

OPEN DOORS SUMMER PILOT SITE PROFILE

Northwest ESD 189

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

Overview

Northwest Educational Service District (NWESD) 189 Open Doors offers students an alternative pathway to earn a GED or high school diploma. Students can work on their GED or complete high school credits online at their own pace with personalized support. They are required to come in person two hours each week. Staff members also support students with college and career preparation.

NWESD 189 program overview, school year 2023–24

- GED or high school diploma
- ESD
- Community type: Suburban, midsize; town, fringe; town, distant
- **249** students enrolled in SY 2023–24
- Average age at enrollment: **17.2**
- Average credits at enrollment: **9.3**

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

Summer 2024 pilot program design and implementation

NWESD 189 Open Doors did not operate during the summer months before the pilot. Staff members reported that students would not make much academic progress during the summer, and it was challenging to re-engage students in September. The summer pilot was meant to provide students with a continuation of the academic support available during the school year.



Table 1. NWESD 189 summer 2024 pilot goals, activities, and intended outcomes

Goals	Summer program activities	Intended outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Expanded student participation in summer programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">GED instruction and testingHigh school instruction and testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Indicators of academic progress earningPathway completionStudent well-being and stability

OVERVIEW OF SUMMER PROGRAM PILOT

NWESD 189 Open Doors used summer funding to support students’ academic progress, well-being, and stability. The site did not offer any unique summer activities that were not offered during the school year.

Sustained academic support

The summer programming was an extension of school year programming. Students could come in person Monday through Thursday for support with indicators of academic progress (IAPs) and to make progress toward their GED or diploma. Students signed up for at least one two-hour session each week or dropped in on a Thursday. Staff members shared that this consistency was an important element of the summer program design.

Summer partnership exploration

NWESD 189 Open Doors had planned to develop partnerships with the Salvation Army and Goodwill of Marysville. These partnerships would have provided career-connected learning and employment opportunities. However, neither partnership “got off the ground” for the summer due to safety concerns about the clientele of both organizations. Therefore, NWESD 189 Open Doors did not have any community partners for the summer program.

In the future, NWESD 189 Open Doors is interested in partnering with the Tulalip Positive Youth Development and Leadership Program, which supports Native students to secure summer employment.

Student participation in summer 2024 pilot

STUDENT OUTREACH

NWESD 189 Open Doors prioritized recruiting seniors and students close to age 21 for summer programming. Staff members encouraged these students to attend over the summer so they could gain as many credits as possible toward a high school diploma. They also prioritized outreach to students with very few high school credits and post-resident youth.

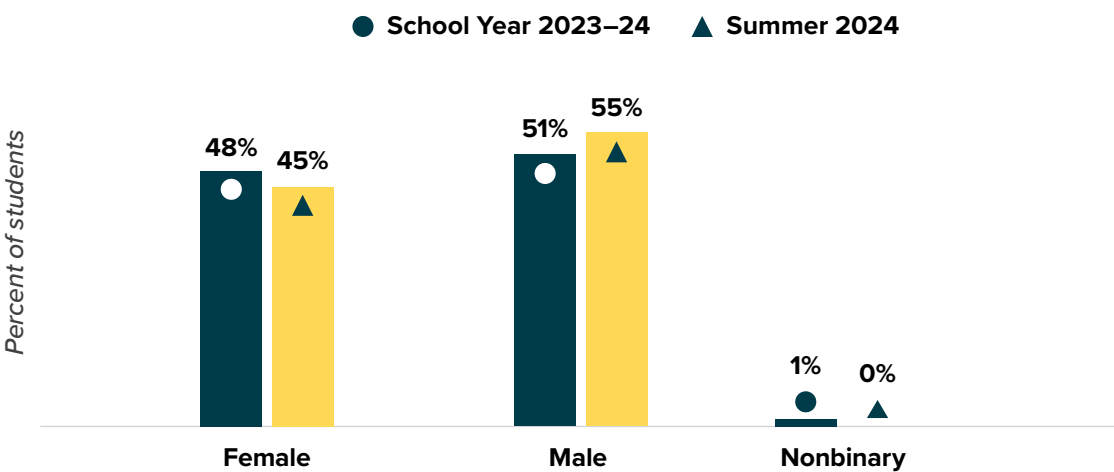
STUDENTS SERVED IN SUMMER 2024

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

Compared to students enrolled in the 2023–24 school year program, students participating in the summer program first enrolled in Open Doors at a slightly younger age (16.9 compared with 17.2) and with fewer credits (8.6 compared with 9.3).

