

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE, CAREER, AND COMMUNITY

*Seattle Public Schools' Office of African American
Male Achievement Future Readiness*

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ABOUT EDUCATION NORTHWEST

Education Northwest is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to helping all children and youth reach their full potential. We partner with public, private, and community-based organizations to address educational inequities and improve student success. While most of our work centers on the Pacific Northwest, our evaluations, technical assistance, and research studies have national impact and provide timely and actionable results.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Future Readiness is an initiative of Seattle Public Schools' (SPS) Office of African American Male Achievement (AAMA) that supports students to be college and career ready. Future Readiness aims to improve student engagement; rates of core course taking; and student interest and enrollment in two-year, four-year, and technical postsecondary pathways for Black boys and teens in SPS. In uplifting novel programming and district-workforce partnerships, AAMA's Future Readiness fortifies a college-going culture systemwide.

About this report

AAMA recognized the need for more in-depth progress monitoring, mixed methods analysis, and new qualitative tools for continuous program improvement. To support these efforts, AAMA partnered with Education Northwest. This report summarizes findings from an analysis of student administrative data; student, family, and staff surveys; and student focus group data.

Future Readiness

In 2023–24 and 2024–25, students in two AAMA programs, Kingmakers of Seattle and WHOLE (With Hope Our Life Excels) Mentoring, participated in Future Readiness activities including scholarship preparation, job site visits, guest speakers, internships and externships, and college and career mentoring. Kingmakers is a Black studies elective course with embedded mentorship and wraparound support for sixth through twelfth graders and WHOLE Mentoring is a culturally responsive mentorship program for ninth and tenth graders. Ultimately, the Future Readiness supports are meant to ensure that Black boys and teens graduate from SPS with the skills, hands-on experiences, and mentors to successfully launch their college and career pathways.

Promising student and family outcomes with just two years of program implementation

Overall, students, families, and staff members shared positive feedback about how Future Readiness supports Kingmakers participants to prepare for college and careers. Students

cited several helpful activities, including learning about college and career options, support with High School and Beyond Plans, internships, guest speakers, job visits, and college visits.

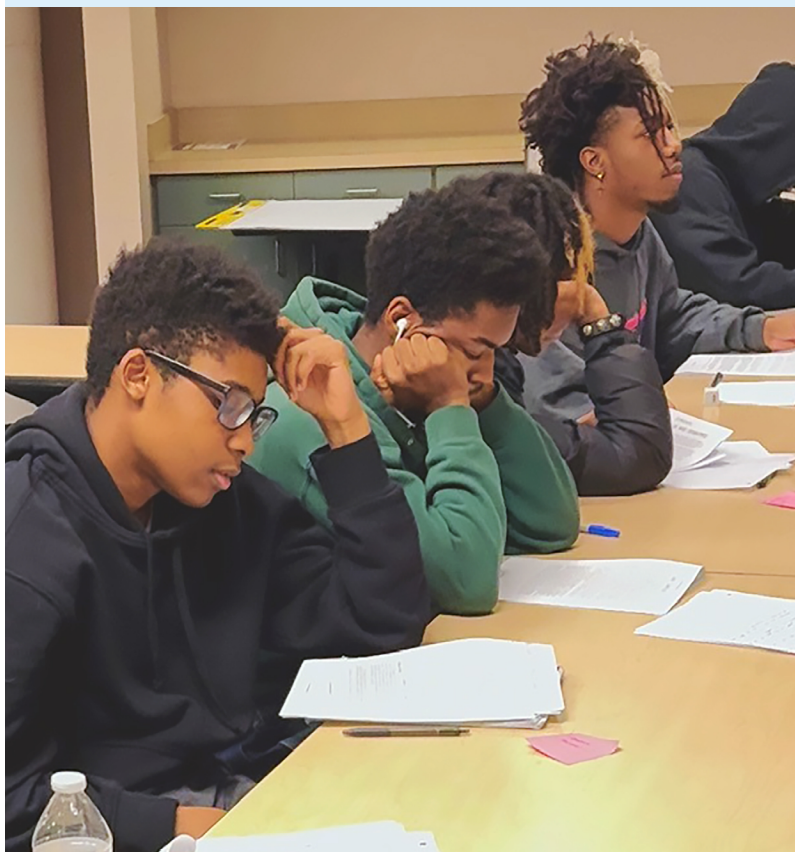
“It really just helped me to see what I could do after high school.”

Kingmakers student

Future Readiness participants also show promising outcomes: They had higher average attendance rates (84%) than nonparticipants (81%) in 2024–25. In addition, a higher percentage of Future Readiness participants (12%) moved from “not on track to graduate high school” to “on track to graduate high school” compared to nonparticipants (10%) in 2024–25. Likewise, a higher percentage of Future Readiness participants showed GPA improvements in 2023–24 compared to nonparticipants (49% vs. 45% for high school students and 57% vs. 40% for middle school students). These findings suggest that Future Readiness is supporting students and families to prepare for college and career, and that the district can learn from the strategies of Future Readiness to support students districtwide.

Lessons learned

Future Readiness strategies are rooted in student and family priorities and research on practices that prepare students for postsecondary success. Students need trusted adults and opportunities to cultivate their agency and leadership. When students feel a sense of belonging and have access to culturally responsive curriculum, they have increased positive identity, achievement, motivation, and social emotional skills associated with engagement and success in school and life (Del Toro & Wang, 2020; Eccles & Wigfield, 2024; Hammond & Jackson, 2015; Korpershoek et al., 2020). To shift systems within SPS and support Black boys and teens to be college and career ready, the district needs greater coordination, equitable access to career-connected learning, quality advising, and culturally responsive mentorship.



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INTRODUCTION

About AAMA

In 2019, Seattle Public Schools (SPS) established the Office of African American Male Achievement (AAMA) to lead the district in building an educational system where every student thrives. Guided by the voices, brilliance, and aspirations of Black boys and teens, AAMA works in close partnership with students, families, and the broader community to co-create solutions that foster belonging, excellence, and opportunity.

Grounded in the belief that public education can be a powerful force for transformation, AAMA combines systemic change with innovative programs that affirm identity, nurture social and emotional well-being, and accelerate academic success. Using targeted universalism (powell et al., 2019), AAMA focuses its efforts on the success of Black male students while strengthening systems and practices that benefit all students. This mission-driven approach reflects an unwavering dedication to ensuring that every student experiences a high-quality education that prepares them for a future of opportunity and purpose.

AAMA Future Readiness

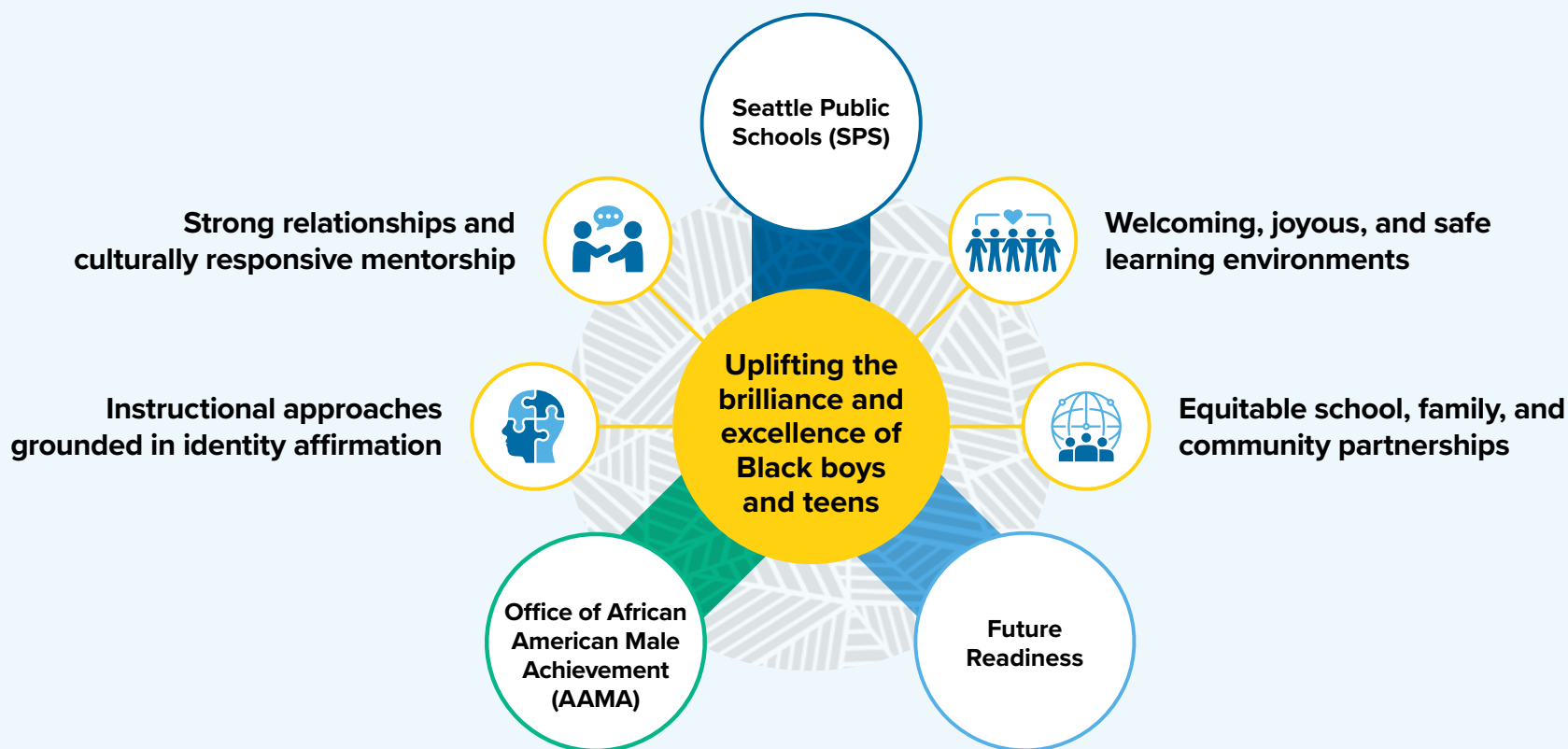
There is compelling evidence that students need greater support to be prepared for life after high school. An estimated 70 percent of jobs in Washington from 2024–2029 will require postsecondary training and credentials (Washington Roundtable, 2023). This includes not just four-year degrees, but any type of

postsecondary credential. In the 2021–22 SPS Senior Survey, 80 percent of African American male students said they hoped to attend a two-year or four-year college or university after graduating high school (Cooley & Williams, 2024). However, since the pandemic, postsecondary enrollment at both community colleges and four-year universities in Washington has declined (Washington Student Achievement Council, 2024). In addition, disparities in high school graduation, postsecondary enrollment, and postsecondary completion rates persist for Black students across the state (Washington Roundtable, 2023; Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2024). Through the Future Readiness initiative, AAMA is working to reverse these trends by addressing systemic barriers and providing culturally responsive services to prepare Black boys and teens for college and career success.

Future Readiness responds to students' and families' strong interest in college and career support and the community need for more students to be prepared for life after high school. Future Readiness aligns with SPS's 2019–2024 strategic plan, Seattle Excellence, which has specific postsecondary goals related to finishing grade 9 on track to graduate as well as graduating ready for college and career (Seattle Public Schools, 2019). AAMA, as part of Future Readiness, directly supports the district's college and career goals by investing in mentorship, C.A.R.E. (Culturally Affirming Relevant Engagement) strategies, family engagement, and expanded career-connected learning opportunities for Black male students.

SPS Black students representing many identities and service needs in two AAMA programs, Kingmakers of Seattle and WHOLE Mentoring, benefit from Future Readiness activities. Strategies include connecting students with postsecondary scholarships, job site visits, guest speakers, internships, externships, and college and career mentoring. As part of Future Readiness, AAMA focuses on cross-departmental alignment of resources and increased access to opportunities and supports regarding career-connected learning and college and career readiness. Ultimately, these supports aim to ensure that Black male graduates of SPS have the skills, hands-on experiences, and mentors to successfully launch their college and career pathways.

FIGURE 1. *Future Readiness theory of change*



Note: Full Future Readiness theory of change in Appendix A.

Source: Seattle Public Schools.

FUTURE READINESS GOALS

Future Readiness is grounded in a theory of change and logic model (see appendix A). The initiative aims to improve student engagement; rates of core course taking; and interest and enrollment in two-year, four-year, and technical postsecondary pathways for Black boys and teens in SPS. Specifically, the initiative is meant to increase the percentage of Black boys and teens in SPS who:

Feel a sense of belonging and community in school

Express confidence in their leadership abilities

Attend school regularly

Are on track to graduate at the end of grades 9 and 10

Complete two or more career and technical education (CTE) credits

Successfully complete at least one advanced course in high school

Report that they learn helpful information about college and careers in high school

Feel prepared for college and careers

Graduate high school

Choose a college or career pathway that is suited for them

Education Northwest and SPS partnership

AAMA recognized the need for ongoing progress monitoring and data-informed decision making to identify what is working, address challenges, and adapt strategies to meet evolving needs. To support these efforts, AAMA partnered with Education Northwest to complete the following capacity-building activities:

- Develop a theory of action with key metrics for the Future Readiness initiative
- Develop measures and data collection methods to better understand student and family experiences with Future Readiness programming so the office can track its reach and identify areas for improvement
- Analyze data to understand the outcomes of Black boys and teens engaged in Future Readiness programming
- Support dissemination of user-friendly reports and findings



TABLE 1. *Education Northwest learning questions and activities*

Learning questions	Education Northwest activity or data source
1. To what extent has the Future Readiness initiative been implemented as intended? How has it been adapted? a. Who was served by Future Readiness? b. What were the key activities of the Future Readiness initiative? c. What were the facilitators and challenges to implementation? d. What were the innovative/effective implementation approaches/components, if any?	SPS administrative data Future Readiness staff surveys
2. What is the overall experience of students and families of students participating in Future Readiness programming? a. How are Black boys and teens engaged in Future Readiness programming performing on key metrics? b. Which college knowledge resources or career-based learning events have been effective? c. What makes some more effective than others?	Future Readiness student, family, and staff surveys Future Readiness student focus group SPS administrative data
3. How has the initiative influenced SPS' larger college and career work? a. How does AAMA build a culture of evidence over the course of the initiative? b. How does AAMA help to build a greater understanding of data use and a more robust data capacity?	Future Readiness staff surveys

Source: Education Northwest.

