

SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS' INTERAGENCY RECOVERY CAMPUS

WASHINGTON'S ONLY SOBER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL

“*The Interagency Recovery Campus 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.*”



Academic Support

- ▶ A combination of classroom instruction and online learning
- ▶ Small class sizes
- ▶ Credit Retrieval
- ▶ Running Start opportunities and job readiness assistance

Recovery Support

1. Individualized recovery plans
2. On-site substance use counseling and sober support groups
3. Positive pro-social recovery community
4. Referrals to mental health and other resources

Approach

The Interagency Recovery Campus is for high school students in grades 9–12 who are actively working toward their academic, career, and recovery goals. Within a student-centered environment, the program promotes the Four Dimensions of Recovery: Health, Home, Purpose, and Community.

Daily recovery groups build shared accountability among students who support each other as they progress through key milestones of sobriety. The school also partners with community organizations who provide additional resources to students and families after school.





Recovery Campus Enrollment Process

- ▶ Year-round enrollment open to students in grades 9–12
- ▶ Voluntary program for students whose goal is to maintain sobriety
- ▶ Prospective students meet with a staff member where they may ask questions and discuss how the school might meet their needs.
- ▶ During the initial visit, prospective students meet with a staff member and may ask questions and discuss how the school might meet their needs.

What It's Like Being a Recovery Campus Student

Being in recovery means that students are building sober lifestyles in and out of school by cultivating connections with peers, engaging in fun prosocial activities, and being a presence in the recovery community. **More than half (51%) of Recovery Campus students have more than one year of recovery following initial enrollment.**

Contact Information

TO SCHEDULE A VISIT TO THE INTERAGENCY RECOVERY CAMPUS

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERAGENCY RECOVERY CAMPUS

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INTERAGENCY RECOVERY
CAMPUS FACEBOOK



INTERAGENCY RECOVERY
CAMPUS YOUTUBE





SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS' INTERAGENCY RECOVERY CAMPUS BRIEF SERIES: Mapping the Need for Washington's Only Public Recovery High School

This is the first of a series of short reports that share how recovery high schools are an evidence-based approach to supporting high school graduation and abstinence from alcohol and drugs. Interagency Recovery Campus's 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

In this brief, we share the case for recovery schools generally and Seattle Public School's Recovery Campus specifically. The Recovery Campus is the only public school of its kind in Washington. Together these short reports share data and stories showing the value of sober learning spaces tailored for young people in recovery from substance use disorders.

Why We Need Recovery Schools

Both prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic, young people's behavioral health has become a pressing concern. During the past two years, students' experiences of instability, isolation and fear have been documented in multiple studies. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Children's Hospital Association have declared a national emergency in children's mental health, citing the serious toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on top of existing challenges.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General one in five children reported having a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder.ⁱⁱ

Interagency Recovery
Campus Brief Series
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Mental health and substance use are connected:

- ▶ Mental health issues can influence a person's use of drugs and alcohol.
- ▶ Substance use can impact the development of mental illness.
- ▶ Risk and protective factors for both conditions can contribute to one another.
- ▶ Research suggests that adolescents with substance use disorders also have high rates of co-occurring mental illness.ⁱⁱⁱ

Low high school graduation rates for youth impacted by co-occurring disorders underscore the need for recovery schools.

Only one in four Washington youth with substance use concerns graduated from high school within six years.

For youth with co-occurring mental health and substance use needs, that number dropped to 17%.^{iv}

Without a high school diploma, individuals are more likely to have poor health and economic outcomes. They are also more commonly involved in the juvenile legal system.^v Innovative post-treatment transitions like those offered at the Recovery Campus are critical to supporting student success.

Washington's Only Sober Public High School

Seattle Public School's Recovery Campus provides a singular and important service in King County. Hosted through the Interagency Academy network of specialized campuses across the city of Seattle, the Recovery Campus is the only one of its kind in Washington. The school offers programs and supports to address the Four Dimensions of Recovery: Health, Home, Purpose and Community.^{vi} The Recovery Campus provides instructional programs for ninth through twelfth graders and

daily sober support groups. It also partners with BRIDGES: Seattle Alternative Peer Group to offer fun and sober activities after school.

HISTORY The school was founded as a partnership between the King County Behavioral Health and Recovery Division of the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS-BHRD) and Seattle Public Schools in 2014. Concerned about low high school graduation rates in Washington, DCHS-BHRD staff visited recovery high schools in Minnesota and Texas and then provided \$250,000 in startup funds to launch the school.

