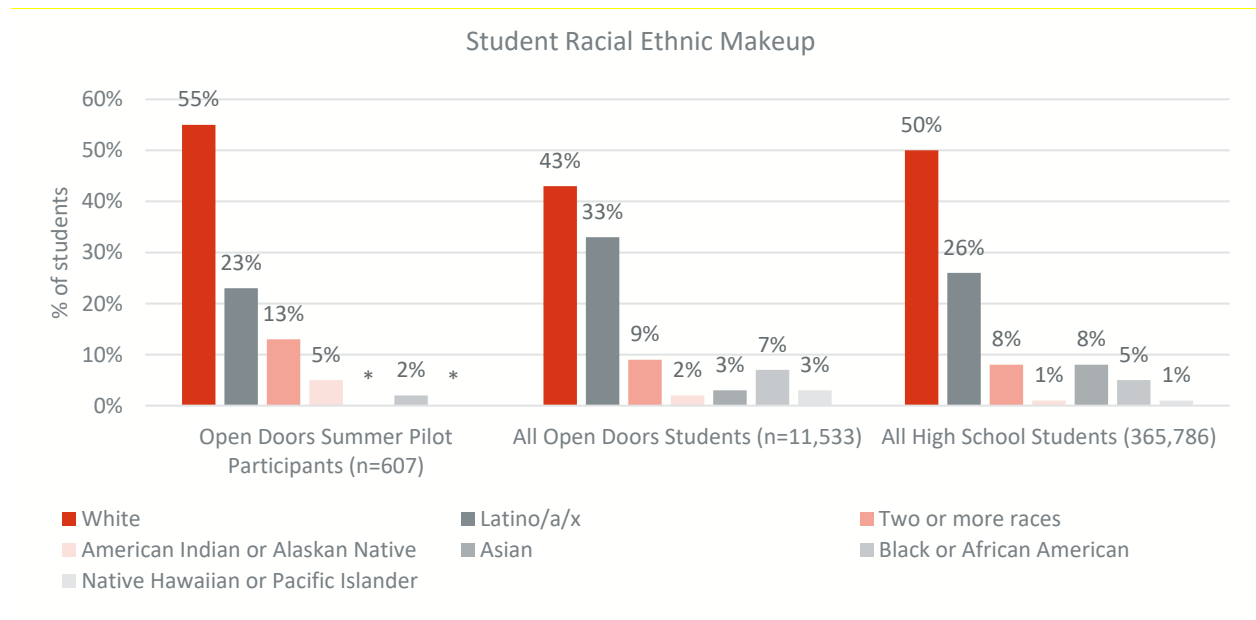
PRY = post-resident youth.

Note: Definition of PRY = Enrolled in institutional education at any time between 2014–15 and 2022–23.

Source: CEDARS, OD EOY files, and OSPI summer pilot data.

Looking at the racial-ethnic identity of students, the summer 2023 pilot sites served a lower percentage of Hispanic, Asian, and Black students, and a higher percentage of multi-racial and American Indian students compared with Open Doors statewide (figure 36). Post-resident youth in the summer 2023 pilot were also more likely to be white or two or more races than the Open Doors and overall high school populations (figure 37).