METHODS

As part of the partnership, Education Northwest analyzed administrative data to better understand who was served by Future Readiness and what outcomes students experienced in 2023–24 and 2024–25. Education Northwest also designed Future Readiness surveys and supported AAMA to conduct surveys with students, families, and staff members. In addition, Education Northwest developed a focus group protocol and supported AAMA to collect student focus group data.

For a detailed description of the methods, see appendix B.

IMPLEMENTATION OF FUTURE READINESS

Future Readiness is a strategy led by AAMA that supports students who participate in Kingmakers of Seattle and WHOLE Mentoring, two programs led by AAMA, to be college and career ready.



Kingmakers of Seattle

Kingmakers is an elective course that empowers students by deepening their knowledge of African history, Black culture, and self-identity in alignment with their historical cultural identity. The course supports students to identify, research, and use their voice to create change in their communities while fostering their sense of pride and belonging. Through this course, students are equipped with the tools they need to navigate life's challenges and discover their unique purpose.

When students feel a sense of belonging in school and have access to culturally relevant curriculum, they are more likely to be on track for college and career success (Hammond & Jackson, 2015; Korpershoek et al., 2020). Therefore, while Kingmakers is much broader

than a postsecondary preparation program, preparing students for success in life after high school is one of its central components.

In 2024–25, Kingmakers facilitators, who are the program's classroom teacher-mentors, piloted a new strategy to further develop positive relationships and empower students to succeed in their classes. Kingmakers provided weekly academic reflections, mentoring, shadowing and push-in support, and opportunities for restorative practices. Some students needed additional or more frequent support at different times throughout the year. To support decisions about the frequency and intensity of support, Kingmakers pulled data to review each student's attendance, behavior, and grades in core classes (language arts/English, social studies, math, and science)

midway through the quarter and at the end of each quarter. This allowed Kingmakers to raise the intentionality and intensity of enrichment support provided to students. The overall goal of this work is that Black boys and teens in the Kingmakers program, starting in grade 6, pass core credit requirements, thereby setting them up for postsecondary success.

WHOLE Mentoring

Black boys and teens across SPS have made requests and suggestions to have Black representation among the district staff and mentors. In response, the WHOLE (With Hope Our Lives Excel) Mentoring program was launched in 2021 and provided Black male students with culturally responsive mentorship, as well as tutoring and culturally specific peer spaces. Mentors provided a culturally relevant environment and assessed student services and academic data to support on-track credit completion and on-time graduation. In this way, WHOLE Mentoring participants were directly supported to prepare for college and career success.

Due to a districtwide budget shortfall, AAMA could not implement WHOLE Mentoring in 2024–25. Therefore, for this report, Future Readiness students are those who participated in WHOLE Mentoring in 2023–24 and in Kingmakers in 2023–24 and/or 2024–25.

Future Readiness activities

With funding from Amazon, in 2023–24 and 2024–25 AAMA offered various Future Readiness-specific events and activities meant to prepare students for college and careers. AAMA hosted job site visits, college tours, guest speakers, and scholarship nights, in addition to supporting recruitment for internships. In 2024–25, Kingmakers also used a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework to provide a continuum of academic instruction and interventions aligned with student needs, as described earlier. MTSS is meant to provide students with the support they need to achieve their desired outcomes (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, n.d.).

Future Readiness activities included:

Early career exposure for Black male students, including connections with Black male professionals, tours of corporate offices, and skill development opportunities

Through a partnership with Dr. Theresa Price, the National College Resources Foundation and SPS hosted the 7th Annual Seattle Black College Expo at Rainier Beach High School in January 2025

Scholarships for students through events like Dollars for Scholars and other ongoing scholarships shared via social media

Support for students to access summer externships and internships with a variety of companies (e.g., Amazon, Skanska)

Support for academics through a rigorous student success tracker that monitored students' attendance, grades, and other needs through an MTSS framework

Coordination with students, families, teachers, and school leaders to ensure students receive the support necessary to succeed in their coursework and have access to college and career preparation activities at their school

In addition, AAMA has engaged at a systems level to increase the availability of opportunities and support for Black boys and teens, and ultimately all students. AAMA is a backbone and driver of systemic change: They seek the root causes of inequitable outcomes and, through targeted universalism, hope to transform the entire system to better support all students to be college, career, and community ready.

- AAMA participated in SPS College and Career Readiness monthly meetings to integrate support for Black boys and teens into the team's overall strategy
- AAMA partnered with the CTE department to work toward equitable access to CTE
- AAMA is working to elevate student voice by showing student videos across the district to increase cultural responsiveness and antiracism among SPS educators

Finally, family engagement is a foundational component of AAMA and Future Readiness. Starting with *Our Voice Our Vision* (Cooley et al., 2021), AAMA has prioritized relationships

with families, shared leadership, and authentic engagement. AAMA staff members build relationships and engage with families directly to foster deeper family and community engagement. AAMA builds connections with families through a relational approach and events like Black to School Night and the annual Crowning Ceremony. AAMA emphasizes the importance of relationships: Students and families show up when there are authentic relationships and trust between families and educators.

Students served

Future Readiness students are defined as youth served by WHOLE Mentoring in 2023–24 and Kingmakers in 2023–24 and/or 2024–25. In total, Future Readiness served 308 students in 2023–24 and 230 students in 2024–25 (table 2). The majority of Future Readiness students (more than 95% in 2023–24 and 95% in 2024–25) identified as male. Similarly, while Future Readiness programs are open to all students, the majority identify as Black or African American. As part of its strategic plan and focus on Black boys and teens, SPS has a flag in its data for African American male students (AAM) and students of color furthest from educational justice (SOCFFEJ). This is meant to ensure that Black male students are accurately included in the data. In 2023–24, 91 percent of Kingmakers participants and over 95 percent of WHOLE Mentoring participants identified as AAM. In 2024–25, 87 percent of Kingmakers participants identified as AAM.

Students who identify as Black or African American have diverse backgrounds and lived experiences. Many students (nearly

a quarter of Kingmakers participants in 2024–25) are multilingual. A significant percentage of students receive special education services (19% of Kingmakers participants and 20% of WHOLE Mentoring participants in 2023–24, and 11% of Kingmakers participants in 2024–25). Ten percent of Kingmakers participants and 9 percent of WHOLE Mentoring participants in 2023–24 were classified as advanced learners, with the percentage increasing to 17 percent of Kingmakers participants in 2024–25. Among Kingmakers participants, 13 percent were eligible for McKinney-Vento services in 2023–24 and 9 percent were eligible in 2024–25. Therefore, Future Readiness serves a diverse population of students with incredible assets that the education system has traditionally not served well.

TABLE 2. *Student count and demographics for Kingmakers and WHOLE Mentoring in 2023–24 and 2024–25*

		2023–24		2024–25
		Kingmakers	WHOLE Mentoring	Kingmakers
Future Readiness students		205	112	230
Grade level	6	13%	–	26%
	7	24%	–	17%
	8	27%	–	27%
	9	14%	43%	6%
	10	<5%	40%	10%
	11	<10%	<15%	4%
	12	10%	<5%	9%
Gender	Male	>95%	95%	>95%
	Female	<5%	<5%	5%
Race	Black	70%	82%	68%
	Hispanic	10%	<10%	9%
	Multiracial	15%	>10%	16%
Multilingual		18%	17%	24%
Eligible for special education services		19%	20%	11%
Has a 504 plan		< 5%	< 5%	7%
Advanced learner		10%	9%	17%

	2023–24		2024–25
	Kingmakers	WHOLE Mentoring	Kingmakers
African American Male (AAM)	91%	> 95%	87%
Students of color furthest from educational justice (SOCFFEJ)	> 95%	> 95%	> 95%
Eligible for McKinney-Vento services	13%	< 10%	9%
Foster care	< 5%	< 5%	< 5%

Note: Due to small sample sizes, some groups are omitted or presented with a percentage range. Nine students were enrolled in Kingmakers and WHOLE Mentoring in 2023–24.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of SPS administrative data.

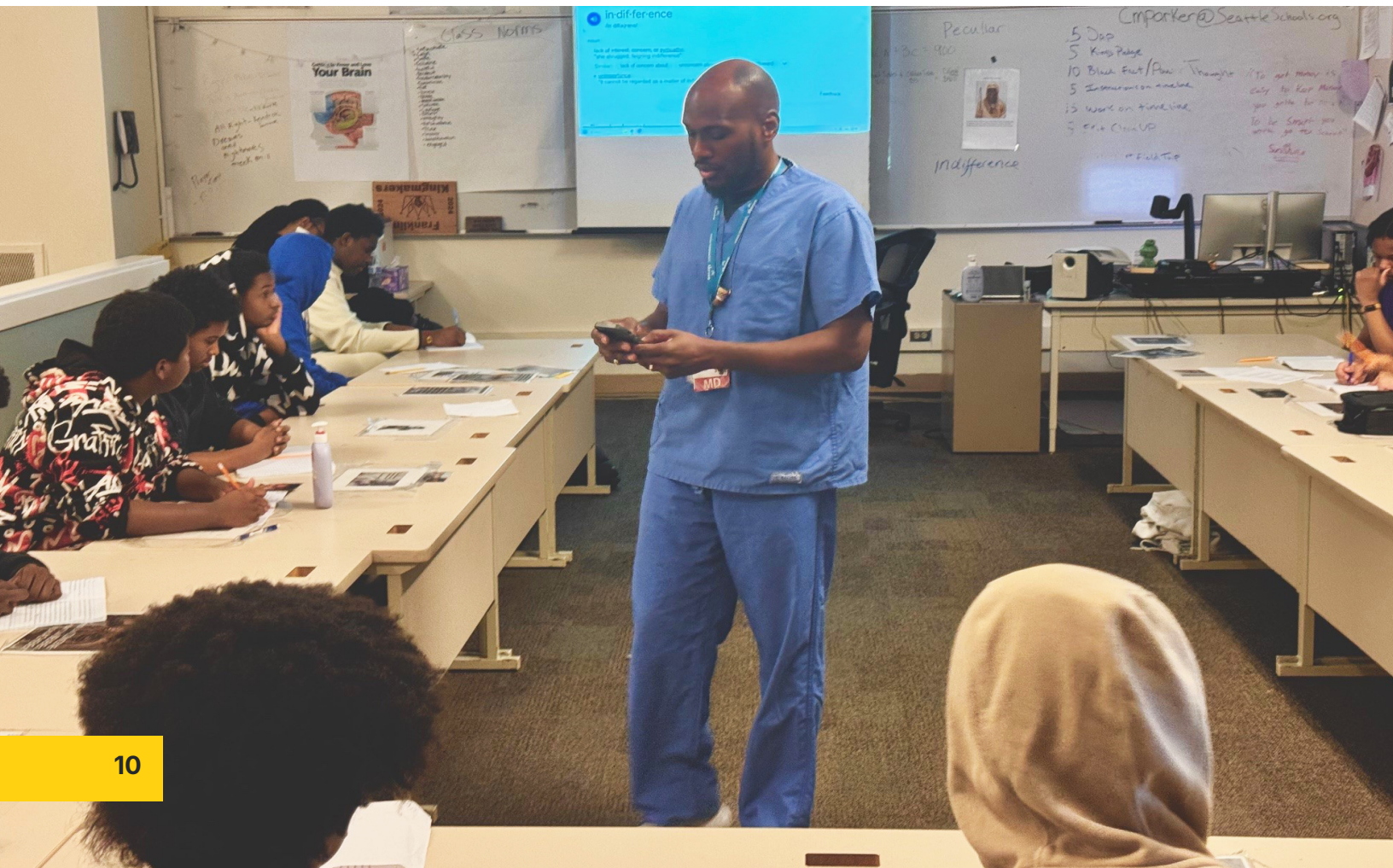
In 2023–24 and 2024–25, Kingmakers was implemented at six SPS schools: Aki Kurose Middle School, Denny International Middle School, Mercer Middle School, Interagency Academy, Cleveland High School, and Franklin High School (table 3). WHOLE Mentoring also was implemented at six SPS schools in 2023–24: Chief Sealth High School, Cleveland High School, Franklin High School, Ingraham High School, Nathan Hale High School, and Rainier Beach High School.

TABLE 3. *Student count by school in 2023–24 and 2024–25*

	2023–24		2024–25
	Kingmakers	WHOLE Mentoring	Kingmakers
Future Readiness students	205	112	230
Aki Kurose Middle School	22%	–	21%
Chief Sealth High School	–	14%	–
Cleveland High School	<5%	10%	7%
Denny International Middle School	25%	–	24%
Franklin High School	20%	9%	16%
Ingraham High School	–	30%	–
Interagency Academy	10%	–	5%
Mercer Middle School	<5%	–	23%
Nathan Hale High School	–	21%	–

	2023–24		2024–25
	Kingmakers	WHOLE Mentoring	Kingmakers
Rainier Beach High School	–	9%	–
Total number of schools	6	6	6

Note: Due to small sample sizes, some groups are omitted or presented with a percentage range.
Source: Education Northwest analysis of SPS administrative data.



FUTURE READINESS STUDENT AND FAMILY OUTCOMES AND EXPERIENCES

We analyzed administrative data, Future Readiness surveys, and student focus group data to understand how participants perform on key attendance and academic outcomes as well as how students and families feel about the college and career preparation they receive through Future Readiness.



