

## OPEN DOORS SUMMER PILOT SITE PROFILE

# Puget Sound ESD 121

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

## Overview

Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) 121 Open Doors received 2024 summer pilot funding to support summer programming. PSESD 121 Open Doors is an online program that provides opportunities for students to achieve high school and college credentials, including work experience within the region. In summer 2024, the program remained open and offered students a variety of new career-connected learning and employment opportunities.

### PSESD 121 Open Doors program overview, school year 2023–24

- High school diploma and college
- ESD
- Community type: Suburban, large
- **27** students enrolled in SY 2023–24
- Average age at enrollment: **16.9**
- Average credits at enrollment: **5.3**

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

## Summer 2024 pilot program design and implementation

### EXTENDING CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING WITH NEW PARTNERS

Prior to the summer pilot, PSESD 121 Open Doors did not offer specialized programming in the summer. While PSESD 121 Open Doors offers some workforce and life skills development during the school year,



the summer 2024 programming and partnerships presented new opportunities for students. PSESD 121 Open Doors established partnerships with various community-based organizations to provide enriched pathways in the trades.

## PRIORITIZING POST-RESIDENT YOUTH

PSESD 121 Open Doors’ summer program was specifically designed for post-resident youth, building on support from PSESD education advocates. PSESD intentionally recruited post-resident youth to participate in the summer programming through partnerships with local counties and juvenile detention centers. Staff members shared that just over half of the students who participated in the summer pilot are post-resident youth. Some new Open Doors-eligible students joined because of the unique programming, and staff members reported that many of those students are continuing in the program during the school year.

**Table 1. PSESD 121 Open Doors summer 2024 pilot goals, activities, and intended outcomes**

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

## OVERVIEW OF SUMMER 2024 PROGRAM PILOT

PSESD 121 Open Doors developed new community partnerships to offer career-connected learning and employment opportunities in addition to the online academic tutoring and support provided during the school year. PSESD 121 Open Doors also used summer funding to provide barrier reduction support, including food, transportation, and other supports.

### *New community partnerships*

PSESD 121 Open Doors used summer pilot funding to grow community partnerships (table 2). To support its goal of increasing access to career-connected learning, the program established new partnerships with Urban League of Seattle, Build 2 Lead, and Mind Your Business. These partnerships not only provided students with workforce development opportunities but also supported students’ well-being and stability through mentorship and support with basic needs.

**Table 2. PSESD 121 Open Doors summer 2024 partners and activities**

Partners	Key summer activities
Urban League of Seattle*	• Flaggers certification (Washington State Traffic Control guidelines)
Build 2 Lead*	• First aid/CPR certification (Advanced First Aid Training)
Mind Your Business*	• Food handler permit (Washington state)
	• Financial literacy
	• Job readiness training/career preparation
	• College readiness
	• Personal development skills and mentorship
	• Construction trades in drywall, flooring, carpentry, plumbing, roofing, electrical, and installations

\*Indicates a new partnership

***Paid career-connected learning and mentorship***

Staff members shared that they intentionally designed the summer pilot program to serve post-resident youth. They reached out to various community-based organizations that provide career-connected learning, especially those with deep ties to the community and experience working with justice-involved youth. The community-based organizations presented to students, and students could select which program they were interested in participating in during the summer. Students worked directly with industry trade professionals and received pay for their work. In addition, community partners provided mentoring and other life skills development.



What’s specific about our program is not only do we do instruction, but they get paid for hands-on training. They get to take that money and go address the need right now. Some of my guys was coming an hour or two hours early because they didn’t want to miss. And then the education was eclipsed to where they was like, ‘Well, wow, we’re actually learning and I can take this information that I’m learning now and I can go make some money now with the framing, with the drywall, and with the fencing. Those are all skills that they can take right now and go make some money.’

PSESD 121 partner

---

# Student participation in summer 2024 pilot

## STUDENT OUTREACH

PSESD 121 Open Doors does not typically offer summer programming. Therefore, staff members prioritized student recruitment and specifically prioritized outreach to post-resident youth. Staff members said they promoted their summer program with nearby county courts and frequently connected with youth via phone calls, text messages, and partnerships with community facilities, youth detention centers, and jails.

