

OPEN DOORS SUMMER PILOT SITE PROFILE

ESD 123 TC Futures

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

Overview

Educational Service District (ESD) 123 TC Futures is an Open Doors program run in partnership with ESD 123, Benton Franklin Workforce Development Council, and Career Path Services based in Kennewick, Washington. During the school year, students engage in academic work online with two hours of on-site services a month, weekly contacts from the TC Futures staff, and an option for online tutoring. Students have year-round access to academic software so that studying can take place at any time. TC Futures received 2024 summer pilot funding to support expanded summer partnerships and career-connected learning opportunities.

ESD 123 TC Futures program overview, school year 2023–24

- GED plus
- ESD
- Community type: Town, fringe; town, distant; town, remote; rural, distant; city, small; suburban, large)
- **591** students enrolled in SY 2023–24
- Average age at enrollment: **17.6**
- Average credits at enrollment: **4.7**

Source: Evaluation team analysis of Appendix R and Open Doors end-of-year data.

Summer 2024 pilot program design and implementation

TC Futures is open year round, with the same staffing and services offered during the school year and the summer. Prior to the pilot, the program offered limited workforce development and life skills training. TC



Futures used the summer pilot as an opportunity to deepen summer program offerings with the goal of increasing students' indicator of academic progress (IAP) earnings, pathway completion, retention from spring to fall, well-being and stability, and college and career skills (table 1).

Table 1. ESD 123 TC Futures summer 2024 pilot goals, activities, and intended outcomes

Goals	Summer program activities	Intended outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New/deeper programming • New/deeper partnerships • Expanded student participation in summer learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GED instruction and testing • Career-connected learning • Community-connected learning • Intensive case management • Unique or innovative program activities limited to the summer months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators of academic progress earning • Pathway completion • Retention from spring to fall • Student well-being and stability • College or career skills

OVERVIEW OF SUMMER PROGRAM PILOT

With summer pilot funds, TC Futures expanded its summer programming to include workplace learning opportunities, career and life skills development, paid internships, and other career-connected learning opportunities. The program grew its partnerships and staff to support this work.

A unique in-person summer learning experience with peers

During the school year, most programming is online. TC Futures requires students to meet in person or face-to-face for at least two hours per month, attend a weekly check-in, and demonstrate academic progress every 90 days. In the summer pilot, the program was able to provide full-time programming with community partners. Staff members reflected that it was a huge shift for students to attend in-person programming for 40 hours a week.

Support for overall well-being, belonging, and basic needs

Students were motivated to come into TC Futures because of the welcoming, safe environment and staff members. Staff members commented that relationships and trust must be established before they can support students with barrier reduction. The program used barrier reduction funds for students' transportation to and from internships and field trips as well as other basic needs such as food, cosmetics, and toiletries.



I feel like if that relationship isn't built, we won't know why they're struggling with their GED, why they're not coming in, why they need that extra help. And if we don't have that relationship, we can't bring down those barriers for them to help them. I always say, if there's a bajillion other things going on at home, the GED is the last thing on their mind. They need clothes. They need to shower."

TC Futures program staff member

Intensive support for multilingual students

TC Futures hired a new staff member focused on English as a second language (ESL) classes and tutoring during the summer to provide more support for Spanish-speaking students. In addition, the program purchased a Spanish GED preparation software. Staff members saw this as a big shift for the program and supporting students whose first language is Spanish.

New and expanded community and industry partnerships

The summer pilot funding enabled TC Futures to expand partnerships, particularly to offer career-connected learning aligned with community and labor market needs. Partners also provided support for postsecondary planning and personal development.

Table 2. ESD 123 TC Futures summer 2024 pilot partners and activities

Partners	Key summer activities
Career Path Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life skills and work readiness training• Paid internship opportunities in the hospitality field
Growing Forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership academy to help students increase confidence, develop leadership skills, and learn about the community and local youth services
Reddout Wine Consulting and Frichette Wines*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training on potential career opportunities in the hospitality industry and possibly obtaining a paid work experience
Benton-Franklin Juvenile Justice, Kennewick School District, and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outreach to connect post-resident youth with summer programming

*Indicates a new partnership

Career-connected learning

TC Futures established new partnerships to support students' leadership and career skills development and to match students with paid work experiences aligned with their interests. Students took field trips to a leadership academy, a community health center, a winery, and other hospitality-related worksites. Program staff members reflected on the importance of students seeing "how they could fit within a career or workplace." In addition, TC Futures leveraged partnerships to provide students with life skills (e.g., financial literacy, digital literacy, relationship skills) and work readiness training.