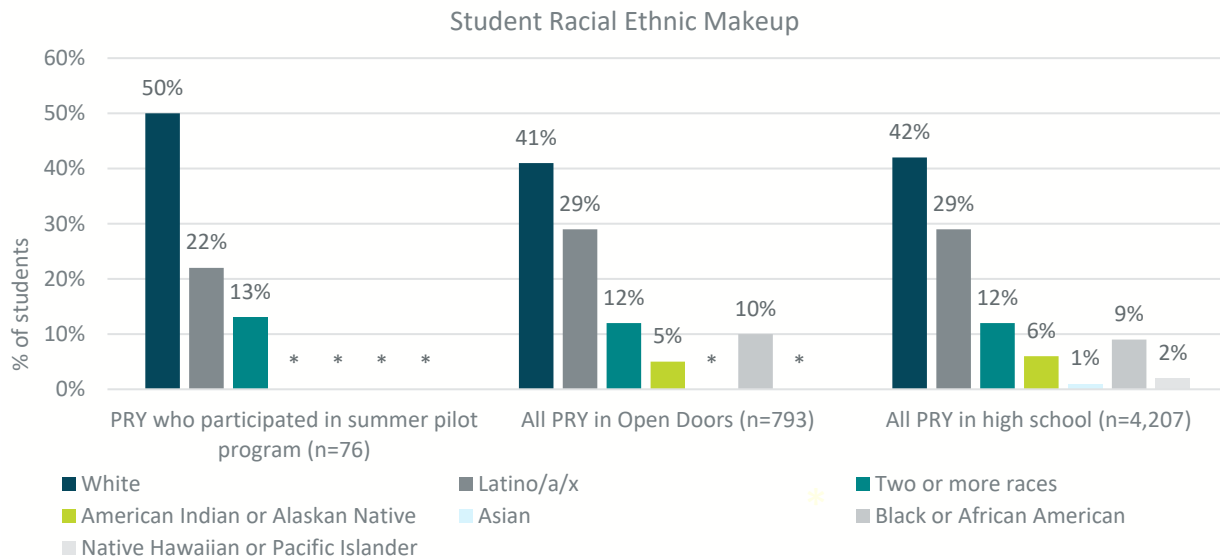
Figure 36. Summer 2023 pilot students were more likely to be white, two or more races, or American Indian than the Open Doors and overall high school populations



* Population redacted due to small sample size.

Source: CEDARS, OD EOY files, and OSPI summer pilot data.

Figure 37. PRY in the summer 2023 pilot were also more likely to be white and two or more races than the Open Doors and overall high school populations



* Population redacted due to small sample size.

PRY = Post-resident youth.

Note: Definition of PRY = Enrolled in institutional education at any time between 2014–15 and 2022–23.

Source: CEDARS, OD EOY files, and OSPI summer pilot data.

Bright spots and success factors

Most pilot sites reported higher levels of student engagement and academic progress during summer 2023 compared to previous years.

Below we discuss these bright spots in more detail and describe factors that pilot site staff members say promote student engagement and academic progress. Note that the final report will provide more data on academic progress.

“Student re-engagement in September is always a challenge ... Summer just bridged that because there was no end. It was just a continuation ... as a teacher, I saw the growth just continue and it was easier for me then to plan ... what's going to happen next ... heading towards the diploma.

– Coupeville Open Academy staff member

Summer funding provided pilot sites with a level of consistency critical to sustaining youth engagement and academic progress

Summer funding enabled pilot sites to **maintain a focus on academics** by offering more equitable access to high-quality summer learning for all students regardless of whether they had already used their 10 months of apportionment funding. Providers say filling this gap maintains all students' academic momentum and is especially important for those who are motivated to keep studying during the summer because they are close to completing their pathway goal or to aging out of the program.

In terms of outcomes, pilot sites reported that **students earned more indicators of academic progress and credits, passed more GED tests, and earned GEDs more quickly** due to their sustained engagement and barrier reduction support during the summer. Several sites reported increased levels of student retention from spring to fall after the summer pilot.

Pilot sites say that the funding strengthened their relationships

“Summer of '23 was the best we've ever done in terms of engagement and attendance in the summer. And this school year, kids were just flying out the door because they're getting their GEDs. It was great to see that having that [summer programming] available just kept them going. There was never the slowdown or the stopping point. This is true across the board with all education. We know that summer programming is successful, it works. We just need to do it.”

– ESD 113 Gravity staff member

with youth and cultivated a sense of trust that the program will be there when they need support

Programs that historically operated during the summer cultivate a **year-round mindset** where students experience a similar set of expectations, opportunities, supports during the summer months. This consistency is especially critical for youth who have experienced detention or who are involved in other public systems such as child welfare. As one provider noted, summer funding enabled them to “strike while the iron is hot” and be there when youth were ready to engage, whether they were enrolling in the program for the first time or returning after a break.

Pilot sites conducted **intentional outreach and relationship building** to encourage youth, especially post-resident youth, to participate during the summer. They note that the personalized support

offered by case managers and instructors, combined with their smaller learning environments, enable them to build on the strengths of youth who have experienced detention. Several sites also asked for **youth input** on the design of the summer program.