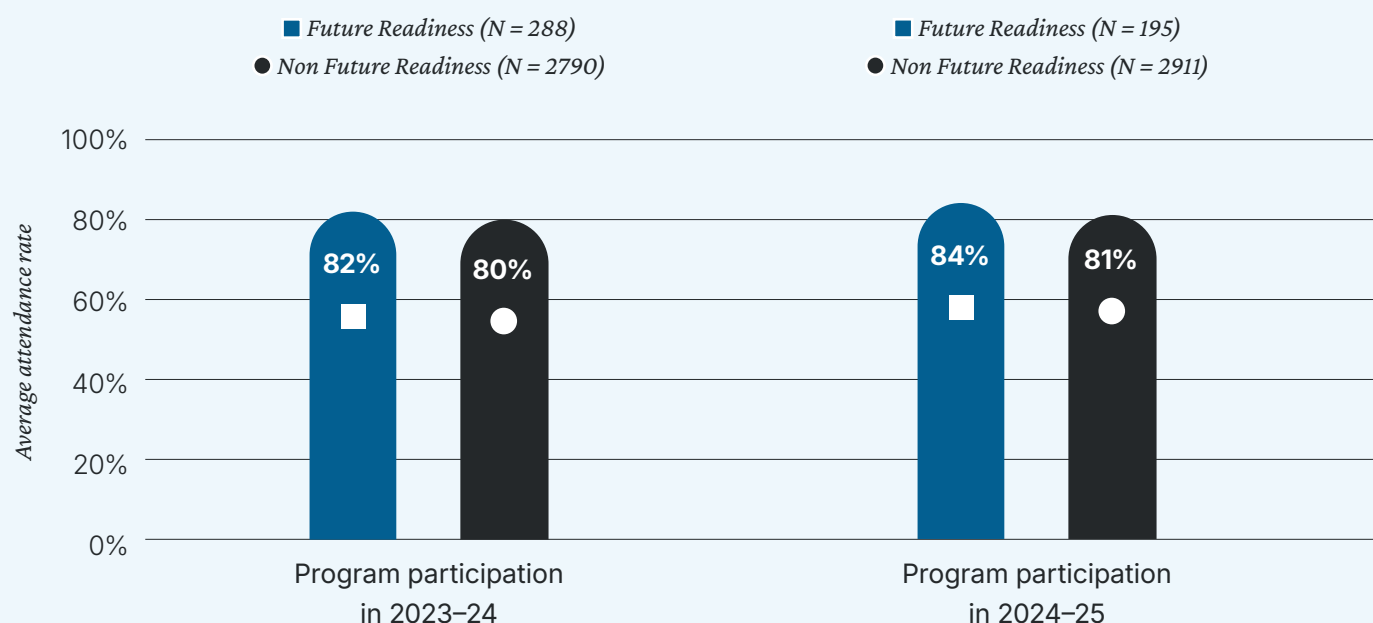
Attendance

Attendance is a critical component when preparing students for college and careers. Future Readiness programs support students to attend school regularly through relationship building, referrals to family support workers and other services, and case management.

In 2023–24 and 2024–25, Black male students who participated in Kingmakers or WHOLE Mentoring demonstrated higher average attendance rates than their peers who did not participate in Future Readiness programs

(figure 2). Specifically, the 2023–24 average attendance rate was 83 percent for Kingmakers participants (N = 187) and 80 percent for WHOLE Mentoring participants (N = 110), for a combined 82 percent for Future Readiness participants, including students who participated in both programs. This is higher than the rate for nonparticipants, 80 percent. The difference was especially pronounced in 2024–25, when Kingmakers participants had notably higher attendance rates (84%) than nonparticipating students (81%).

FIGURE 2. African American male students who participated in Future Readiness had higher average attendance rates in 2023–24 and 2024–25 than their nonparticipating peers



Note: The end-of-year attendance rates reflect the average attendance of students based on their participation (or nonparticipation) in Future Readiness programs during that school year. Averages are calculated using only students with nonmissing attendance data. Nine students were enrolled in Kingmakers and WHOLE Mentoring in 2023–24. Kingmakers was the only Future Readiness program offered in 2024–25.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of SPS administrative data.

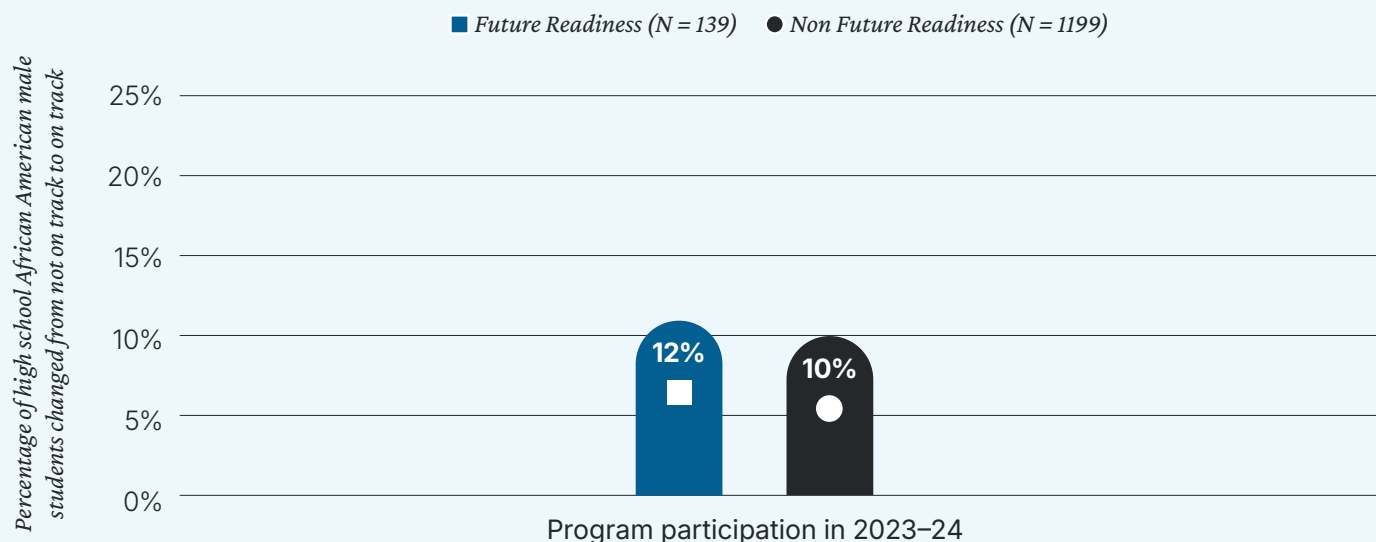
Academics

Another important component of college and career readiness is academic preparation and achievement. To understand how Future Readiness students progressed after program participation, we analyzed changes in on-track status and GPA from the end of 2023–24 to the end of 2024–25.

A higher percentage of Black male high school students who participated in Kingmakers or WHOLE Mentoring during 2023–24 moved from being not on track at the end of 2023–24 to being on track by the end of 2024–25, compared to their nonparticipating peers (figure 3). This suggests that Black

male students who participated in Future Readiness programs in 2023–24 earned more credits toward graduation requirements in 2024–25 than they had previously. Therefore, participation in Future Readiness programs may have positively influenced students' credit accumulation in the school year following their participation.

FIGURE 3. A higher percentage of Black male high school students who participated in Future Readiness programs in 2023–24 moved from being not on track to graduation at the end of 2023–24 to being on track at the end of 2024–25, compared to Black male students who did not participate in Future Readiness programs in 2023–24



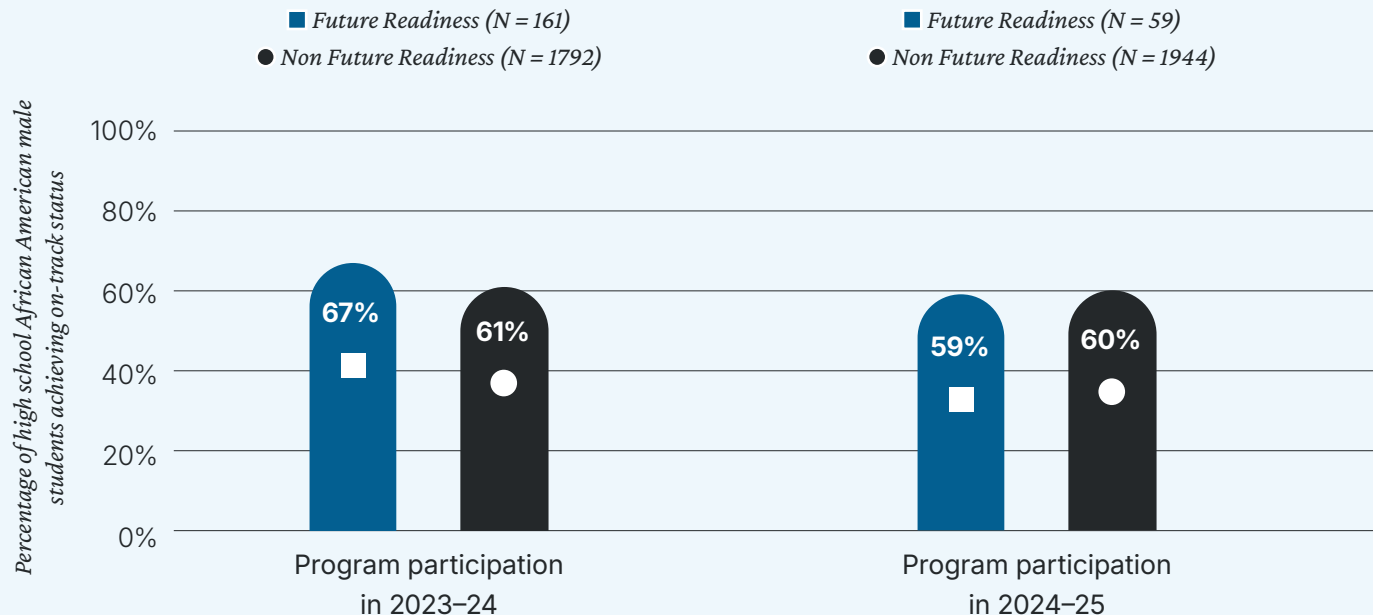
Note: The end-of-year on-track status reflects whether students have met graduation-meeting credit totals annually. Percentages are calculated using only high school students with nonmissing credits data. Percentages for Black male students who participated in Kingmakers during 2024–25 are omitted due to small sample size.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of SPS administrative data.

In addition, a higher percentage of Black male high school students who participated in Future Readiness programs during 2023–24 were on track for graduation compared to their nonparticipating peers (figure 4). The on-track rate was highest among WHOLE Mentoring participants (69%), followed by Kingmakers participants (65%). However, in 2024–25, the on-track rate among Kingmakers participants was slightly lower than that of nonparticipants.



FIGURE 4. A higher percentage of Black male high school students who participated in Future Readiness programs in 2023–24 achieved on-track status compared to Black male students who did not participate in Future Readiness programs in 2023–24



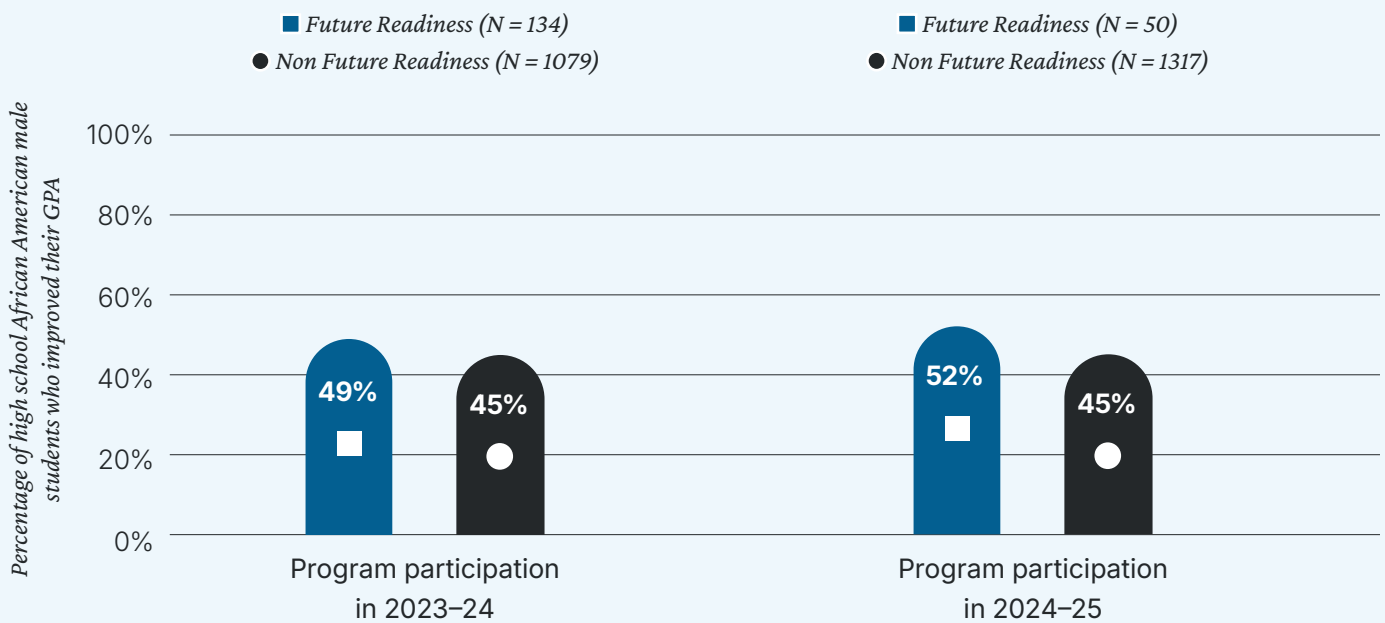
Note: The end-of-year on-track status reflects whether students have met graduation-meeting credit totals annually. Percentages are calculated using only high school students with nonmissing credits data. Kingmakers was the only Future Readiness program offered in 2024–25.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of SPS administrative data.

Similarly, a higher percentage of Black male high school students who participated in Future Readiness programs improved their GPA from 2023–24 to 2024–25 compared to their nonparticipating peers (figure 5). Among Black male high school students, 49 percent of Future Readiness participants from 2023–24 (42% of Kingmakers participants and 51% of WHOLE Mentoring participants) and 52 percent of Future Readiness participants from 2024–25 improved their end-of-year GPA from 2023–24 to 2024–25, compared to 45 percent of nonparticipants each year.