Figure 1. Photographs taken by TC Futures student participants during the summer pilot



In the photo (left) [is] Paul, one of our teachers for Leadership Academy. He was talking about how having a vision for the future and getting others to invest in that vision is a part of being a good leader to others.”

TC Futures student

“This photo (right) shows a lesson on healthy versus not healthy relationships in our dignified work class.”

TC Futures student

TC Futures staff members see partnerships as key to meeting students' needs. For example, TC Futures partnered with Career Path Services to deliver its Dignified Work model. Program staff members and partners said that Dignified Work was the foundational piece of summer programming, which involved resume workshops, leadership development, and industry-related skill development. Classroom learning was paired with paid internships and career-related field trips.



And so it was a natural partnership when we started talking about summer planning to leverage some of our expertise in that space. And we have a proprietary program that we can deliver within our streamlined youth program, our out-of-school youth program. But it's been a really cool way to pilot this Dignified Work service delivery model with these pilot dollars. It's more difficult to do with our highly regulated federal funds. So this was a really great way to experiment with what youth need with that model. And so, yeah, it's been really natural and exciting, and I think we're seeing some really great results."

TC Futures program partner

Student participation in summer 2024 pilot

STUDENT OUTREACH

One goal of the summer 2024 pilot was increasing student participation, particularly among students who have been involved with the juvenile justice system, have participated in migrant education, or reside in more rural areas. TC Futures uses various methods to reach out to and engage youth. To engage youth who have been involved with the justice system, the program partners closely with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families and probation officers to refer students. Many students are also referred through word of mouth, including friends, friends of friends, and family members. Program staff members have increased their marketing of summer programming to students and families through emails, phone calls, and text messages.

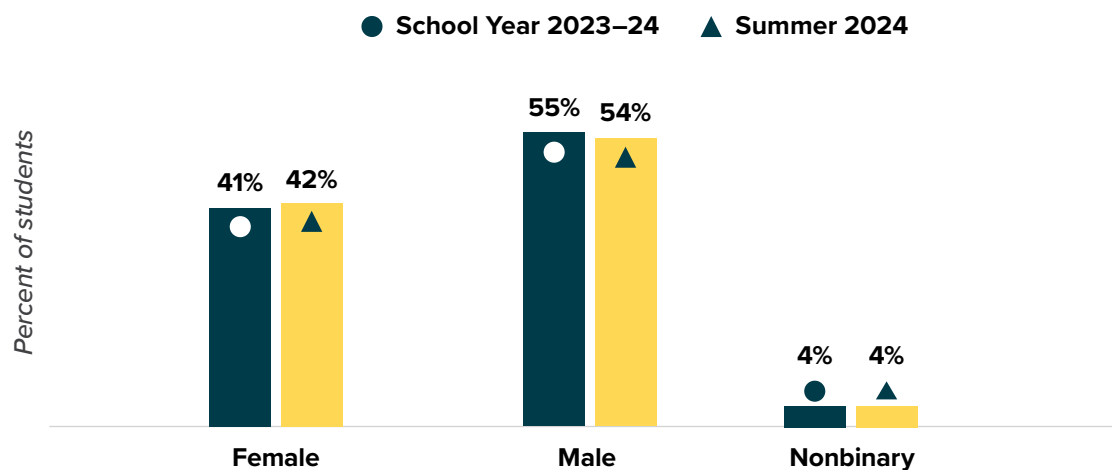
STUDENTS SERVED IN SUMMER 2024

Two hundred-thirteen students participated in summer 2024. All students participated in both July and August. Seven percent of summer participants were post-resident youth.

Compared to students enrolled in the 2023–24 school year program, students in the summer program first enrolled in Open Doors at a slightly younger age (17.2 compared with 17.6) and with slightly more credits (5.0 compared with 4.7).