For example, ESD 105 used the funding to reach back out to post-resident youth and others who completed their GED but who were still eligible for the enhanced support available through the summer pilot. The program used asset-based language to communicate with students about the unique opportunities available to them during the summer and invited input from students on what they would like to see in the program.

Through the program students were able to complete career credentials, gain work experience, prepare for college, and/or secure employment and housing to support their families. Many students reportedly stayed enrolled in the fall.

“... the internships and those skills that they learned—it was just fantastic! And we're retaining all the students. Where in previous years ... there was a gap. And then it was harder for our students to reengage because some students found themselves back into the system ...”

– ESD 105 staff member

Barrier reduction funding attracted students to summer programming and supported their overall stability and well-being

All sites described how the provision of barrier reduction funds **increased the stability and well-being of students during the summer**. This includes helping young people access employment, housing, and mental health support. One provider noted that the access to barrier reduction support was “life changing” for their students in terms of setting them up for long-term postsecondary stability and success.

Pilot sites commonly reported that the ability to say “yes” to barrier reduction requests helped to cultivate a sense of trust in students, while also making it possible for them to respond to needs more quickly. Several sites used the funding to offer **more intensive case management** during the summer, and some used the funds to develop new partnerships with community-based organizations focused on supporting youth with basic needs—including partners with a specific focus on post-resident youth.

“We had a student complete their GED over the summer strictly, which was amazing. That generally doesn't happen ... it's someone who had been really struggling with housing and we just caught them at the end of the [school] year. And so having that summer program that was really GED specific was perfect for them. They were able to come in, they finished, and we hooked them up with the navigator and they got housing at the end of it.”

– Seattle Interagency staff member

“[Barrier reduction funding from OSPI] provides hope ... We don't have to wait on the community partner, we don't have to jump through so many hoops to be able to help a young person ... when you're dealing with post-resident youth, oftentimes, they're in some form of trauma ... I mean case management trauma. I need this today, not next week. So being able to do that and be able to have that word of mouth be spread among other young people, they know, ‘Okay, we can count on them to be able to do this for us immediately and I don't have to wait around for whatever,’ I think that's a big deal. It gives young people confidence in the system.”

– ESD 101 staff member

Pilot site staff members also relayed that **career-connected learning** was a big draw for students during the summer. The ability of the program to use funds to provide stipends or other forms of

compensation made it possible for more students to participate in work-based learning activities during the summer, reducing competition with summer jobs.

Pilot sites strengthened existing partnerships and explored new ones

All sites reported collaborating in some capacity with **institutional education and education advocates**. As noted above, co-location of these functions in the same agency that runs Open Doors facilitated information sharing, referrals, and continuous support for students. Several organizations also described positive relationships with **judges, probation officers, and parole officers**—by offering summer programming, they provided a space for post-resident youth to meet with their probation officers. All sites partnered with **community-based organizations** to provide either career-connected learning or support for students' basic needs and overall well-being. Sites commonly noted that strong **district** partnerships were critical to support summer student outreach and enrollment, helping them to set up agreements to receive referrals and access student records during the summer.

Challenges identified by summer 2023 pilot sites

Summer 2023 pilot sites experienced many of the same challenges operating summer programming and serving post-resident youth as were shared in provider survey responses and focus groups. However, they did identify several challenges unique to the 2023 pilot funding.

- **Short start-up time:** Sites reported that they only had a couple of weeks to prepare to use the funding. This presented challenges in terms of developing new partnerships, offering new programming, finding available staff, and using barrier reduction funds.
- **Sustainability:** Sites expressed concern about sustaining the enhanced services and support once the pilot funding ends. For example, they experienced challenges explaining to students that barrier reduction support was no longer available during the school year.

