

Understanding the Reach of King County School-to-Work

A data story about outreach efforts



Department of Community & Human Services
Developmental Disabilities & Early Childhood Supports Division

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What is School-to-Work?

The King County School-to-Work (S2W) program works with students, families, school districts, state, and community partners to connect students with developmental disabilities to employment services early, while students are still in their high school transition programs.

Students are eligible for S2W if:

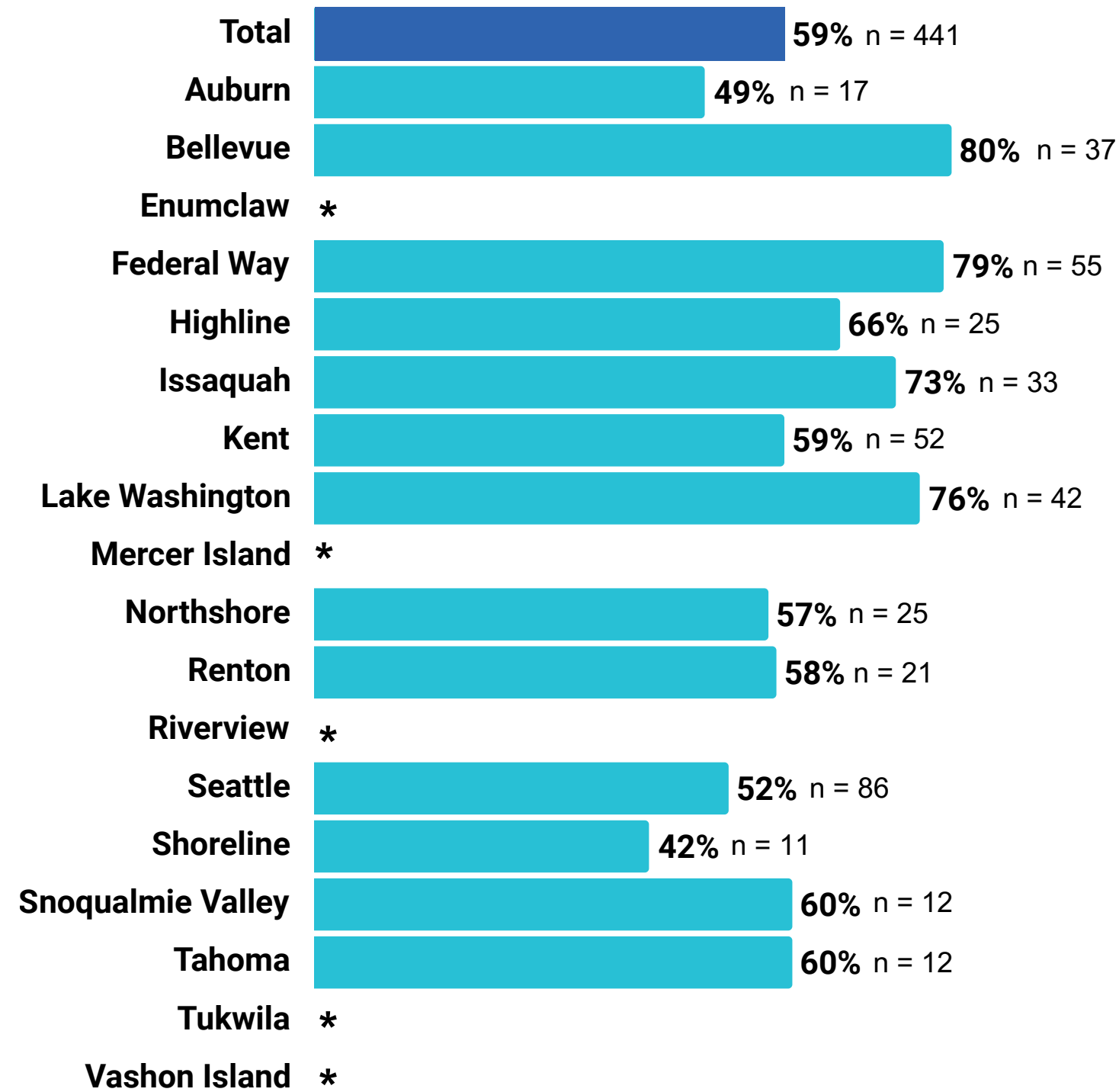
- They are enrolled in the Washington State Department of Social & Human Services (DSHS) Developmental Disabilities Community Services (DDCS),
- They want to work, and
- They stay in school through ages 21 or 22.