The summer population had a similar gender and racial/ethnic makeup to the school year population but a slightly lower percentage of students who identified as Latino/a/x (figures 2 and 3). In addition, summer 2024 students had similar school experiences to the school year population, with a slightly lower percentage of students who had been classified as English learners or experienced homelessness (figure 4).

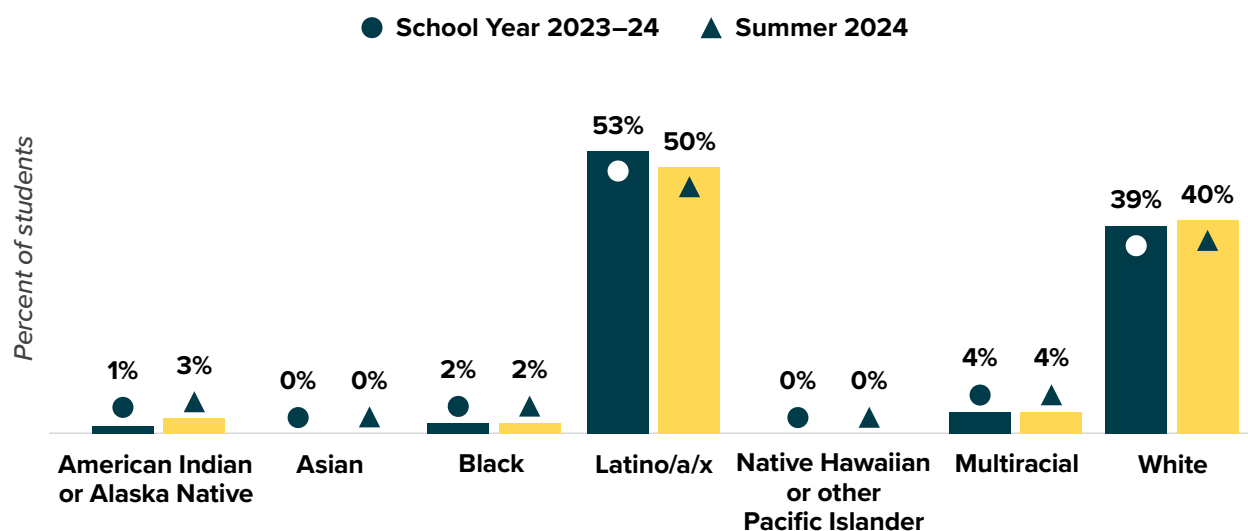
Figure 2. The summer 2024 student population had about the same percentage of female, male, and nonbinary students compared to the 2023–24 school year population



Note: N = 591 for school year and N = 213 for summer.

Source: Evaluation team analysis of Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) data.

