



SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS' INTERAGENCY RECOVERY CAMPUS BRIEF SERIES:

Recovery Campus Students' Characteristics and Outcomes: 2015-22

This is the second of related short reports that describe how recovery schools are an evidence-based approach to supporting young people in graduating from high school and building a substance-free lifestyle. Recovery schools' primary goal is to educate students working a recovery program in a sober environment. Staff members typically include substance use counselors, teachers and mental health professionals.ⁱ

Together these short reports show the value of providing substance-free learning spaces that are tailored for young people.

In studies of youth who are in treatment for substance use, students attending recovery schools had substantially higher rates of graduation and sobriety than those attending other high schools.

Who Attended the Seattle Interagency Recovery Campus?

In this report, we share data about the **137 students** who attended the Recovery Campus for at least 90 days between Fall 2015 and Spring 2022.ⁱⁱ

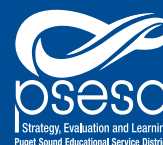
Seattle Recovery Campus
Brief Series developed in
partnership with



King County



**Seattle Public
Schools**



psed
Strategy, Evaluation and Learning
Puget Sound Educational Service District

Demographics and Characteristics

A majority of Recovery Campus students were male (55%) and Black, Indigenous or People of Color (53%). Few students (4%) were English Language Learners. When comparing the student population to 2021-22 school district numbers, the breakdowns between white and BIPOC students are similar.ⁱⁱⁱ

Students can enroll in the Recovery Campus at any point during their high school career. Between 28 and 41 students attended the Recovery Campus for at least 90 days during each school year. Figure 2 shows the breakdown by grade level.

Note: Many students attended the Recovery Campus for more than one year, so the same student may be included in 2016 and 2017, for example.

Students at the Recovery Campus had substantially higher rates of disability and homelessness or transitional living than their peers across the school district. **Over one in three** had an Individualized Education Plan. **Close to one in five** students received McKinney-Vento services for students experiencing homelessness or transitional living situations (see Figure 3).

While **fewer than half (43%)** of students completed residential substance use treatment prior to enrollment, an additional **18%** completed treatment when they attended the Recovery Campus.

FIGURE 1: Recovery Campus Racial and Ethnic Breakdown, 2015-2022 (N=137)

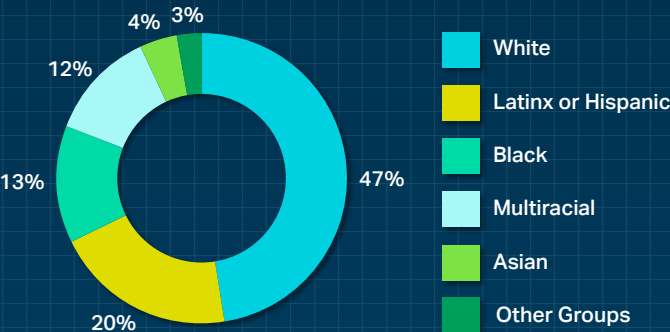


FIGURE 2: The Majority of Recovery Campus Students were Juniors or Seniors (N=268)

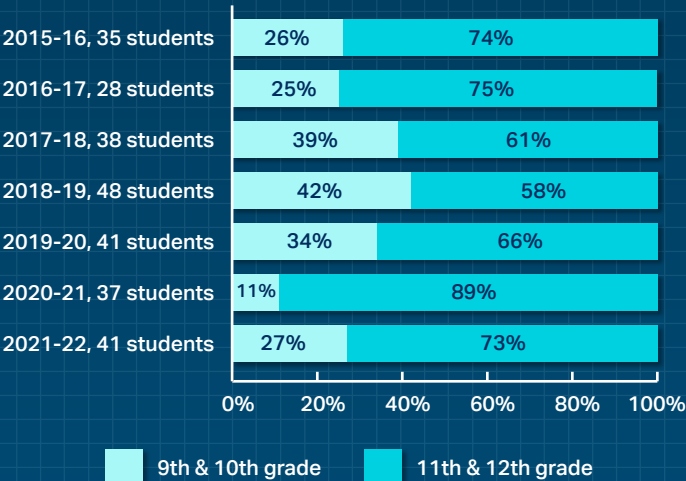
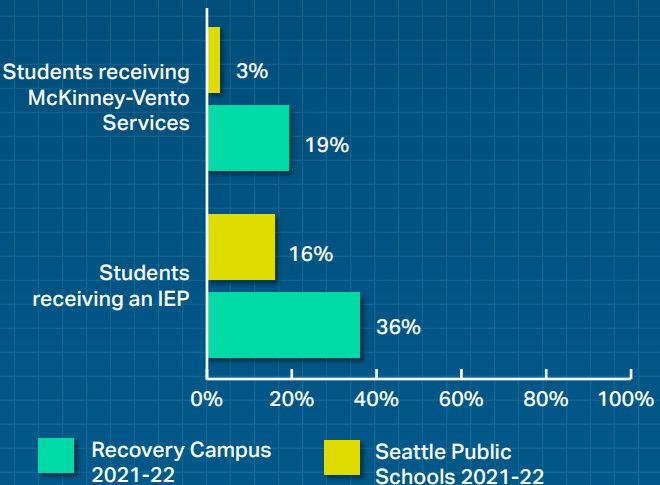


FIGURE 3: Comparison of Students Attending the Recovery Campus and Seattle Public Schools^{iv} (N=137)



What are the Outcomes of Recovery Campus Students?