FIGURE 5. A higher percentage of Black male high school students who participated in Future Readiness programs showed GPA improvement from 2023–24 to 2024–25 compared to their peers who did not participate in any Future Readiness programs



Note: Percentages are calculated using only high school students with nonmissing end-of-year GPA data. Kingmakers was the only Future Readiness program offered in 2024–25.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of SPS administrative data.

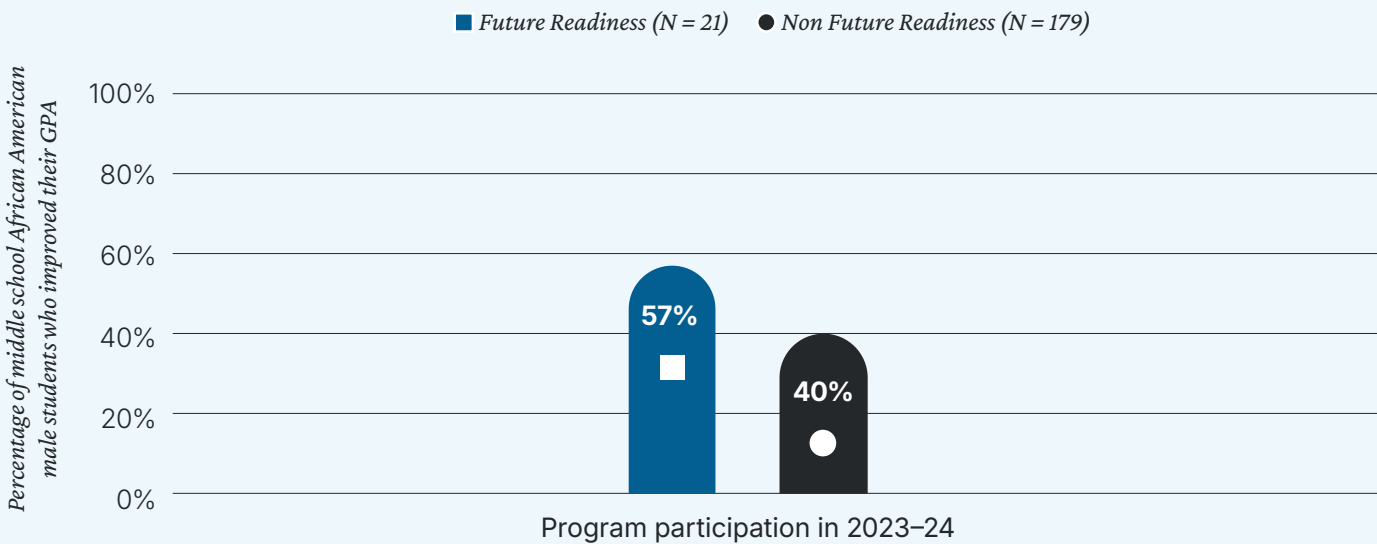
In 2023–24, students who participated in Future Readiness programs had an average GPA of 2.6 (N = 28) in middle school and 2.5 (N = 161) in high school, compared to 2.8 (N = 222) and 2.5 (N = 1,661) among nonparticipants. In 2024–25, the average GPA of program participants increased to 2.9 (N = 21) for middle school students and 2.7 (N = 58) for high school students, while nonparticipants averaged 2.7 (N = 210) and 2.6 (N = 1,788), respectively. These averages are calculated among students with available end-of-year GPA data in each school year.

The data also show a positive trend regarding middle school students' GPAs. Fifty-seven percent of Black male middle school students who participated in Kingmakers during

2023–24 improved their end-of-year GPA from 2023–24 to 2024–25 (figure 6). This is a higher percentage than that of Black male middle school students who did not participate in Future Readiness programs.

It is important to note that supporting students to be on-track to graduate and successfully pass their core courses is a whole school responsibility. While Future Readiness programming can provide an additional layer of support, students need their teachers and administrators to view their success as the school's responsibility. When administrators and educators collaborate with Kingmakers staff members and provide schoolwide systems of support, students can thrive.

FIGURE 6. A higher percentage of Black male middle school students who participated in Kingmakers in 2023–24 improved their GPA from 2023–24 to 2024–25 compared to their peers who did not participate in Future Readiness programming



Note: Percentages are calculated using only middle school students with nonmissing end-of-year GPA data. No middle school students participated in WHOLE Mentoring in 2023–24. Percentages for Black male students who participated in Kingmakers during 2024–25 are omitted due to small sample size.

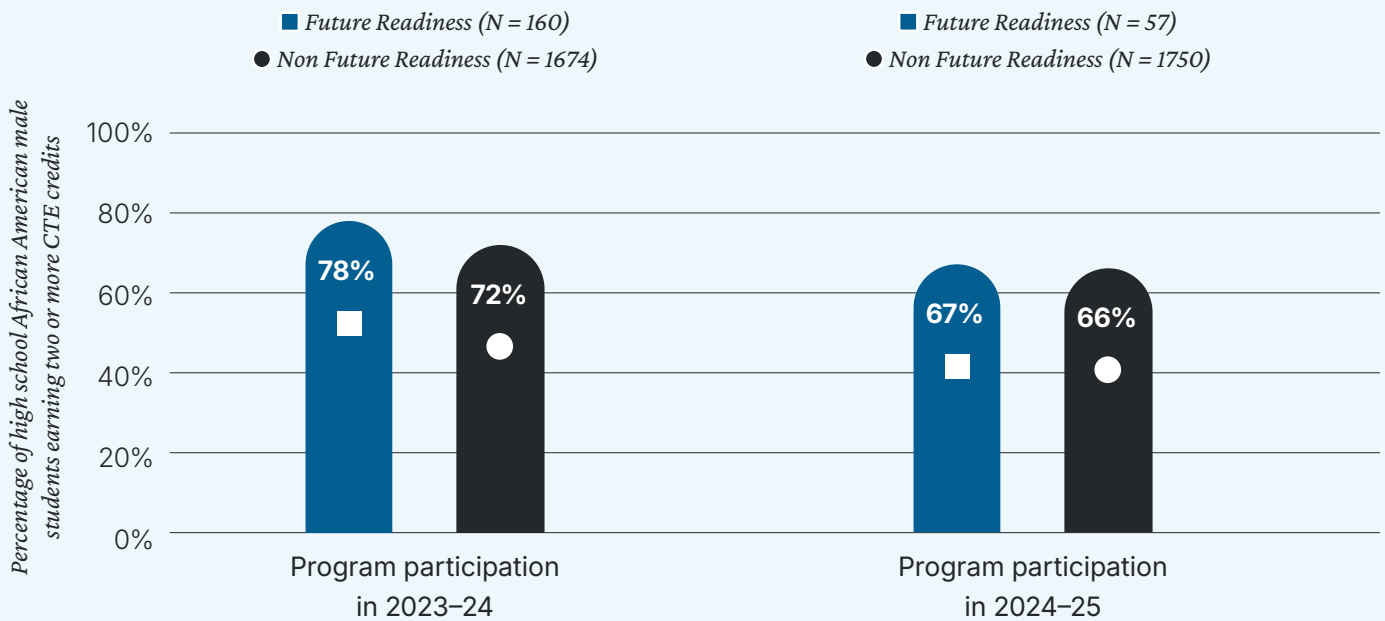
Source: Education Northwest analysis of SPS administrative data.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND ADVANCED COURSES

AAMA has also identified CTE and advanced courses as priorities, as they are associated with better postsecondary outcomes (Lindsay et al., 2024; Morgan et al., 2018). Therefore, we analyzed CTE credits earned from 2017–18 through 2024–25 among Black male students in high school. We found that a higher percentage of Future Readiness participants from 2023–24 and 2024–25 earned two or more CTE credits compared to nonparticipants (figure 7). The percentage was even higher among 2023–24 WHOLE Mentoring participants, with nearly 80 percent earning two or more CTE credits.



FIGURE 7. A higher percentage of African American male high school students in Future Readiness programs have earned two or more CTE credits compared to their nonparticipating peers in both 2023–24 and 2024–25



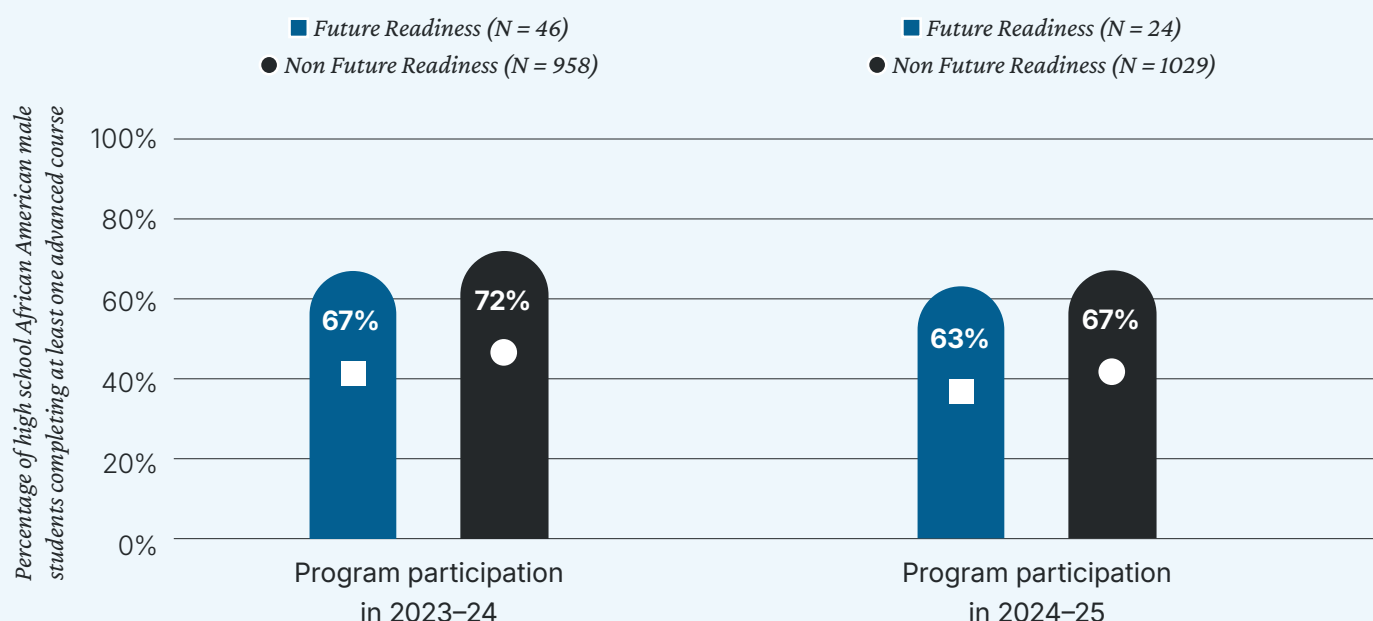
Note: Percentages are calculated using only high school students with nonmissing credits data. Kingmakers was the only Future Readiness program offered in 2024–25.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of SPS administrative data.

In addition, we analyzed credits earned in advanced courses—including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Running Start, and College in the High School (CIHS)—from 2017–18 through 2024–25 among students who were at grade 11 or above during the participating year. There was some variation across programs. Specifically, 52 percent of Kingmakers participants successfully completed at least one AP, IB, Running Start, or CIHS course in 2023–24 (N = 27). However, a higher percentage (89%) of WHOLE Mentoring participants from 2023–24 earned at least one credit in these advanced courses (N = 19). When combined, 67 percent of Future Readiness participants completed at least one advanced course in 2023–24 (figure 8). Among students who did not participate

in Future Readiness, 72 percent completed at least one advanced course. This difference may represent different school offerings, as several schools that implemented WHOLE Mentoring have AP, IB, or CIHS for all programs to ensure broad access to advanced courses. To increase access to advanced courses, SPS may consider expanding the “advanced course for all” model to additional schools. In 2024–25, when WHOLE Mentoring was not offered, 63 percent of Kingmakers high school participants completed at least one advanced course, a slightly lower percentage compared to their Black male nonparticipating peers (see figure 8).

FIGURE 8. In 2023–24 and 2024–25, a lower percentage of Future Readiness high school participants completed at least one advanced course compared with Black male nonparticipants



Note: Advanced courses include Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Running Start, and College in the High School (CIHS). Percentages are calculated using only high school students who were at grade 11 and above with nonmissing credits data. Kingmaker was the only Future Readiness program offered in 2024–25.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of SPS administrative data.

STUDENTS AND FAMILIES APPRECIATED THE ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROVIDED THROUGH KINGMAKERS

In the student focus group, Kingmakers participants shared that the program offered academic support through tutoring and homework help. Students noted how staff members encouraged students to excel in school, explaining that academic success could lead to better opportunities after high school, which could involve going to college or entering the workforce.

“They encourage me to be on top of my schoolwork and to fix my grades constantly.”

“They set a high standard for on us to exceed and go beyond. We have time to do classwork, and it really helps us out. I would ask for help, and they found ways to help and take time to teach it.”

Student focus group participants

Families also said their children improved their academic performance because of their participation in Kingmakers. A couple of families shared the following in open-ended survey responses about their child's academic performance and skills.

“His grades and academic skills have improved significantly since joining Kingmakers.”

“I appreciate that he gets time to study and catch up on schoolwork.”

Family survey respondents

Therefore, students and families appreciated the academic support offered through Future Readiness, and Future Readiness participants showed promising academic outcomes, especially compared to students who did not participate in any Future Readiness programs.