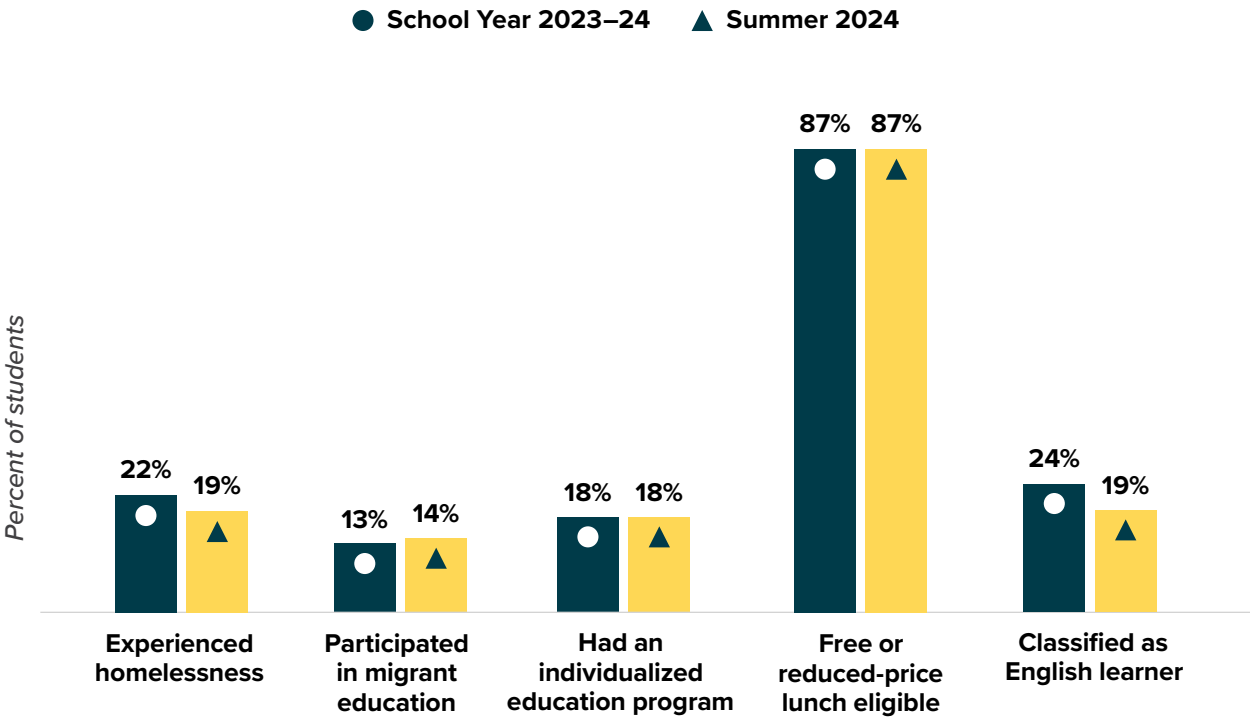
Figure 3. The summer 2024 student population had a slightly lower percentage of students who identify as Latino/a/x compared to the 2023–24 school year population



Note: N = 591 for school year and N = 213 for summer.

Source: Evaluation team analysis of CEDARS data.

Figure 4. The summer 2024 population had similar school experiences to the 2023–24 school year population, with a slightly lower percentage of students who had been classified as English learners



Note: Data are from 2014–15 to 2023–24 and so span students’ upper elementary, middle school, and high school years. N = 591 for school year and N = 213 for summer.
Source: Evaluation team analysis of CEDARS data.

Outcomes

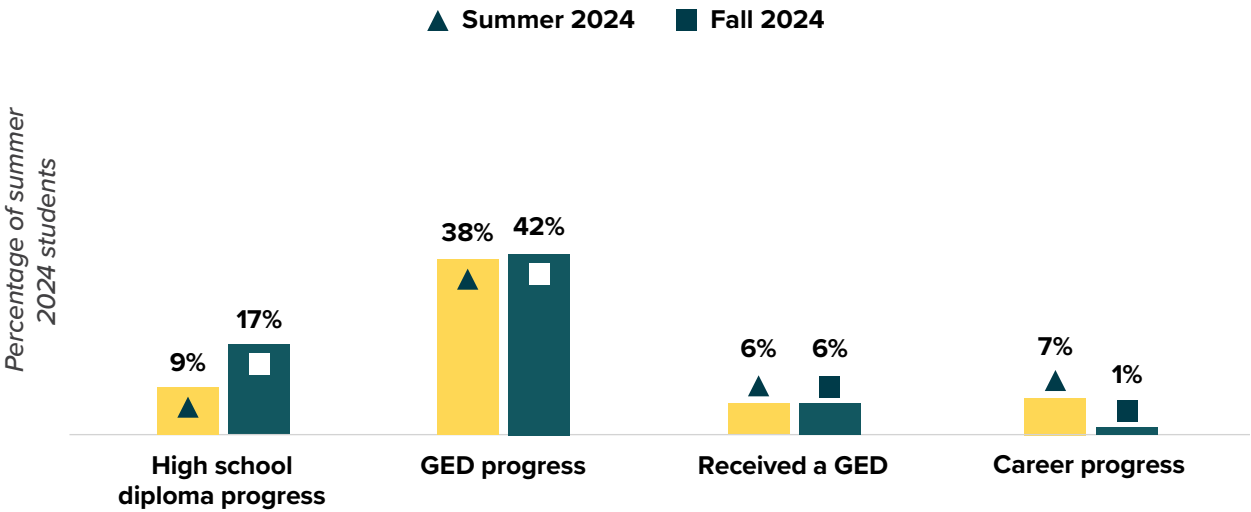
SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS

In the summer pilot, TC Futures saw increased engagement, attendance, and consistency from students. The program also made progress in terms of IAP completion, particularly around work readiness and IAP earning for students who speak English as a second language.