Recommendations from providers and partners statewide

Providers and partners statewide offer the following recommendations for strengthening summer programming and services for post-resident youth through Open Doors:

1. Provide all programs with robust, flexible funding for year-round programming and barrier reduction to promote more equitable access to summer learning statewide.
2. Offer programs professional development, training, and guidance around summer programming and supporting post-resident youth.
3. Raise awareness of Open Doors within DCYF and identify ways the programs can coordinate at the state and local levels to support students through key transition points.
4. Provide more concrete guidance and training to districts about their responsibility to educate youth who have experienced detention and interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline.

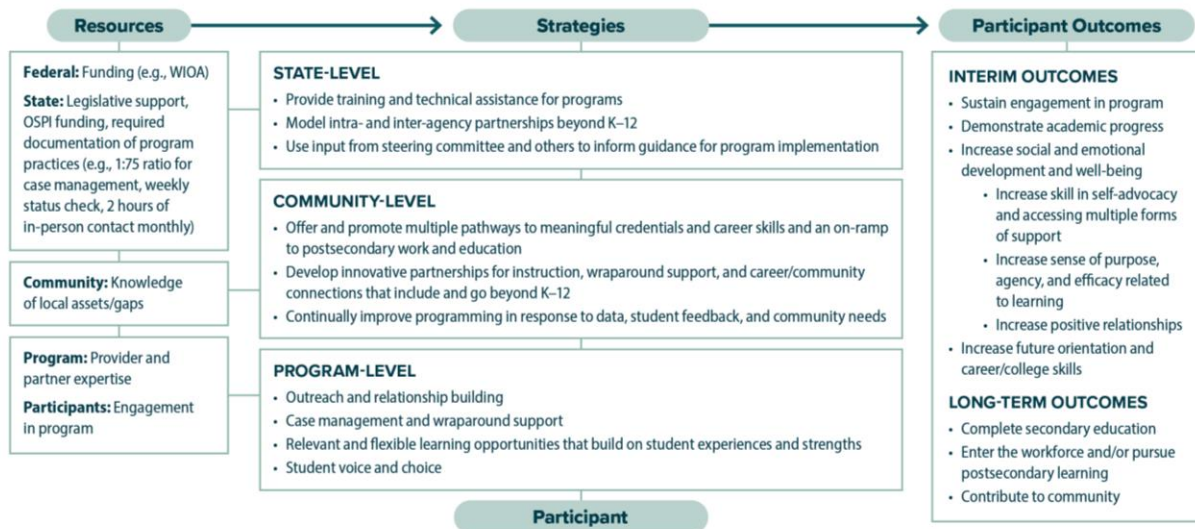
Appendix A: Open Doors Youth Reengagement Theory of Action

Focus Population

Open Doors is an option for young people 16-21 who are not enrolled in high school, who are not on track to complete by 21, and/or who may not complete high school with their cohort without intensive supports.¹

Assumptions

- Youth experience disruptions in their high school education for multiple, complex reasons
- Alternative learning, credit recovery, and online learning programs do not provide sufficient support for all students
- Through cross-agency partnerships, youth reengagement programs can offer intensive and varied supports in response to the personal challenges and goals of each student



¹ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=392-700-035&pdf=true>

Foundational Principles



Student-based programming, services, and supports to fit individual goals, needs, and strengths



Whole-person support to address barriers to learning and promote overall well-being



Connections to career and/or postsecondary education to help students take their next step



Equity-informed design and implementation to address disparities and support students furthest from educational justice

Appendix B: Additional research support

Collaborate across organizations, systems, and sectors to reduce barriers and provide whole-person support

- Cross-system relationships and perspectives are critical in supporting post-resident youth, especially those who are also involved in the child welfare system or receiving mental health or special education services (Clark et al, 2016; House et al., 2018, NDTAC, 2023)
- The capacity of education agencies to partner with CBOs and local government facilitates integrated student support in K–12 (Fries et al., 2012) and barrier reduction in postsecondary (Fujita-Conrads et al., 2024; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2021; April et al., 2020)

Summer programs can partner with local organizations to connect with youth and connect them with paid employment opportunities (Goodyear et al., 2022; Augustine et al., 2021; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).