The summer 2024 population was slightly more likely to be male and identify as Asian or Latino/a/x compared to the 2023–24 school year population (figures 1 and 2). In addition, a higher percentage of summer 2024 students had experienced homelessness, participated in migrant education, were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and were classified as English learners (figure 3).

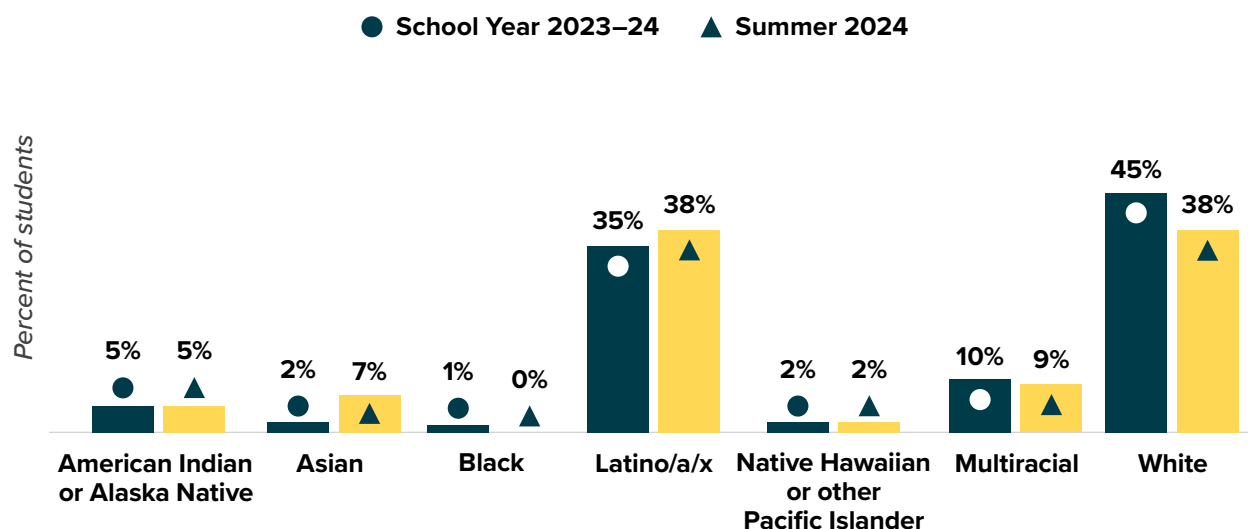
Figure 1. The summer 2024 student population had a slightly higher percentage of male students compared to the 2023–24 school year population



Note: N = 249 for the school year and N = 57 for summer.