## STUDENTS SERVED IN SUMMER 2024

Ten students participated in summer 2024. All students participated in both July and August. Half of the 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 (16.7 compared with 16.9) and with about the same number of credits (5.2 compared with 5.3).

The summer population was slightly more likely to be female and identify as American Indian or Alaska Native compared to the school year population. In addition, the summer population was more likely to have been classified as an English learner but less likely to have experienced homelessness or had an individualized education program. (We do not report the data here due to small sample sizes.)

## HIGH MOTIVATION TO PARTICIPATE IN PAID LEARNING OF A TRADE

PSESD 121 Open Doors students, staff members, and partners shared that the opportunity to learn a trade while being paid was a motivating factor in students' participation and an important element of the program.

---

# Student outcomes

## CAREER SKILLS AND INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

PSESD 121 Open Doors staff members shared that students benefited from the career exposure and experience offered by the community-based organizations. For example, students in the construction program, Mind Your Business, received a certificate they can put on their resume, and Build 2 Lead offered pre-apprenticeship certifications for students. Community partners shared that youth left the program with marketable skills they could use to get a job and gain financial stability while working toward their education goals.



[The summer pilot offered] opportunities for us to work with youth who we knew really needed the work for our program, which is doing pre-apprenticeship certifications as environmental specialists, green job economy, and particularly those youth who are in this diversion pipeline pathway. And it allowed us to expand the current programming that we have into the summer.”

PSESD 121 partner

Based on data from PSESD 121 collected in summer 2024, the focus on career skills led to students earning indicators of academic progress (IAP) related to career progress. About half of the summer 2024 students earned an IAP in summer 2024; all students who earned an IAP in the summer earned the IAP “successfully completes a paid or unpaid cooperative work-based learning experience of at least 45 hours.”

## **DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS WITH SUPPORTIVE ADULTS AND MENTORS**

Staff members said that students formed new relationships and benefited from the mentorship provided by community partners. Students echoed that they felt supported by community partners, and community partners shared that the relationships will continue beyond the summer.



He gave us that boost of confidence that we could do anything. He just pushes, and we wouldn't doubt ourselves. I mean, I personally thought that if I couldn't do something, he would just push me and be like, 'No, you can do it. You can do it.' And I ended up doing it. I'd be proud of myself because I doubted myself but I had somebody to support me and to help me through me doubting myself.”

PSESD 121 student

“In my class, they were talking about things that happened, to where mom failed them and auntie didn't come and things like that, because there was a safe space that was right there. And then now they can go out to society like, 'Hey, I'm a better person. I'm working on me. I'm focused on what I got going on. I have a skill. I can actually go back to school or I can take this trade to another level with it, and I'm looking to go to work.' Some of these guys just want to work.”

PSESD 121 partner

Summer programming also allowed post-resident youth who are served by an education advocate to stay engaged over the summer, a time when many students lose connections with their education advocate.



It's nice now that we have this opportunity with this summer project for kids to not be on the streets or to get behind or get back locked up, and then they lose that connection with the EA [education advocate] again. So it was nice to rebuild, to be able to rebuild that relationship with the EAs while they're participating on this pathway, and also they're getting compensated for it."

PSESD 121 staff member

In addition, the summer programs reduced barriers for students by providing transportation, clothing, tools, and other materials needed for employment.

---

## Success factors and challenges

### **STUDENT CHOICE INCREASED PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

PSESD 121 Open Doors offered students three different options for summer career-connected learning. Staff members shared that the students showed more interest in certain programs than they anticipated, demonstrating the value of offering student choice. Being able to select a program increased buy-in and engagement among students.

### **POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND A WELCOMING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Students described the importance of relationships with PSESD 121 Open Doors staff members, including education advocates, as well as community partners. Students were mostly recruited to the program because of their relationship with a staff member or education advocate. Both staff members and community partners described the importance of frequent communication with students through text messages and phone calls. Overall, students described Open Doors as a no-judgement zone and appreciated that community partners did not judge them based on their backgrounds.