Student achievement of indicators of academic progress in summer and fall 2024 based on quantitative data

Forty-eight percent of summer 2024 students earned an IAP in summer 2024 and 44 percent earned an IAP in fall 2024. Thirty-eight percent of students were working toward GED progress in the summer and 6 percent earned a GED. This progress persisted through the fall, with **42 percent of summer participants making progress toward their GED and 6 percent earning their GED in fall 2024** (figure 5). Additionally, 9 percent of summer students made progress toward their high school diploma in the summer and 17 percent made progress in the fall.

Figure 5. Over one-third of students who participated in summer 2024 made progress toward a GED in summer and fall 2024



Note: N = 213. IAPs were categorized into high school diploma progress, high school diploma completion, GED progress, GED completion, college academic progress, college credential completion, career progress, and career credential completion. IAP categories are not shown if no students achieved IAPs in that category in either summer or fall 2024. For the categories displayed in this figure, the IAPs that were achieved were:

- High school diploma progress:** h. Successfully completes a grade level curriculum in a core academic subject that does not earn high school or college credit.
- GED progress:** f. Passes one or more high school equivalency certificate measures (each measure may only be claimed once per enrolled student), or other state assessment. g. Makes a significant gain in a core academic subject based on the assessment tool’s determination of significant gain (may be claimed multiple times in a year per enrolled student).
- Career credential:** d. Receives an industry recognized certificate of completion of training or licensing received after completion of a program requiring at least 40 hours of instruction.

Source: Evaluation team analysis of pilot site reporting on summer 2024 and fall 2024 outcomes.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE SKILLS

Over the summer, staff members saw growth in student confidence, learning, and self-development. Similarly, students reflected on their growth in career-related skills, like interviewing and financial literacy. Students also mentioned developing more emotional awareness, vulnerability in front of others, and improved communication skills.



[The summer program] helped me with my emotional awareness and communication. Keeping things and some skills in mind that I learned from Dignified Work and Leadership Academy.”

TC Futures student

“I learned to be vulnerable in front of others from the Leadership Academy Program.”

TC Futures student

“The outlook they have on what can be achieved by them has shifted a lot. The confidence, the development—self-development is huge. Giving them that exposure and having them talk about themselves in a new light almost, it seems like that’s making ... it’s changed their perspective. At first, they felt like their life was predetermined. They could only follow this path that they’ve only seen in cycles through their families. And now it’s like, ‘Oh my God, I can do something different.’ I feel like that’s success.”

TC Futures program staff member

SENSE OF BELONGING AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS

Over the summer, staff members saw growth in student confidence, learning, and self-development. Similarly, students reflected on their growth in career-related skills, like interviewing and financial literacy. Students also mentioned developing more emotional awareness, vulnerability in front of others, and improved communication skills.



Typically, they show up alone, do the application, start studying alone, and they don't really interact with each other. And hearing them talk or giggle or have conversation, walk out of the building having conversations not related to school, is really interesting because they are starting to build these relationships and these connections, and they're not alone, and they're not the only ones going through a situation in their life."

TC Futures program staff member

Similarly, students reflected on the friends they made during the summer. One student said that being around peers with similar backgrounds or school experiences fostered connections and friendships.



I don't usually make friends, but I guess it's that I know that these people here are pretty similar to me. We all have something in common so it's not as scary. You don't feel like you're beneath or higher. There's no cliques here. There's no school gang."

TC Futures student

Success factors and challenges

INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE STAFF

Participants commonly described positive relationships with staff members and the program's welcoming environment as key factors that supported youth engagement and progress. A key part of that was having high-quality facilities, technology, and supports for students.