- Provision of transportation and offering paid summer employment opportunities can reduce barriers to participation in summer programs (Augustine et al., 2021)
- Summer programs leverage funding from federal, state, and philanthropic sources to support operations (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019)

Center relationships and offer engaging learning opportunities grounded in the priorities of young people and families

- Provide post-resident youth with strengths-based programming (Dempsey et al., 2021) that is centered on their individual interests and includes career training opportunities and family engagement (Gagnon & Barber, 2019; Zaugg & Jarjoura, 2017)
- Offer summer programming that centers relationships with students; provide creative, inquiry-based forms of learning and high-quality academics; and solicit input from students and families (Bang et al., 2021; West, 2023; Augustine et al., 2016; Augustine et al., 2021)

Promote continuous learning to ensure the learning environment is responsive to students

- Provide comprehensive professional development on how to support post-resident youth before, during, and after transition from detention and use data for continuous improvement (Chaney & Schwartz, 2020; NDTAC, 2023)
- Provide professional development specific to summer programming (West, 2023)

Appendix C: PRY students enrolled in Open Doors SY 2022-23 who were ever enrolled in IE, by facility

Facility Type	Facility Name	Number of PRY enrolled in OD in SY2022-23
Community Facility	Cowlitz County Youth Service Center	44
	Oakland High School	78
	Oakridge Group Home	<10
	Parke Creek Treatment Center	<10
	Ridgeview Group Home	<10
	Structural Alt Confinement School	24
	The Healing Lodge	29
	Touchstone	<10
	Woodinville Community Center	<10
Detention Center	Benton/Franklin Juvenile Justice Center	65
	Chelan County Juvenile Justice Center	18
	Clallam Co Juvenile Detention School	<10
	Clark County Juvenile Detention School	53
	Grays Harbor Juvenile Detention	27
	Interagency Detention School	39
	Island Juvenile Detention Education Program	18

	Juvenile Detention Center	65
	Kitsap Co Detention Center	20
	Lewis County Juvenile Detention	20
	Martin Hall Detention Center	52
	Mason County Detention Center	21
	Okanogan Co Juvenile Detention	<10
	Remann Hall Juvenile Detention Center	66
	Skagit County Detention Center	<10
	Snohomish Detention Center	73
	Spokane Juvenile Detention Center	55
	Thurston Co Juvenile Detention	76
	Whatcom Co Detention Center	26
Long Term Juvenile Institution	Echo Glen School	69
	Green Hill Academic School	29
	Naselle Youth Camp School	24

Note: Definition of PRY ever in IE = Enrolled in institutional education at any time between 2014–15 and 2022–23.

Appendix D: Student population across all programs compared to programs that responded to the survey and said they had summer programming (2015–2021)

	Average across all Open Doors programs (n = 114 programs)	Average across Open Door programs reporting a summer program in the Education Northwest survey (n = 78 programs*)
Gender		
Male	56%	55%
Female	44%	45%
Non-binary	<1%	<1%
Race/ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2%	2%
Asian	3%	3%
Black or African American	8%	6%
Latino/a/x	27%	32%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2%	1%
Two or more races	8%	6%
White	50%	50%
Program participation and experiences in high school as of 2020–21		

Free or reduced-price lunch	78%	80%
Learning assistance program	29%	29%
Experienced homelessness	22%	24%
Special education	18%	18%
504 plan	10%	11%
English language learner	10%	11%
Migrant education program	2%	5%
High school academic progress upon enrolling in Open Doors		
Average cumulative high school grade point average	1.3	1.4
Average cumulative high school credits earned	9.5	10.2

*The number of programs is larger than the number of survey respondents who said they had summer because some survey respondents reported for multiple programs.

Note: The average across all Open Doors programs is from Appendix A of Education Northwest’s report Community Partnerships for Reengagement Initiative: Summary Report (Petrokubi et al., 2023). The average across Open Door programs that responded to the Education Northwest survey and reported having a summer program is calculated from the CPRI dataset used in that report and is the average for each program that reported having a summer program in the survey. It is not the weighted average nor the percentage of students who fall into the category for all summer students.

Source: All data originally came from Comprehensive Education and Research System data files and students’ high school records. The total sample size is 27,964 students who participated in Open Doors between 2015–16 and 2020–21. These numbers predate the summer pilot.

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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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