CONNECTIONS The Recovery Campus attracts students from a number of referral sources, including peers, counselors, treatment programs and families. As Recovery Campus staff support equity of access to the program, they share the opportunity with incoming alternative school students. They help out-of-district students take the steps to attend the school.

To ensure that the Recovery Campus is the right place, prospective students visit and participate in an afternoon recovery group co-led by staff and students. These daily meetings build shared accountability among students who support each other in their progress through key milestones of sobriety.

Over three in five adolescents in community-based substance use disorder treatment programs also meet diagnostic criteria for another mental illness.ⁱⁱⁱ



Seth Welch, the school's lead substance use counselor and social worker, is engaged in the National Association of Recovery Schools, serving on the organization's board and exploring how to prepare the school for accreditation.

STUDENTS The majority of the Recovery Campus students have co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. Students commit to a program of sobriety during their

attendance. While treatment for substance use and a month of sobriety are recommended to students prior to enrollment, staff make exceptions for individuals who are committed to the program. This flexibility reduces barriers that students may experience when seeking treatment.



AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES Abstaining from drugs and alcohol is just the beginning. Engagement in prosocial activities and a supportive peer community are important to successful post-treatment recovery. Many Recovery Campus students engage in ongoing treatment outside of school. BRIDGES offers afterschool drop-in and field trip activities, student and parent support groups, and arts programs. As young leaders, Recovery Campus students develop a sense of self-efficacy and confidence as they create positive change beyond the walls of the school:

The Recovery Campus placed tools in front of me that I would not have found on my own, allowing barriers to be broken and help to be accepted.

— Recovery Campus student

FUNDING Like other similar schools, the Recovery Campus supplements the Seattle Public Schools budget with multiple grants and funding sources to support students' needs.

Please see our other short report to learn more about the students who attend Recovery Campus and their outcomes. You will learn that Recovery Campus students are more likely than other similar young people to complete high school and build a recovery lifestyle of health, community and purpose.

REFERENCES

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

ⁱⁱ Murthy, V. (2022). The Mental Health of Minority and Marginalized Young People: An Opportunity for Action. *Public Health Reports*, 137(4), 613-616. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00333549221102390>

American Academy of Pediatrics (2021). AAP, AACAP, CHA declare national emergency in children's mental health. Retrieved from <https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/17718>

ⁱⁱⁱ National Institute on Drug Abuse (2021, April) . Common Comorbidities with Substance Use Disorders Research Report: Part 1: The Connection Between Substance Use Disorders and Mental Illness. Retrieved from <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/common-comorbidities-substance-use-disorders/part-1-connection-between-substance-use-disorders-mental-illness>

^{iv} 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>

^v Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (no date) Healthy People 2020, Social Determinants of Health: High School Graduation. Retrieved from <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/high-school-graduation>

^{vi} Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2022) Recovery and recovery support. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/recovery>

SUGGESTED CITATION: Loeb, H., San Nicolas, O., Wyatt, J. G. & Raya-Carlton, P. (2023). Seattle Public Schools' Interagency Recovery Campus Brief Series: Mapping the Need for Washington's Only Public Recovery High School. Renton, WA: Puget Sound Education Service District Strategy, Evaluation and Learning Department and Seattle, WA: King County Department of Community and Human Services, Behavioral Health and Recovery Division.



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.

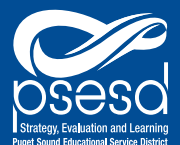
Who Attended the Seattle Interagency Recovery Campus?

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
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King County



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)

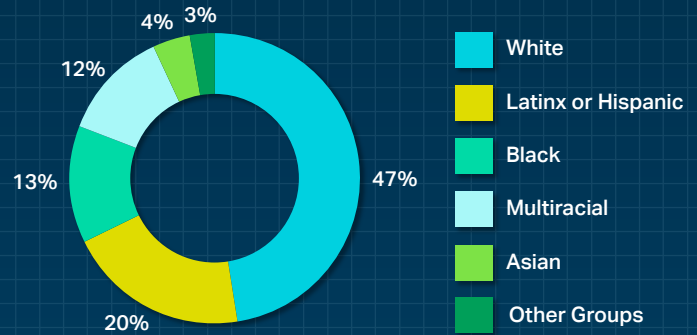


FIGURE 2: The Majority of Recovery Campus Students were Juniors or Seniors (N=268)