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

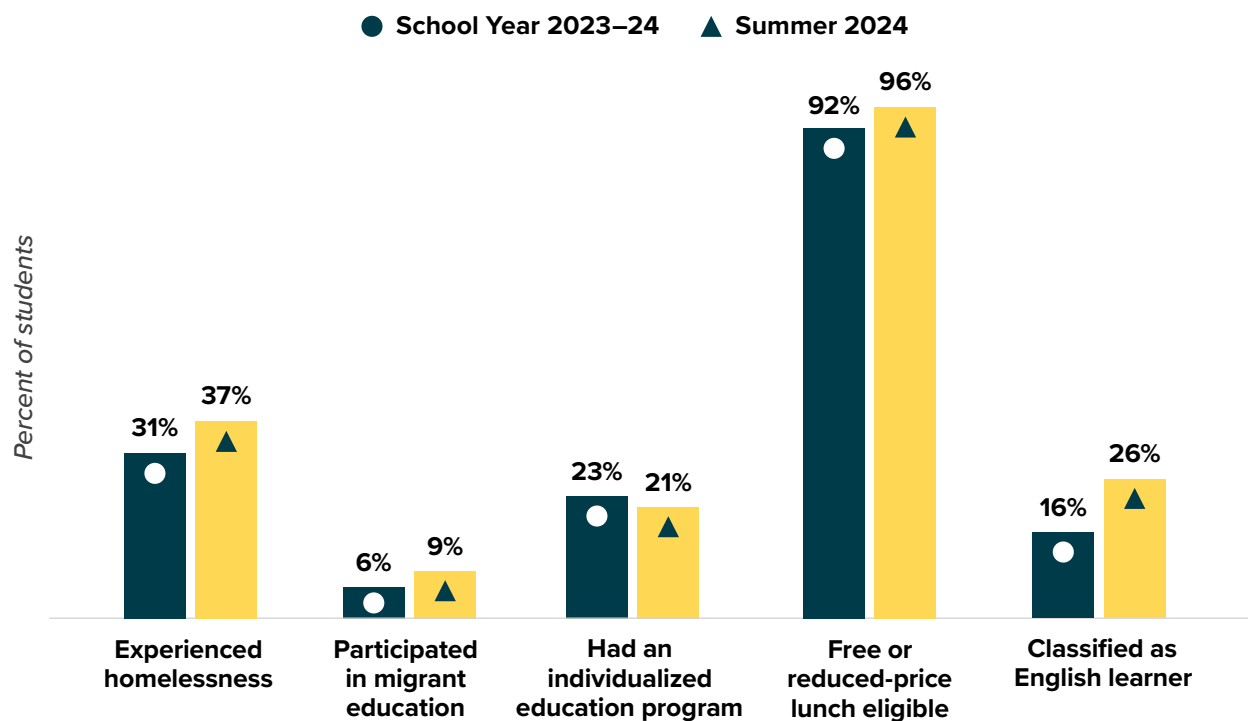
Figure 2. The summer 2024 student population had a higher percentage of students who identify as Asian and Latino/a/x compared to the 2023–24 school year population



Note: N = 249 for the school year and N = 57 for summer.

Source: Evaluation team analysis of CEDARS data.

Figure 3. The summer 2024 student population had a higher percentage of students who were furthest from opportunity compared to the 2023–24 school year population



Note: Data are from 2014–15 to 2023–24 and so span students' upper elementary, middle school, and high school years. N = 249 for the school year and N = 57 for summer.

Source: Evaluation team analysis of CEDARS data.

Outcomes

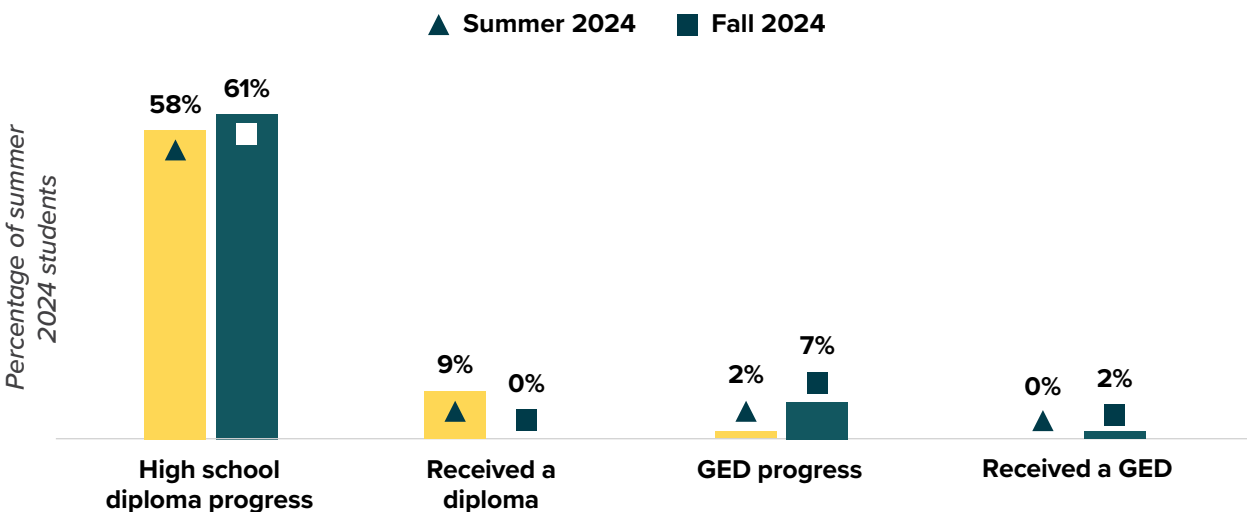
SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT, ACADEMIC PROGRESS, AND COMPLETION