NATIONAL DATA While studies show the positive effects of recovery schools, there are currently only 44 recovery high schools across the U.S.^v One study of ten substance use treatment programs in three states compared student outcomes of those attending recovery schools with other high schools.

Post treatment, national data about recovery school students' high school graduation rates were **61%** as compared to **39%** for other youth. **Over one-third (35%)** of the recovery school students reported they were abstinent from drugs and alcohol for one year while the sobriety rate for those not attending recovery schools was **one in eight (12%)**.^{vi}

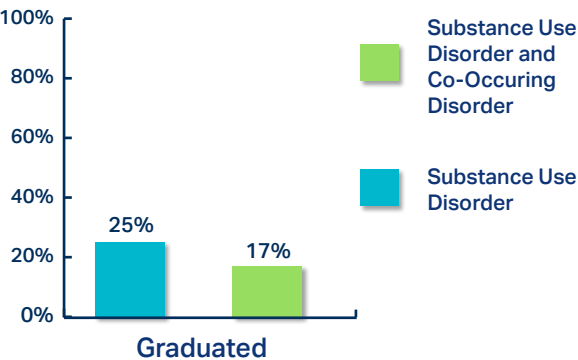
WASHINGTON AND SEATTLE DATA In 2013, the Washington Department of Social and Human Services reported that only **25%** of young people who received publicly funded substance use disorder treatment graduated from high school.^{vii} For students with co-occurring mental health disorders, the number dropped to 17%. (see Figure 4)



This report led the King County Behavioral Health and Recovery Division of the Department of Community and Human Services and Seattle Public Schools to collaborate on establishing a recovery school as part of the Interagency Academy system.

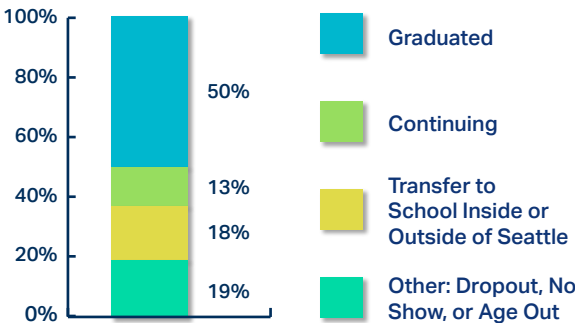
From 2015-2022, **63%** of students at the Seattle Interagency Recovery Campus have earned, or are working toward, a high school diploma at the school. An additional **18%** have transferred to continue schooling elsewhere. (see Figure 5)

FIGURE 4: 25% of Washington Students with Substance Use Disorder Graduated within Six Years (N=1,757)



Note: This is the proportion of students that graduated in six-years for students beginning ninth grade in 2006. Data Source: Behavioral Health Needs and School Success: Youth with Mental Health and Substance Abuse Problems are at Risk for Poor High School Performance.

FIGURE 5: 63% of Recovery Campus Students Have Earned, or are Working Toward, a High School Diploma (N=137)



Note: Students enrolled between 2015-2022.



More than half (51%) of Recovery Campus students have more than one year of recovery following initial enrollment.^{ix}

Data about student substance use demonstrates the power of the Recovery Campus. For a student to be in recovery means that they are building a sober lifestyle in and out of school which involves cultivating connections with others, engaging in prosocial activities, and being a presence in the recovery community.

Summary

Read together, the national research and this summary of student outcomes at Seattle’s Interagency Recovery Campus show the effectiveness of the model. Student perspectives on their time at the school help us understand the power of a drug and alcohol-free place to learn:

The Recovery Academy gave me a place to fit in and find comfort in a sober lifestyle that not many people my age were doing. It gave me an environment where my ideas were valued, and my problems met with solutions rather than dismissal.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

ⁱ Association of Recovery Schools Website (no date). Retrieved from <https://recoveryschools.org/what-is-a-recovery-high-school/>

ⁱⁱ Student data was provided by both the Seattle Public Schools Research Office and the Recovery Campus staff. We report results for students when there are more than ten students in a category. A total of 165 students attended the school during this time.

ⁱⁱⁱ Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (2022). Washington State Report Card. Retrieved from <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/100229> In Seattle, Asian students make up 13%, Black/African American Students make up 15%, Latinx student make up 13%, multiracial students make up 12%, White students make up 46% and other groups make up 1%. 13% of students are English Language Learners

^{iv} Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (2022). Washington State Report Card.

^v Association of Recovery Schools Website (no date). Retrieved from <https://recoveryschools.org/what-is-a-recovery-high-school/>

^{vi} Weimer, D.L., Moberg, P., Falon French, E. E., et al. (2019) Net Benefits of Recovery High Schools: Higher Cost but Increased Sobriety and Increased Probability of High School Graduation. *Journal of Mental Health Policy Economics*. 22(3): 109–120

^{vii} Kohlenberg, E., Lucenko, B., Mancuso, D., et al. (2013). Behavioral Health Needs and School Success: Youth with Mental Health and Substance Abuse Problems are at Risk for Poor High School Performance. Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. Retrieved from <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/rda/reports/research-11-194.pdf>

^{ix} The recovery status of 22% of the students is unknown.

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