We're really intentional about creating an environment that youth want to learn in. We want to keep our facilities nice. We want to have great technology. We want to have new clothes for them. When we purchase the support services, they're buying new clothes, they're buying hygiene items. They get to choose what they're purchasing. That's where the Dignified Work, our dignity, comes from in our career path services mission statement, is breaking the spirit of poverty through the dignity of work. So we have this dignity, dignified branding throughout, but it really shows up at TC Futures, and we're in a brand new facility."

TC Futures program staff member

Students valued the calm, welcoming learning environment and felt like staff members were willing to "meet them where they are at" and help in any way they could. As noted above, staff members viewed relationship building as a critical first step in helping students.



It is a really chill environment. Relaxed. They play music. They get your comfort food. And if there are any problems, you can just ask. Even if you're a young mom, they have baby diapers and bottles and stuff like that."

TC Futures student

COMPLEMENTARY PARTNERSHIPS

Staff members noted that the summer pilot provided an opportunity to build new partnerships that the program plans to continue in the future. One key to successful partnerships was embedding and integrating learning, field trips, and career opportunities into students' experiences so that the learning opportunities built on each other instead of duplicating experiences.

OUTREACH AND RAISING COMMUNITY AWARENESS

In the spring, before the start of the summer pilot, program staff members put on a lunch-and-learn series so that students, families, community partners, and staff members from local school districts could come to the TC Futures center and learn about the summer program. Program staff members said that these events were incredibly helpful in recruiting students and connecting with districts.

COMPETING COMMITMENTS FOR STUDENTS

Program staff members reflected on challenges to student participation in the summer. External commitments, particularly seasonal jobs, can make it challenging for students to join during the summer, particularly for many of the program's migrant students. When possible, TC Futures offers online programming and flexible schedules to meet students' needs.

LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF DISTRICT STAFF MEMBERS

School districts are less responsive during the summer, which can slow down referrals and enrollment. TC Futures staff members also mentioned challenges providing needed services, like special education, as teachers and district staff members do not work during the summer.

CHALLENGES SUSTAINING SUMMER PILOT ACTIVITIES

Transportation remained a big challenge for students. TC Futures used barrier reduction funds to support transportation but noted that it remained expensive. In addition, staff members ensured that students received lunch each day; they said that it was important but time-consuming and expensive endeavor.

Financial literacy in a real-world context

TC Futures and its partners created an activity to meet students' basic needs and support the development of life skills. Students received \$150 to spend at Walmart. Before the trip, staff members worked with students to create a budget, understand how students were going to spend the money, and prioritize things they needed, such as items for job interviews or upcoming internships.



“This is a photo of our first field trip. We were given a budget and we were supposed to buy hygiene products and clothing. It helped me to be more familiar with managing a budget and being comfortable to do things on my own.”

TC Futures student

“So one really cool thing was, part of the field trips that we did was taking students to Walmart. One of the pieces of the Dignified Work program was taking students to Walmart so they could buy hygiene items, clothing, anything that would help them get a job. So it was really cool to take, I think we had eight students, to Walmart to figure out how to budget \$150 worth of stuff and seeing what every student was able to purchase, or what they focused on purchasing. Some students focused on work shoes. Other kids were looking at teeth whiteners and combs and brushes.”

TC Futures program staff member

About this project

Washington state appropriated 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](#). The funding period spanned the 2023–2025 biennium as outlined in House Bill #5187, Sec. 522. ESD 123 TC Futures participated in the summer 2023 and summer 2024 pilot. OSPI contracted with [Education Northwest](#) to evaluate the Open Doors Summer Pilot. Education Northwest prepared this profile as part of the evaluation.

METHODS

Education Northwest developed this summer pilot program profile from artifact review and interviews/ focus groups in summer 2024 with seven ESD 123 TC Futures students, seven staff members, four community partners, and one family member. We also analyzed quantitative program and student data from OSPI to produce the student demographics and outcomes figures. Thank you to the TC Futures students, families, program team, and partners for taking the time to share your stories and perspectives about the summer pilot.

Recommended citation

Fujita-Conrads, E., Cigarroa Kennedy, C., Hodara, M., & Petrokubi, J. (2025). *Open Doors Summer Pilot site profile: ESD 123 TC Futures*. Education Northwest.

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