College and career preparation

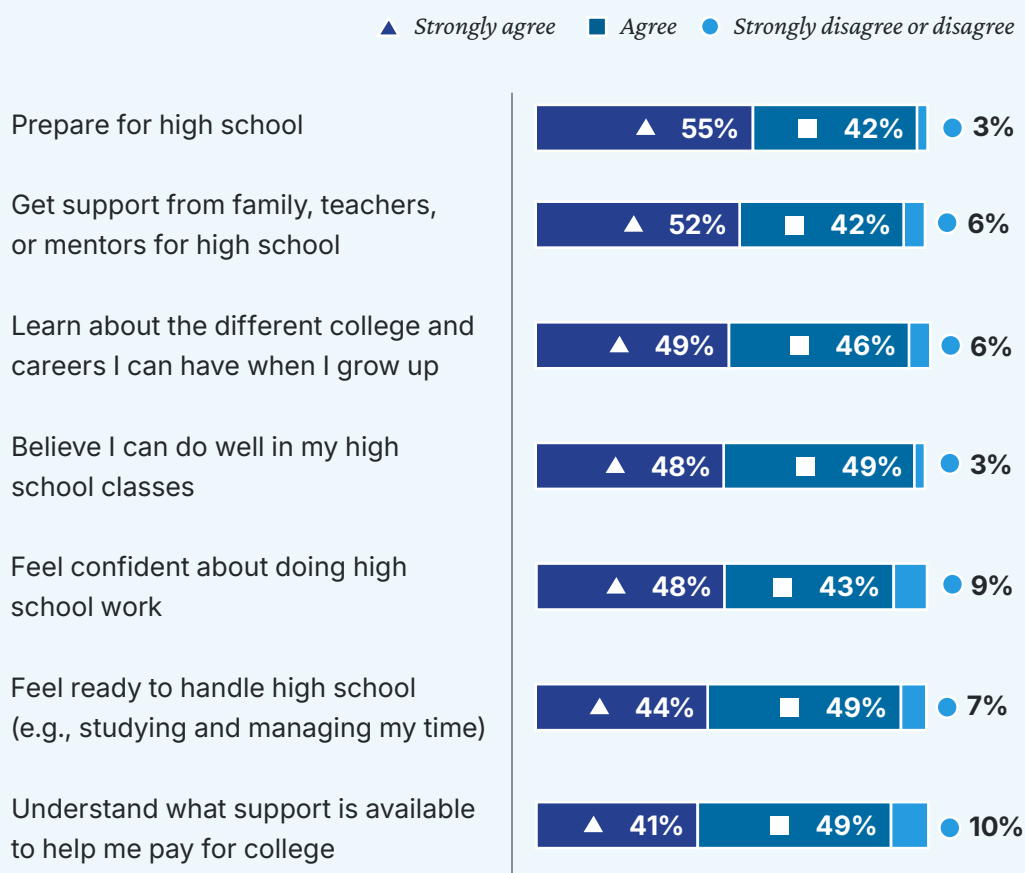
While Future Readiness supports students to excel academically and attend school regularly, the program strategy primarily focuses on preparing students for college and careers. To better understand student and family perceptions of how Future Readiness does this, we analyzed the student and family Future Readiness surveys.

FUTURE READINESS STUDENTS REPORTED THAT KINGMAKERS PREPARES THEM FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Middle and high school students expressed high levels of agreement that Future Readiness prepares them for college and careers. Middle school Kingmakers participants expressed strong agreement that the program helps them to prepare for high school and postsecondary options (figure 9).



FIGURE 9. At least 90 percent of middle school participants agreed or strongly agreed that being in Kingmakers helped them to address each of these statements



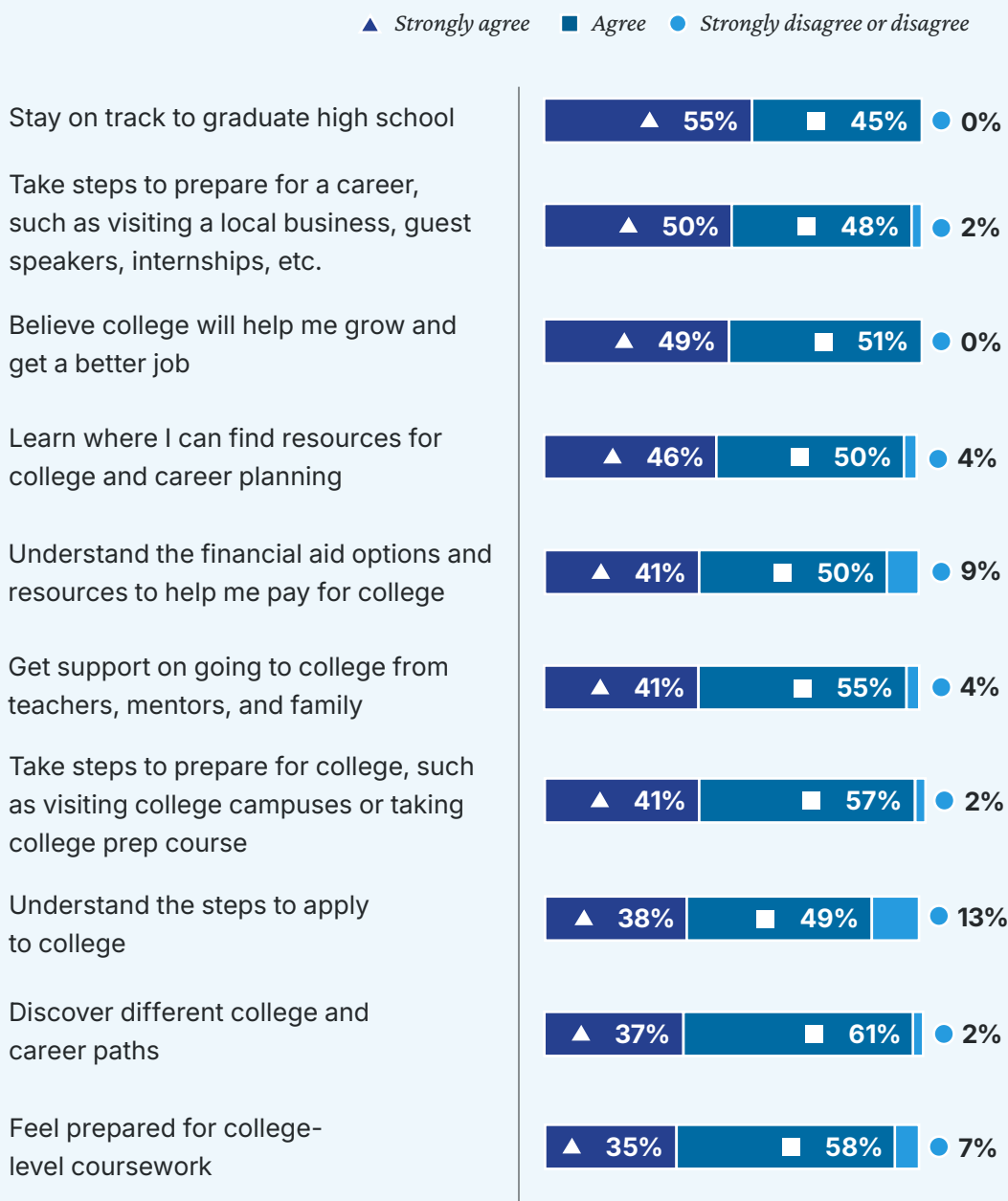
Note: Number of respondents ranged from 78 to 96 middle students. Survey item stem is “Being in Kingmakers has helped me to ...”. Figure reflects scale value range of the following response options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Percentages for “strongly disagree” and “disagree” were combined for privacy. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding. Respondents could also indicate “don’t know” and “NA.” Across these items, between seven and 25 respondents indicated either “NA” or “don’t know.”

Source: Education Northwest analysis of Future Readiness student survey data.

Among high school students, over 90 percent agreed or strongly agreed that participating in Kingmakers helped them stay on track to graduate high school and engage in several activities related to college and career preparation (figure 10). The consistent agreement with these statements shows that students feel that Kingmakers and the Future Readiness strategy support their postsecondary preparation.

The two statements with the highest percentage of disagreement related to understanding financial aid options and how to apply to college. Therefore, AAMA may consider placing greater emphasis on these topics through Kingmakers and coordinating with school counselors and other College and Career Readiness staff members to address them.

FIGURE 10. All high school participants agreed or strongly agreed that being in Kingmakers helped them stay on track to graduate high school and believe that college will help them grow and get a better job

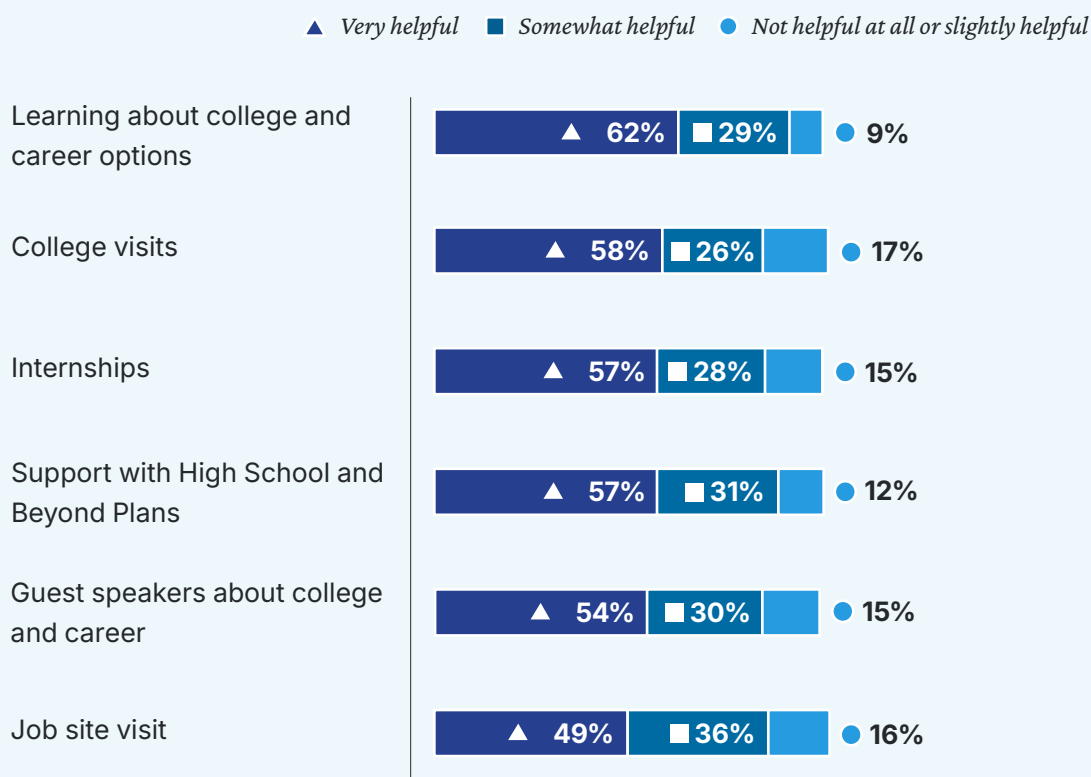


Note: Number of respondents ranged from 43 to 51 high school students. Survey item stem is “Being in Kingmakers has helped me to ...”. Figure reflects scale value range of the following response options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Percentages for “strongly disagree” and “disagree” were combined for privacy. Respondents could also indicate “don’t know” and “NA.” Across these items, between two and nine respondents indicated either “NA” or “don’t know.”

Source: Education Northwest analysis of Future Readiness student survey data.

In the Future Readiness student survey, middle and high school students rated the helpfulness of college and career preparation activities provided by AAMA. Over 90 percent of students rated “learning about college and career options” as either somewhat or very helpful. Over 80 percent of students reported that college visits, internships, support with High School and Beyond Plans, guest speakers about college and careers, and job site visits were either somewhat or very helpful (figure 11). Therefore, most students found Future Readiness activities to be helpful in preparing them for college and careers, with generally learning about college and career options as the most helpful activity.

FIGURE 11. Over 80 percent of participants rated all college and career preparation activities either somewhat helpful or very helpful



Note: Number of respondents ranged from 113 to 147 middle and high school students. Survey item is “Please rate the extent to which these activities were helpful in preparing you for college and career success.” Figure reflects scale values range of the following response options: not helpful at all, slightly helpful, somewhat helpful, and very helpful. Percentages for “not helpful at all” and “slightly helpful” were combined for privacy. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding. Respondents could also indicate “don’t know” and “NA.” Across these items, between nine and 42 respondents indicated either “NA” or “don’t know.”

Source: Education Northwest analysis of Future Readiness student survey data.

The student survey also asked about participants' general satisfaction with Kingmakers supports for college and career readiness. Nearly two-thirds of students reported that they were very satisfied and just over a third said they were satisfied (figure 12).

FIGURE 12. Nearly all students indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with how Kingmakers supports them to be college and career ready



Note: Number of respondents is 147 middle and high school students. Figure reflects scale value range of the following response options: very satisfied, satisfied, unsatisfied, and very unsatisfied. Percentages for “very unsatisfied” and “unsatisfied” were combined for privacy. Respondents could also indicate “don’t know” and “NA.” On this item, eight respondents indicated either “NA” or “don’t know.”

Source: Education Northwest analysis of Future Readiness student survey data.

The positive findings from the survey were also reflected in the student focus group and open-ended survey responses. Participants expressed their appreciation for how Kingmakers helped them prepare for life after high school, whether they plan to pursue college or enter the workforce. Participants shared that the program offered opportunities to go on field trips to local college campuses and interact with current college students. Participants also learned about the college application process, including how to apply and pay for college. In addition to exploring various college options, they were exposed to different career pathways through guest speakers and job site visits, where they gained insights into the daily realities of various professions.

“It really just helped me to see what I could do after high school.”

— Student focus group participant

“It’s taught me skills to prepare me for after high school.”

“They [Kingmakers staff] motivated me and showed me the benefits of college.”