Given that the program does not typically operate during the summer, the summer pilot funding enabled the staff to keep working with students who otherwise would not be engaged in school. Staff members shared that four students earned their diploma over the summer who would not have otherwise. Several students were close to graduation and could receive their diploma in September.

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

Fifty-eight percent of summer 2024 students earned an IAP in summer 2024 and 68 percent earned an IAP in fall 2024. Most students were working toward a high school diploma in the summer (58%; figure 4). Students’ high school diploma progress persisted through the fall, with **61 percent of summer participants making academic progress toward their diploma in fall 2024 by earning high school credit.** Additionally, **9 percent of summer students earned a high school diploma during the summer.** In the fall, some summer students also focused on completing high school by earning a GED: 7 percent made progress toward their GED and 2 percent earned a GED.

Figure 4. Over half of students who participated in summer 2024 made progress toward a high school diploma in summer and fall 2024; 9 percent received a high school diploma



Note: N = 57. 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, IAPs that were earned are as follows:

High school diploma progress: a. Earns at minimum a 0.25 high school credit.; e. Passes one or more tests or benchmarks that would satisfy the state board of education’s graduation requirements as provided in chapter 180-51 WAC.

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.

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

Success factors and challenges

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Students and staff members described the importance of relationships among students and the staff at NWESD 189 Open Doors. Students shared that staff members communicate with them frequently via text messages and phone calls, but instead of feeling pressure, students feel supported.



I feel rather than being your boss or your instructor, [Open Doors staff] build an interpersonal relationship with you ... Open Doors gives students ... a chance to have some space and grow but still get the help that they need.”

NWESD 189 student

Students also noted the lack of judgement from educators at NWESD 189. Students described how the Open Doors staff members give everyone an opportunity to succeed and are not too hard on students who previously missed a lot of school or do not have many credits.



I feel like at regular schools, if you kind of make a reputation for yourself at school, that’s how your teachers are going treat you. But ever since I came here ... they’re just not really judging and they help you more than just making you feel bad about all the school you missed.”

NWESD 189 student

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.



They're more than just a student. They're a person, and you have to connect with them. I think the more authentic that we are with them, they appreciate that ... they [students] understand we're coming from a place of love and care for them, and they want to make you proud of them."

NWESD 189 staff member

FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE PROGRAM STRUCTURE

As a program, students and staff members shared that NWESD 189 Open Doors offers high expectations and a lot of support for students. In addition, students appreciate the flexibility of the Open Doors model. For students who work full time or have child care or other responsibilities, this flexibility allows them to continue their education.

CHALLENGES ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS

Staff members noted challenges with establishing community partnerships for the summer pilot. Issues arose with both community partners and, with limited time to prepare for the summer, the program was not able to launch a community partnership as planned.

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. NWESD 189 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 four NWESD 189 Open Doors students, three staff members, and one community partner. We also analyzed quantitative program and student data from OSPI to produce the student demographics and outcomes figures. Thank you to the NWESD 189 Open Doors students, staff members, and partners for taking the time to share your stories and perspectives about the summer pilot.

Recommended citation

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