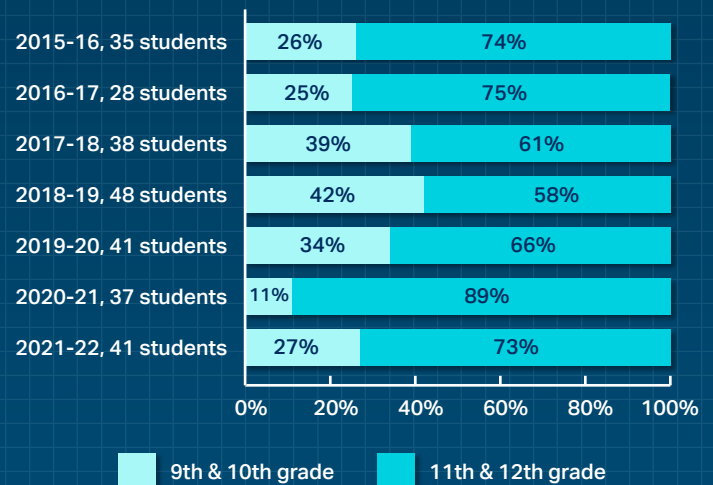
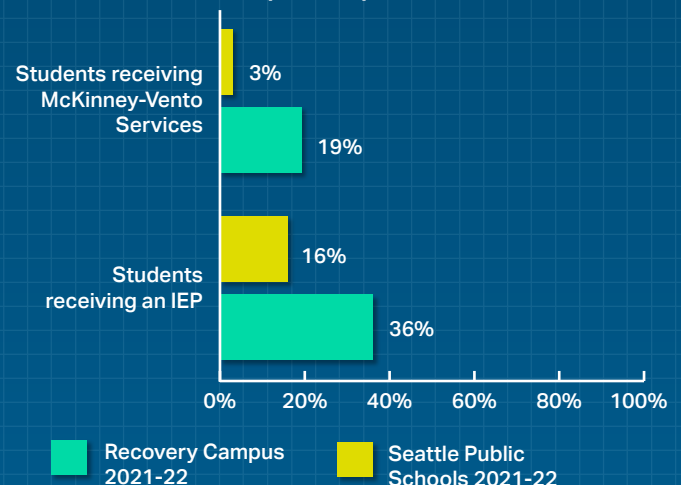


FIGURE 3: Comparison of Students Attending the Recovery Campus and Seattle Public Schools^{iv} (N=137)



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}

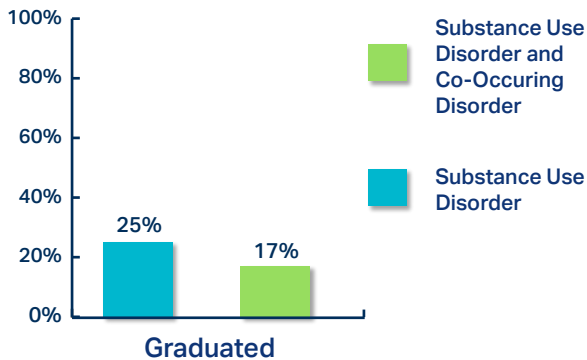
WASHINGTON AND SEATTLE DATA In 2013, the Washington Department of Social and Human Services reported that only **25%** of young people who received publicly funded substance use disorder treatment graduated from high school.^{vii} For students with co-occurring mental health disorders, the number dropped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

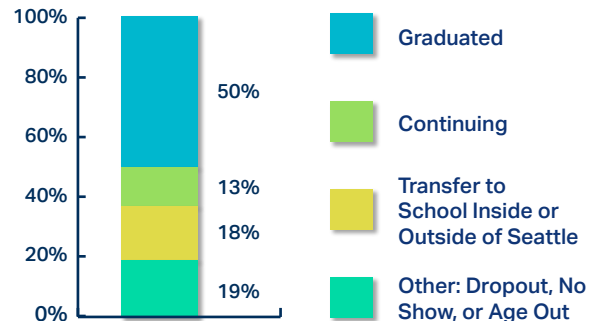
From 2015-2022, **63%** of students at the Seattle Interagency Recovery Campus have earned, or are working toward, a high school diploma at the school. An additional **18%** have transferred to continue schooling elsewhere. (see Figure 5)

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://washingtonstaterreportcard.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.

SUGGESTED CITATION: Loeb, H., San Nicolas, O., Wyatt, J. G. & Raya-Carlton, P. (2023). Seattle Public Schools’ Interagency Recovery Campus Brief Series: Recovery Campus Students’ Characteristics and Outcomes: 2015–2022. Renton, WA: Puget Sound Education Service District Strategy, Evaluation and Learning Department and Seattle, WA: King County Department of Community and Human Services, Behavioral Health and Recovery Division.