— Student survey respondents

KINGMAKERS STUDENTS REPORTED MORE MIXED SATISFACTION WITH THEIR OVERALL COLLEGE AND CAREER PREPARATION IN SCHOOL

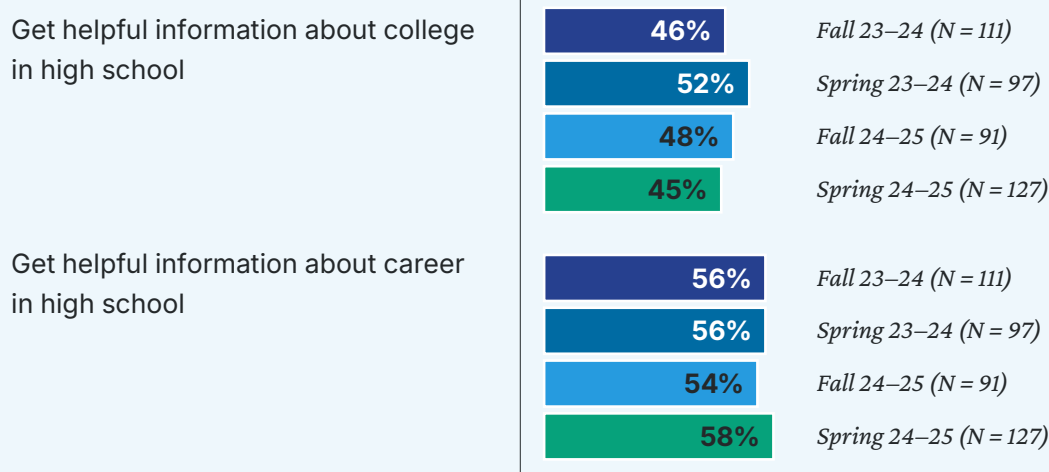
In the Future Readiness survey administered by AAMA in spring 2025, Kingmakers participants expressed satisfaction with how the program helps them prepare for college and careers. However, participants had mixed feelings about their college and career preparation in school more generally.

In the SPS climate survey—which is administered to all students in grades 3–12 each fall and spring—the percentage of Kingmakers participants who agreed or strongly agreed that they received helpful information about college in high school rose from 46 percent in fall 2023 to 52 percent in spring 2024, then declined slightly to 48 percent in fall 2024 and further to 45 percent in spring 2025 (figure 13). The percentage of Kingmakers partici-

pants who agreed or strongly agreed that they received helpful information about careers in high school remained stable at 56 percent in fall 2023 and spring 2024, decreased slightly to 54 percent in fall 2024, then increased to 58 percent in spring 2025. This may indicate an increased emphasis on career preparation in SPS.

Overall, satisfaction levels were consistently below 60 percent, indicating that many students do not feel that they receive helpful information about college or careers in high school. SPS may consider providing additional training or support for the high school college and career staff to ensure more students receive helpful information about college and careers. In addition, SPS may consider engaging all students in a schedule of college and career activities to ensure that students learn relevant information and have experiences that prepare them for postsecondary success.

FIGURE 13. About half of Kingmakers participants agreed or strongly agreed that they received helpful information about college and careers in high school

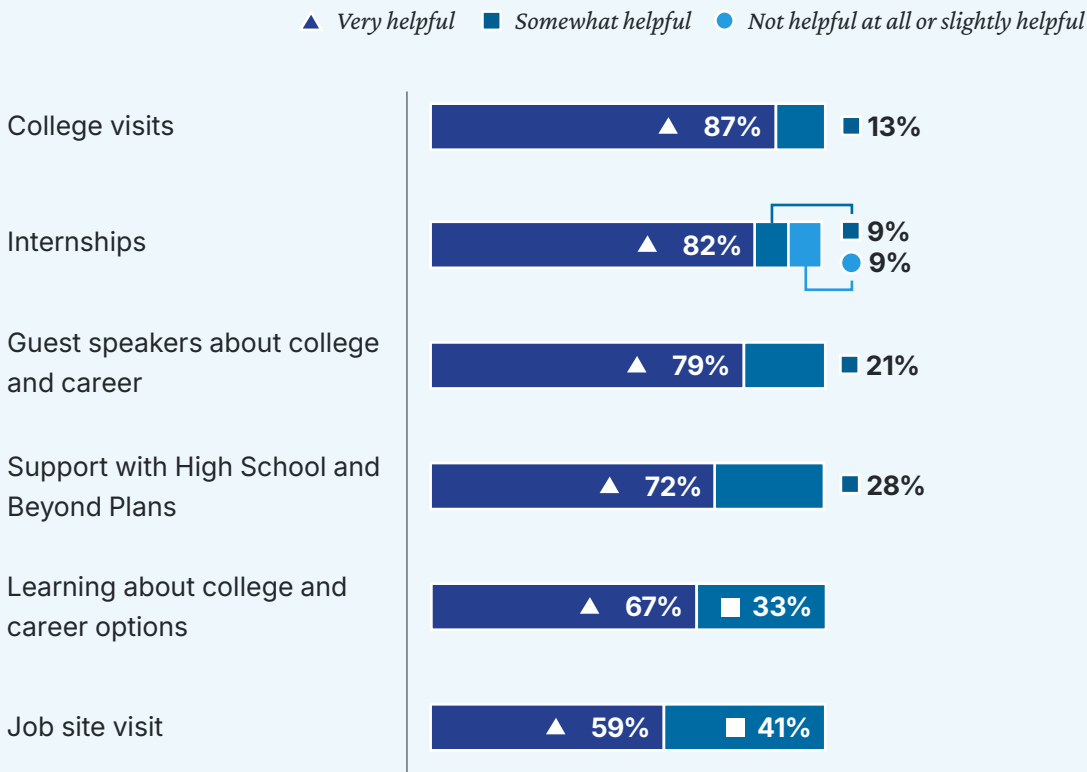


Note: Percentages are based on all Kingmakers participants that have nonmissing climate survey data. Survey used a four-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Bars represent the percentage of Kingmakers participants who agreed or strongly agreed.
Source: Education Northwest analysis of Future Readiness climate survey data.

FAMILIES RATED FUTURE READINESS COLLEGE AND CAREER ACTIVITIES AS HELPFUL

Families of Kingmakers participants also shared positive sentiments about how Future Readiness supports their children to be college and career ready. In the Future Readiness family survey, all respondents rated college visits, guest speakers about college and careers, support with High School and Beyond Plans, learning about college and career options, and job site visits as either somewhat or very helpful (figure 14). For the remaining activity, internships, 91 percent of families reported that it was either somewhat helpful or very helpful, with 82 percent choosing “very helpful.” Families rated college visits as the most helpful activity, with 87 percent choosing “very helpful.” Also, nearly 80 percent of families indicated that the guest speakers about college and careers were very helpful.

FIGURE 14. Families rated Future Readiness college and career preparation activities as helpful



Note: Number of respondents ranged from 11 to 21, combining responses of families of middle and high school students. Survey item is “Please rate the level of helpfulness of the following activities in preparing your child for college and career success.” Figure reflects scale value range of the following response options: very unhelpful, slightly helpful, somewhat helpful, and very helpful. Percentages for “not helpful at all” and “slightly helpful” were combined for privacy. Respondents could also indicate “don’t know” and “NA.” Across all these items, between two and 11 respondents indicated either “NA” or “don’t know.”

Source: Education Northwest analysis of Future Readiness family survey data.

Families were also asked the extent to which they agree with the following statements:

Because of Kingmakers, my child knows more about different college and career paths

Because of Kingmakers, my child is prepared for college and career success

**OVER
95%**

of family survey respondents strongly agreed with these statements, showing a high level of satisfaction with how Kingmakers prepares participants for college and careers.

In open-ended survey responses, many families expressed gratitude for the opportunities that Kingmakers provided for their children to explore postsecondary education and career options. Numerous families noted that the program helped their children become more familiar with the college application process and the tools needed for it. Additionally, they said that the program exposed their children to careers that they might not have known about otherwise.

“Kingmakers has helped him connect with colleges and different career opportunities that otherwise wouldn’t be available.”

“I like that it builds a path for him to learn about college and career options.”

“My son really loved the Microsoft trips.”

Family survey respondents



Culture, identity, belonging, and leadership

STUDENTS AND FAMILIES APPRECIATED HOW KINGMAKERS SUPPORTS CULTURAL IDENTITY, BELONGING, AND STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Through Future Readiness, AAMA supports students to understand their culture and identity, fosters a sense of belonging among students, and cultivates students' leadership. Through Kingmakers, students explore and deepen their understanding of culture and identity by learning about historical events and reflecting on their own lived experiences. Student focus group participants specifically highlighted learning about the Little Rock Nine and other instances of racism and discrimination that have shaped the experiences of Black and African American communities.

"We got to learn about Little Rock Nine and the other things related to racism. Learning about that changed my point of view."

"I learned about the background of America and what it means to be Black in America."

—
Student focus group participants

In open-ended survey responses, students expressed gratitude for having a dedicated space to engage with their cultural identity and history—topics they noted were rarely addressed in their other classes. Many students, especially Black males, shared that the program helped them better understand what it means to be a Black male today.

"Learning about my culture and background."

"If you are a Black male, it is like a program where you learn more about Black history, and it is like a different class."

"The program helps young Black kings to know and understand who they are."

—
Student survey respondents

Students also emphasized the importance of learning in a classroom with peers from similar backgrounds. This environment fostered a strong sense of connection, belonging, and mutual support.

“Being around people that look like me.”

“I get to be around people like me and can be myself.”

“Just being in a class with all my brothers and learning how to be successful in life.”

Student survey respondents

Families echoed these sentiments, recognizing the cultural component of the program as a key factor in their children's personal growth. They highlighted how the program helped their children build leadership skills, gain confidence, and develop stronger social-emotional skills.

“The focus on building a positive and healthy community for our young Black kings through education.”

“It teaches strength in the culture and self-respect.”

“The experience was eye-opening and moved him out of his comfort zone. I feel like he has so much positive motivation and growth.”

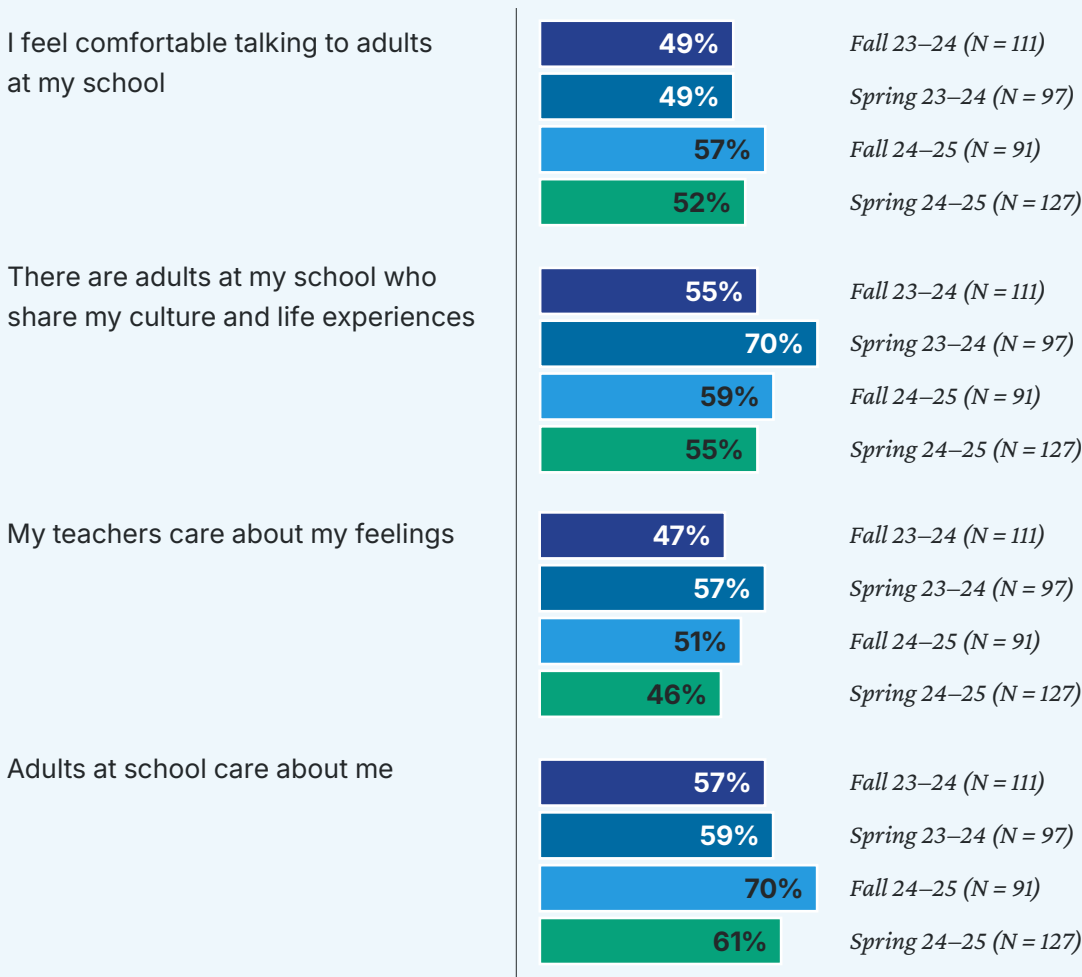
Family survey respondents



KINGMAKERS PARTICIPANTS EXPRESSED MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT SENSE OF BELONGING AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AT THEIR SCHOOLS

In the SPS climate survey, Kingmakers participants expressed mixed feelings about items related to sense of belonging and leadership. For example, the percentage of Kingmakers participants who felt comfortable talking with adults at their school increased from spring 2024 to fall 2024, then decreased in spring 2025 (figure 15). Results were similar—most hovering between 40 to 60 percent—for Kingmakers participants who believed that adults at school share their culture and life experiences, that teachers care about their feelings, and that adults at school care about them.

FIGURE 15. Over half of Kingmakers participants agreed or strongly agreed that teachers and other adults at their school care about them.



Note: Percentages are based on all Kingmakers participants that have nonmissing climate survey data. Survey used a four-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Bars represent the percentage of Kingmakers participants who agreed or strongly agreed.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of Future Readiness climate survey data.