It definitely gave me a different look at teachers and adults because I just always thought they never cared about you or your feelings ... they showed us that, basically, not all adults are the same. They were very different from others. I remember they wouldn't judge you."

PSESD 121 student

"I'm listening to the youth, that they're talking to me about the program and the most important thing is they want to feel valued, respected, and seen. So that's the key thing to me. They want to be seen; they want you to know that they're capable. And so just creating a welcoming environment for them, whether it's over the phone or in person or whatever it is, was a big thing to me, but there's plenty more."

PSESD 121 staff member

## CHALLENGES RECRUITING POST-RESIDENT YOUTH

PSESD 121 Open Doors staff members shared that they intended to serve only post-resident youth in their summer program. Through intentional outreach to various partners in juvenile justice, they successfully engaged a large number of post-resident youth. However, staff members noted some challenges, such as students who wanted to participate but were arrested or had other commitments.

## CONCERN ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY OF SUMMER PROGRAMMING

PSESD 121 Open Doors staff members expressed concern about the sustainability of their summer programming. While they were able to offer paid career-connected learning opportunities for students during the pilot, they wondered what they will be able to offer in future years. One staff member shared that while they appreciated the opportunity to provide so many resources and opportunities for students, they worried about what they will have to offer moving forward without the resources from the pilot.

---

## Intentional design for post-resident youth

PSESD 121 Open Doors' summer program was specifically designed to support post-resident youth. To meet this need, the program conducted extensive recruitment and partnered with community-based organizations that have strong relationships with the community and experience working with post-resident youth. Open Doors staff members said that they sought out community partners that they thought would connect well with students, even if they are smaller organizations or businesses that may not typically benefit from larger opportunities.



When we were out there working and you didn't know something, he [partner] wouldn't make you feel dumb, like, 'Oh, you don't know how to do it.' He would help you and help you until you understood and wouldn't just leave you stuck and doesn't make you feel dumb and doesn't let you talk down on yourself and let you doubt yourself."

PSESD 121 student

"We identified a couple of community-based organizations that align with my passion ... community-based organizations that are not necessarily recognized in big opportunities but they're doing fantastic work and they're the closest to the kids that we serve in marginalized communities. They have the best relationships with those communities with strong pathways."

PSESD 121 staff member

Another promising practice of these partnerships is that the partners plan to stay involved with students as mentors beyond the summer. Both community partners said they plan to continue to provide informal and formal mentorship to students in PSESD 121 Open Doors.



---

## 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. PSESD 121 participated in the 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 five PSESD 121 Open Doors students, three staff members, and two community partners. We also analyzed quantitative program and student data from OSPI to produce the student demographics and outcomes figures. Thank you to the PSESD 121 Open Doors students, program team, and partners for taking the time to share your stories and perspectives about the summer pilot.

## Recommended citation

Padden, M., Cigarroa Kennedy, C., Hodara, M., & Petrokubi, J. (2025). *Open Doors Summer Pilot site profile: Puget Sound ESD 121*. Education Northwest.

### Legal Notice



**Except where otherwise noted, this work by the [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution License](#). All logos and trademarks are property of their respective owners. Sections used under fair use doctrine (17 U.S.C. § 107) are marked.**

Download this material in PDF at [Open Doors Youth Reengagement](#) (<https://ospi.k12.wa.us/>). This material is available in alternative format upon request. Contact the Front Desk at 360-725-6000. Alternate material licenses with different levels of user permission are clearly indicated next to the specific content in the materials. This resource may contain links to websites operated by third parties. These links are provided for your convenience only and do not constitute or imply any endorsement or monitoring by OSPI. OSPI provides equal access to all programs and services without discrimination based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. Questions and complaints of alleged discrimination should be directed to the Equity and Civil Rights Director at 360-725-6162 or P.O. Box 47200 Olympia, WA 98504-7200.