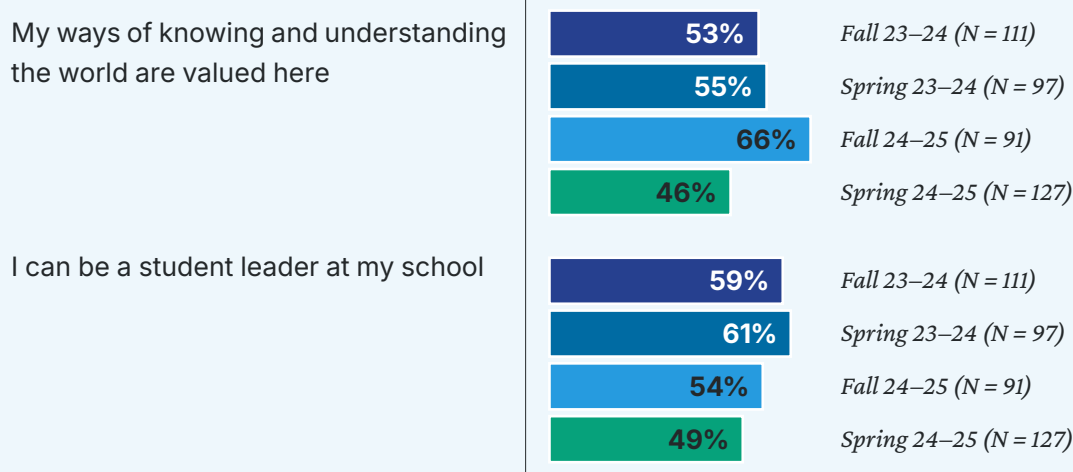
In the same survey, the percentage of Kingmakers participants who agreed or strongly agreed that their ways of knowing and understanding the world are valued at their school increased from 53 percent in fall 2023 to 55 percent in spring 2024, then rose sharply to 66 percent in fall 2024 before dropping to 46 percent in spring 2025 (figure 16).

The percentage of Kingmakers participants who agreed or strongly agreed that they can be a student leader at their school rose slightly

from 59 percent in fall 2023 to 61 percent in spring 2024, then declined to 54 percent in fall 2024 and further to 49 percent in spring 2025 (see figure 16).

These findings suggest that while students may have positive experiences in Kingmakers, there is room for growth in terms of students' relationships with teachers and other staff members at their school.

FIGURE 16. Over half of the Kingmakers participants agreed or strongly agreed that their voices are heard and they can be student leaders at school



Note: Percentages are based on all Kingmakers participants that have nonmissing climate survey data. Survey used a four-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Bars represent the percentage of Kingmakers participants who agreed or strongly agreed.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of SPS climate survey data.



Mentorship

Mentors and relationships with nonparental adults can support long-term well-being, especially among students from marginalized backgrounds (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010; Jones et al., 2021; Jones & Neblett, 2017). Mentorship also supports students to succeed in college and careers (Eby & Dolan, 2015). Through Kingmakers and WHOLE Mentoring, students gain access to mentors and staff members who support them on their path to success and in achieving their college and career goals. In focus groups and open-ended survey responses, students and families shared how having access to a mentor or trusted adult gave them a sense of safety, encouragement, and consistent support. Students emphasized that these relationships created a space of community where they felt seen, heard, and empowered to grow.

“They encourage us, and they are one of the very few teachers that I like. They have helped me out a lot.”

“They put a standard on us to exceed and to do our best in class.”

Student focus group participants

“The community is nice. I like how everyone is invested in the program.”

“I like the teacher. He is chill with the students, nice, and creative, and supports us Black kings.”

Student survey respondents

“The teachers and the leadership here care for the students and their advocacy for them. It’s nice to have an advocate in middle school.”

“My son has another adult ‘mentor’ to talk to about his career and life goals.”

Family survey respondents

Both students and families expressed that mentors and the Kingmakers staff equipped students with essential skills for personal development and guidance in making life decisions. Students gained leadership abilities and learned how to develop a growth mindset. While the main goal was to prepare students for future careers and college options, mentors also taught life skills and wisdom that will serve students well throughout their lives.

“They taught me about life and school which is different then all my other classes, for example, life lessons and skills.”

“They gave me life skills and problem-solving skills.”

—
Student survey respondents

“Boys of color need to see men of color who have been successful in navigating the system.”

—
Family survey respondent

Families expressed high levels of satisfaction with the mentorship their child received through Kingmakers. Over 95 percent of families who responded to the Future Readiness survey strongly agreed with the following statements:

My child has a mentor through Kingmakers who provides them with resources and tools to prepare them for college and career

My child has a mentor in Kingmakers who shares their cultural background and life experiences

My child has someone in Kingmakers who cares about their future

My child knows who to go to when they have a problem in Kingmakers

Family engagement

When preparing students for college and career, family engagement is essential (Bergerson, 2009; Mapp et al., 2022). AAMA prioritizes family engagement by developing strong relationships, communicating often with families, and partnering with community-based organizations and community leaders. Family survey responses indicate that families recognize these efforts, as over 95 percent of respondents strongly agreed with the following statements:

- Kingmakers invites families to be involved in decision making
- Kingmakers provides resources and support for me to help my child prepare for college and career success
- Kingmakers offers opportunities for me to become more engaged in my child's education
- I feel comfortable communicating with Kingmakers staff about any concerns or questions I have

While most families did not respond to the survey, those that did feel that the Kingmakers program engages them and invites them into decision-making. These findings indicate that AAMA not only prepares students for college and careers but also collaborates with families to provide more coordinated, holistic support for students.

Program satisfaction

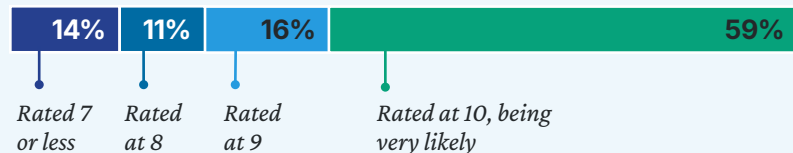
To understand how students, families, and staff members feel about Future Readiness and Kingmakers, the surveys asked about their level of satisfaction with the program and how likely they are to recommend Kingmakers to a friend. Levels of program satisfaction and specific feedback can support AAMA to continuously improve programming to best meet the needs of students and families.

BOTH STUDENTS AND FAMILIES ARE LIKELY TO RECOMMEND KINGMAKERS TO A FRIEND

Students and families were asked how likely they are to recommend Kingmakers to a friend, on a scale of one (not at all likely) to 10 (very likely). Nearly 60 percent of students selected 10, indicating that they are very likely to recommend Kingmakers (figure 17). The average net promoter score across 152 students was 9.0, with a standard deviation of 1.7. Over 95 percent of families chose an eight or higher, with 83 percent selecting 10. Across the 23 family responses, the average net promoter score was 9.8, with a standard deviation of 0.5.



FIGURE 17. Over 80 percent of students indicated that they are likely to recommend the Kingmakers program, choosing an eight or higher on a scale of one to 10



Note: Number of respondents is 152 students, across middle school and high school. Survey item is “How likely are you to recommend Kingmakers to a friend? (1 being not likely and 10 being very likely).”

Source: Education Northwest analysis of Future Readiness student survey data.

These high average net promoter scores indicate high levels of satisfaction with Kingmakers, and with the Future Readiness strategy overall. While students and families do not use the term “Future Readiness,” their overall satisfaction with how Kingmakers supports students to be college and career ready is indicative of satisfaction with Future Readiness.

Facilitators and challenges to implementation

SPS has made equity a priority in its strategic plan and investments. AAMA staff members are committed, knowledgeable, and skilled at supporting students and families as well as advocating for systems change at the district level. At the same time, SPS and AAMA have faced several challenges over the past few years that have impacted programming.

DISTRICT BUDGET CHALLENGES

As a district, SPS has faced many challenges over the past few years, in particular related to the budget (Seattle Public Schools, 2024), and AAMA has been generously supported by philanthropic term-length grants. In conversation with Education Northwest, AAMA staff members said that limited resources, sunset-ting of grants, and hiring freezes impacted the extent to which AAMA could fully implement

the Future Readiness initiative. Staff members said these challenges meant that AAMA was unable to hire a staff member to work full time on Future Readiness. Furthermore, AAMA was unable to hire new staff to fill vacant posi-tions, which impacted other key programs like WHOLE Mentoring in 2024–25, AAMA Student Leadership Council, and more.

LIMITED COLLABORATION ACROSS DEPARTMENTS

Future Readiness is meant to directly support students through college- and career-focused activities while also shifting systems within SPS so that all students can benefit. While many SPS departments collect data regarding college and career access and support, limited collaboration at times gets in the way of significant systems change. For example, AAMA staff members shared that different departments collect different data, share

various opportunities with families, and provide supports, but these activities are not always shared or aligned across departments. To address this, AAMA is engaging in the monthly College and Career Readiness team meetings and reviewing data regularly. Through cross-departmental collaboration, AAMA supports SPS as whole to coordinate and align on various college- and career-related activities to ensure that all students have access to rigorous coursework and postsecondary preparation.

EMERGING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Given AAMA's limited staffing, it is essential that AAMA work in partnership with the College and Career Readiness and CTE teams. A bright spot from the Future Readiness initiative is that AAMA has supported career-connected learning coordinators, who work at schools across the district, to engage Black students more effectively. For example, through working with AAMA, the school staff members understand that it is not enough to only share internship opportunities through parent-teacher associations because not all families engage in them. AAMA has supported school staff members to consider other forms of outreach, such as social media and community partners, to ensure that all students have access to postsecondary and career-connected learning opportunities. As a result, opportunities and resources (e.g., Skills Center classes, credits, job visits, guest speakers) are now disseminated widely, reaching students who historically have not had access to them. AAMA and the CTE team co-host family nights, and the CTE team tables at AAMA events like the annual Crowning

Ceremony. Due to this collaboration, more Black male students are accessing internships. AAMA also engages with Seattle Promise at the Seattle Colleges and is embedding into various districtwide initiatives including the Limitless Learning Network.

INCREASED SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS TO ACCESS COLLEGE AND CAREER- RELATED OPPORTUNITIES

Staff members shared that although AAMA was able to expose students to college and career-related opportunities before Amazon provided support, now AAMA can work with students directly through Future Readiness to help them access those opportunities. For example, instead of just sharing information about scholarships or internships, now AAMA holds scholarship writing workshops and works with students to apply to internships. As a result, several students are participating in the Amazon Tech Quest Class, a two-week intensive class where students earn CTE credit and a \$500 stipend, and more students are receiving scholarships, including the Amazon Future Engineers scholarship. Therefore, while Future Readiness has not been fully implemented as originally intended due to districtwide budget cuts and hiring freezes, AAMA has continued to support students directly and collaborated with various SPS departments to shift practices at a district level.



CONCLUSION

Future Readiness is preparing students for college and career

Overall, students, families, and staff members shared positive feedback about how Future Readiness supports Kingmakers participants to prepare for college and careers. While college and career readiness is not the program's sole focus, students and families reported that Kingmakers does help prepare students. Participants cited several activities that supported college and career readiness, including learning about college and career options, support with High School and Beyond Plans, internships, guest speakers, job site visits, and college visits.

Future Readiness participants also show promising outcomes. Future Readiness participants had higher average attendance rates in 2023–24 and 2024–25 compared to nonparticipants. In addition, a higher percentage of Future Readiness participants moved from not being on track to graduate high school to being on track, compared their nonparticipating peers. Likewise, a higher percentage of participants improved their GPA from 2023–24 to 2024–25 compared to nonparticipants. A higher percentage of Future Readiness participants have also completed at least one CTE credit compared to nonparticipants.

While SPS climate survey data suggest that the district still has areas of growth related to college and career preparation, the promising participant outcomes and positive perceptions of Future Readiness indicate that the district can learn from this initiative's strategies to support students districtwide.

Lessons learned and implications for future work

SPS can leverage findings from the Future Readiness initiative to support all students to be college and career ready. In the staff survey, Kingmakers facilitators emphasized that college field trips and job site visits provided

valuable exposure to varied college and career options, helping students better understand potential pathways for their futures. Staff members noted that meaningful college and career readiness experiences require supportive leadership from schools and districts and adequate resources. Staff members also identified the need for a broader systemic shift in mindsets regarding college and career preparation, particularly in supporting Black male students. Additionally, there was strong agreement among the staff that the Future Readiness should be implemented across the district, rather than limited to select schools, to ensure equitable access and impact. This recommendation was also raised by families, who suggested that every school should have a Kingmakers class. While some staff members acknowledged that the benefits of the type of support offered by AAMA may take time to fully materialize, they stressed the importance of investing in these opportunities now to ensure a long-term impact.

While findings suggest that Kingmakers supports students to prepare for college and careers, it is important that Kingmakers and other programs do not replace existing, foundational college and career support provided to all SPS students. All students—those who participate in Kingmakers and those who do not—need quality advising and robust college and career offerings. In addition, schools should collaborate closely with families. College and career decisions are family decisions, and schools must authentically engage families to holistically support students on their pathway.

Furthermore, schools without Kingmakers can still implement effective practices that support Black boys and teens, as well as all students, to prepare for college and careers. Educator mindsets are critical. Schools should support educators to see the potential in all students and shift practices to engage with students and families in culturally responsive ways. Schools can also work to eliminate barriers to accessing career-related opportunities such as internships (e.g., transportation).

Students need trusted adults and opportunities to cultivate their agency and leadership (Fisher & Fisher, 2018; National Society of Leadership and Success, 2024). When students feel a sense of belonging and have access to culturally responsive curriculum, they will be more successful (Hammond & Jackson, 2015; Korpershoek et al., 2020). To shift systems within the district and support Black boys and teens to be college and career ready, SPS needs greater coordination, equitable access to career-connected learning, quality advising, and culturally responsive mentorship.

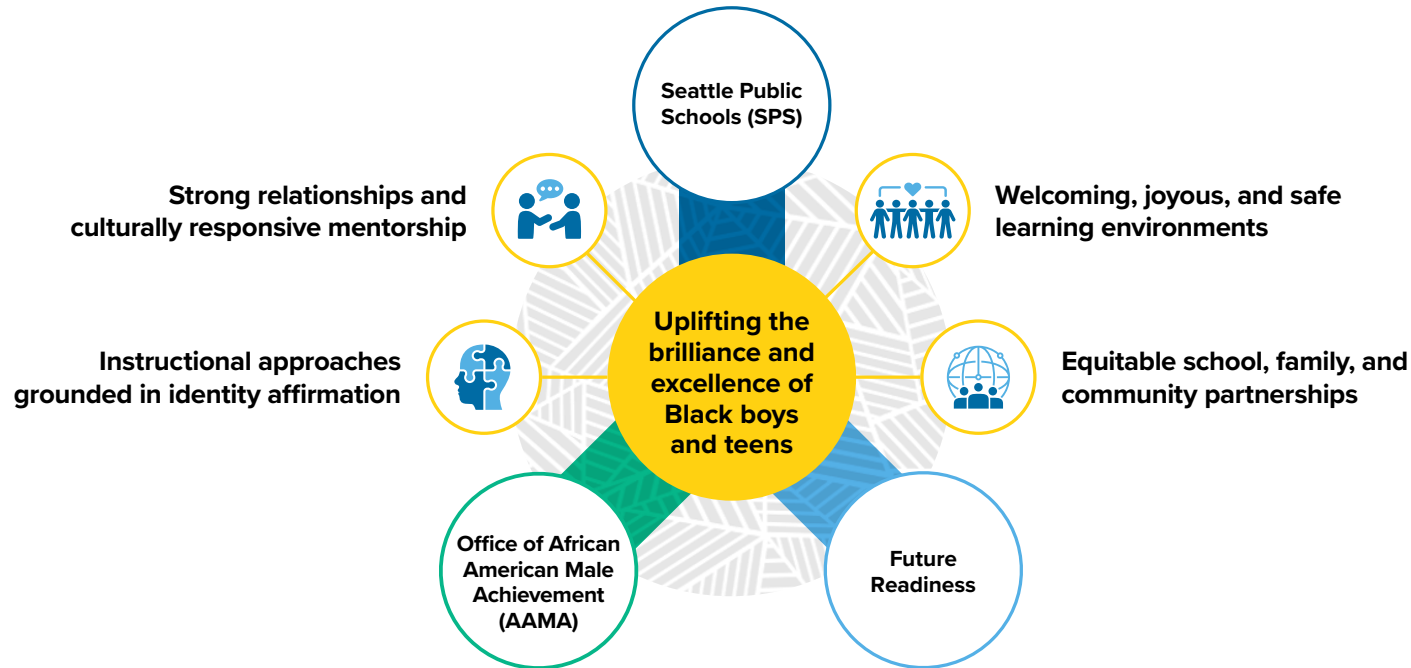
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APPENDIX A. FUTURE READINESS THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL

Future Readiness theory of change



SPS builds districtwide systems that:

- Cultivate Black family power, trust, and district accountability
- Eliminate structural and interpersonal racism
- Provide resources and policy guidance
- Empower AAMA to lead systemic change
- Uplift community-based strategies
- Collaborate effectively across departments to build strong pathways for students

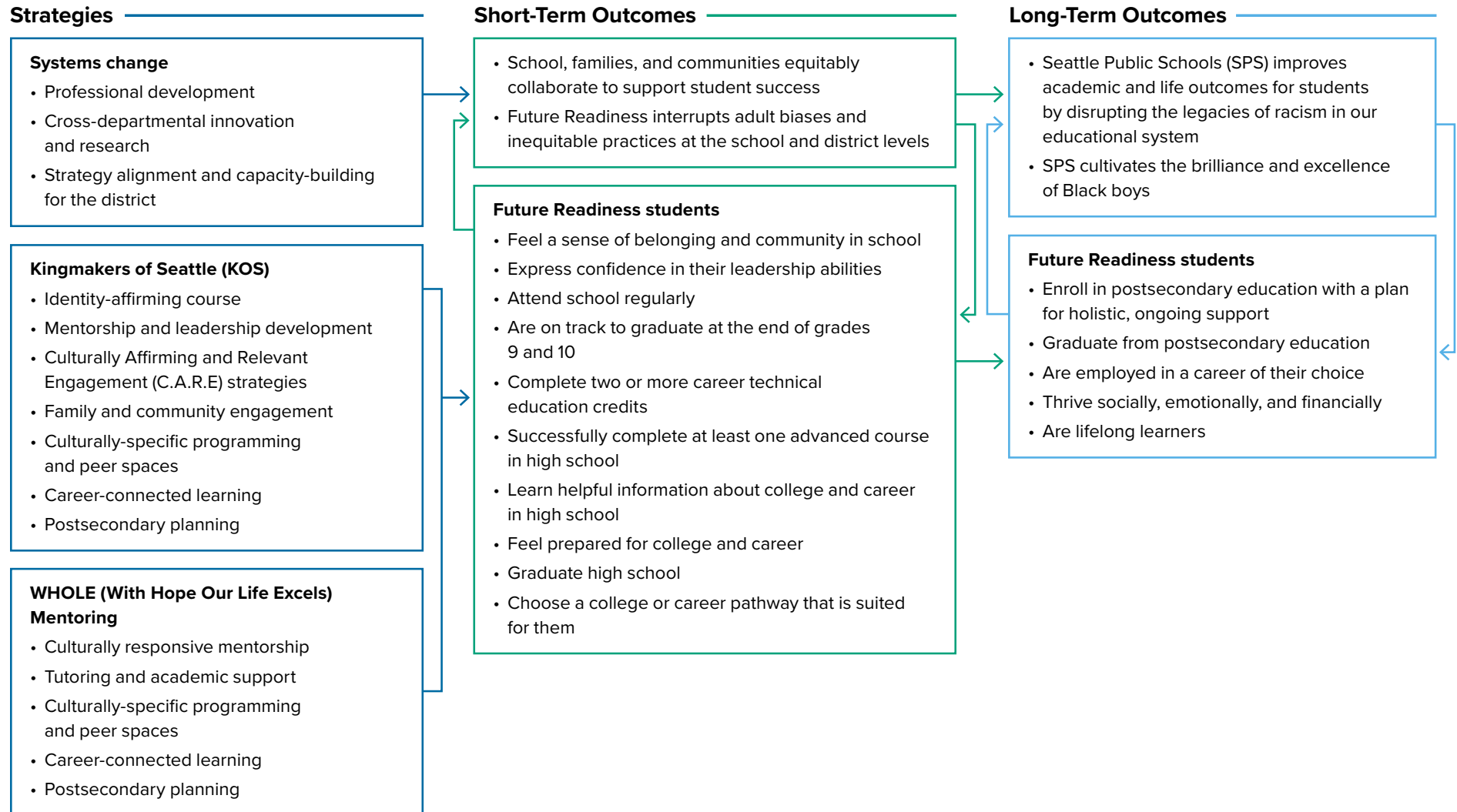
AAMA builds the capacity of schools and educators to:

- Partner with families and community-based organizations
- Utilize asset-based measures
- Dismantle anti-Black racism and build strong relationships
- Affirm racial and cultural identities
- Embrace restorative practices and social emotional learning
- Hold high expectations and provide rigorous, joyful learning environments for students

Future Readiness will prepare Black boys and teens for college and career by:

- Providing culturally responsive mentorship
- Integrate identity-affirming curricula into instruction
- Promoting career pathway exploration and life-relevant skill-building
- Supporting postsecondary readiness and planning
- Ensuring staff representation

Future Readiness logic model



APPENDIX B. METHODS

Seattle Public Schools administrative data

Through a data-sharing agreement, Seattle Public Schools (SPS) shared administrative data on student demographics, attendance, academics, test scores, and SPS-administered climate survey results. Education Northwest received the data in Excel format, along with Future Readiness program participation records for the 2023–24 and 2024–25 school years. The data include enrollment in specific program components, including Kingmakers and WHOLE (With Hope Our Lives Excel) Mentoring. We used a proxy student identifier created by SPS—unique to each student—to link the participation data to administrative records.

To understand who participated in Future Readiness, we conducted descriptive analyses of student composition, disaggregated by key demographic characteristics. We also analyzed student outcomes, focusing on average attendance rates, on-track status at the end of grades 9 and 10, GPAs for middle school students, and credits earned in career and technical education (CTE) and advanced coursework.

Although Kingmakers and WHOLE Mentoring are open to all students, the analyses in this report focused on students who identify as African American males (AAM) based on the SPS enrollment data. When relevant, we compared AAM students who participated in Future Readiness programming in 2023–24 or 2024–25 with AAM students who did not participate in Future Readiness programming in either year. All analysis of administrative data was completed in Stata.

Future Readiness surveys

Based on our learning questions, Education Northwest developed three surveys for the Office of African American Male Achievement (AAMA): a student survey, a family survey, and a staff survey. Survey questions focused on the experiences of students that participate in Future Readiness programming, the experiences of their families, and the college resources or career-based learning events that students and families found most helpful.

In spring 2025, AAMA administered Future Readiness surveys to Kingmakers participants, families of Kingmakers participants, and Kingmakers facilitators. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of students (147 of 230) and approximately 9 percent of families (21 of 230) responded to the surveys. All six Kingmakers facilitators responded to the survey (100%). Students answered questions regarding their experiences in Future Readiness programming, their satisfaction with the support they receive to prepare for college and careers, and recommendations for AAMA. Families responded to questions regarding their engagement with AAMA, their satisfaction with the support their children

receive to prepare for college and careers, and recommendations for AAMA. In the staff survey, Kingmakers facilitators responded to questions about how the program specifically supports students to be college, career, and community ready. Due to the small number of Kingmakers facilitators, and to ensure data privacy, we do not report percentages for the staff survey.

Excel exports of the raw survey results were provided to Education Northwest from AAMA's administration of each Future Readiness survey. All analyses were conducted using Stata, version 18. By survey item, Education Northwest aggregated individual responses to generate the percentage of positive ratings from respondents, then displayed the data in figures. Only the Likert scales were included in the percentage calculations; responses of "I don't know" or "NA" were set to missing and not included in the denominator. Using this approach, items that were asked from either the middle school or high school perspective were combined into one rating for each helpfulness rating on the college and career preparation items.

The team analyzed the open-ended responses using a combination of deductive and inductive approaches. Deductively, we applied a set of a priori codes informed by the theory of action. Inductively, we used open coding to identify patterns and themes that addressed the key learning questions.

Future Readiness student focus group

AAMA conducted a focus group with seven Kingmakers students. To build rapport and establish trust, AAMA staff members, who have already developed relationships with the students, facilitated the focus group using a protocol and guidance created by Education Northwest.

During the focus group, students were asked questions about their college and career goals, their plans after high school, and how well Kingmakers activities supported them in achieving these goals. They also discussed the mentorship they received from the staff, the leadership skills they developed, and the programming that centered on their culture and identity. Additionally, students provided feedback and recommendations for improving the Kingmakers program for future participants.

AAMA recorded the focus group and shared the transcript with Education Northwest for analysis and coding. Similar to the open-ended survey responses, the team applied both deductive and inductive coding approaches, guided by the theory of action and the key learning questions. Coding was conducted in Microsoft Word, and a macro was used to extract comments and transfer them into Excel for further analysis.

APPENDIX C.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Schools and districts should proactively and consistently collaborate with students, families, and communities to understand priorities, co-develop solutions, and provide feedback on programs. To gather this feedback, we recommend not just collecting data from students and families but collaborating *with* students and families to collect data and make decisions together (Hood et al., 2015; Ishimaru, 2020).

Surveys

Education Northwest developed protocols for student, family, and staff surveys that could be modified or adapted in future years. We recommend administering these surveys twice per year: at the beginning of the year and the end of the year. However, if Kingmakers is already administering a survey, Future Readiness student survey questions could be integrated into the existing survey to reduce survey fatigue among students. If developing new survey questions, consider a mixture of multiple choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. To increase response rates for the family survey, consider providing paper copies of the survey or a QR code at family and community events.

Below we list a few recommendations for survey administration:

- Ensure all students assent to participate and have parent/guardian consent
- To encourage participation, consider entering all participants into a raffle for the chance to win a gift card
- Administer the student surveys during the school day (e.g., in a Kingmakers class) to increase participation
- For student surveys, have students log in with their SPS email so that their student ID and demographic information are collected automatically

After administering a survey, the next step is analysis. Microsoft Forms automatically analyzes quantitative questions. You can also export survey results to Excel and develop figures in Excel. For open-ended questions, you should read through responses to identify common themes. It is important to share aggregate survey results with the students, families, and staff members who took the surveys to ensure accountability and reciprocity.

Focus groups

Education Northwest developed a protocol for student focus groups that could be modified or adapted in future years. When developing new focus group questions, phrase them in an open-ended way, rather than prompting for a yes/no or one-word answer, to motivate discussion and collect more nuanced information (e.g., Ask “How has your mentor helped prepare you for college or a career?” instead of “Has your mentor helped prepare you for college or a career?”). We recommend holding focus groups at several schools with approximately five to seven students once per year in the spring. While surveys are helpful in gathering feedback from all students, focus groups allow for deeper conversation and meaning making and can provide more background about why students may feel a certain way about their school or program.

Below we list a few recommendations for focus group facilitation:

- To encourage participation, hold focus groups over lunch with pizza. Gift cards are another way to recognize students for their time and the expertise they share.
- Conduct focus groups in a quiet, private setting.
- Focus groups should last approximately one hour.
- Verify that students under 18 have signed a parent/guardian consent form. If a parent/guardian opted out and the student arrives to participate, kindly explain to them that they are not allowed to join the focus group.
- Read the assent language and have students respond “yes” to agree to the focus group.
- Record the focus group using an audio recorder (a recorder, a computer, etc.). We recommend having two recorders in case one does not work. One option is to open a Zoom meeting and record through Zoom.

After the focus group recordings are transcribed, review the transcriptions to identify themes. Once themes are identified, strengthen the findings by reviewing other data sources (e.g., surveys) or by checking back in with student participants to get their feedback on the initial findings.

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