S2W both hosts and participates in many outreach activities throughout the year to support enrollment and build relationships with schools and families.

The following "data story" provides a snapshot of who S2W is reaching, looking at data by school district, support needs, and race and ethnicity of students. We also highlight what **steps we are taking** to improve outreach efforts based on **what we are learning** through our data and relationships with community partners and families.



% of eligible students enrolled



*Where the total eligible population is less than 5 students, school district data is suppressed to ensure participant confidentiality

Share of Students Enrolled By School District

We need to learn more about the unique needs of each school district to improve outreach and engagement across King County.

What Are We Learning?

Between 2023 and 2025, we enrolled 59% (n=441) of potentially eligible individuals identified by DDCS across King County, but enrollment rates are different across school districts. Our outreach must be flexible to meet the needs of each district and create lasting relationships. Our goal is to understand why there are differences across school districts so that we can close the gaps and increase the number of students that enroll in S2W.

What Steps Are We Taking?

We are continuing to connect with more teachers and more school districts to better coordinate services. For example, S2W is building more relationships and engaging directly with high schools to reach more students. S2W is also investing in more technical assistance and training for school district transition program development. We also use data on an ongoing basis to inform conversations about how we can improve enrollment rates across King County.

Notes: “N” represents the total number of enrolled individuals in each category. School district data for total eligible population is extrapolated based on the residence of the student as of July the year prior to their exit from school.

Share of Students Enrolled By Support Needs

We want to make sure that all students who want to work have the opportunity, no matter what level of support they need.

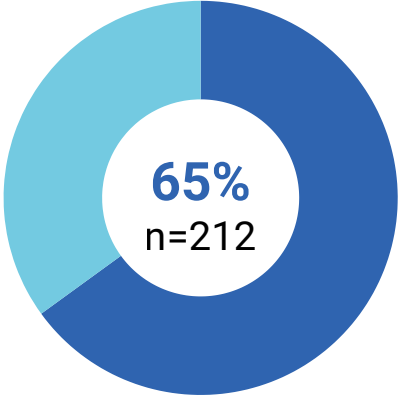
What Are We Learning?

About 2 out of every 5 (43%) potentially eligible individuals identified by DDCS need high levels of support based on data from 2023 to 2025. Historically, students with higher support needs were less likely to enroll in S2W and less likely to find employment. Our goal over the last several years has been to increase enrollment rates for students that need higher levels of support and make sure that all students who want a job have access to the program, regardless of their support needs.

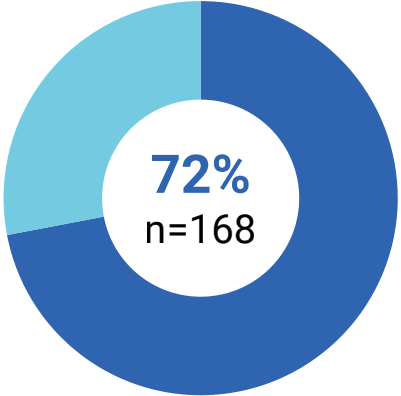
What Steps Are We Taking?

S2W is continuing to work with schools to improve approaches for students who need more support. This includes positive behavioral supports and person-centered planning for students and closer program coordination with schools and technical assistance providers to provide these supports.

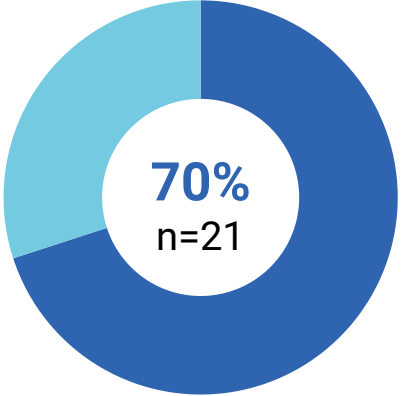
Between 2023 and 2025...



of eligible students needing **high** levels of support were served.



of eligible students needing a **medium** level of support were served.

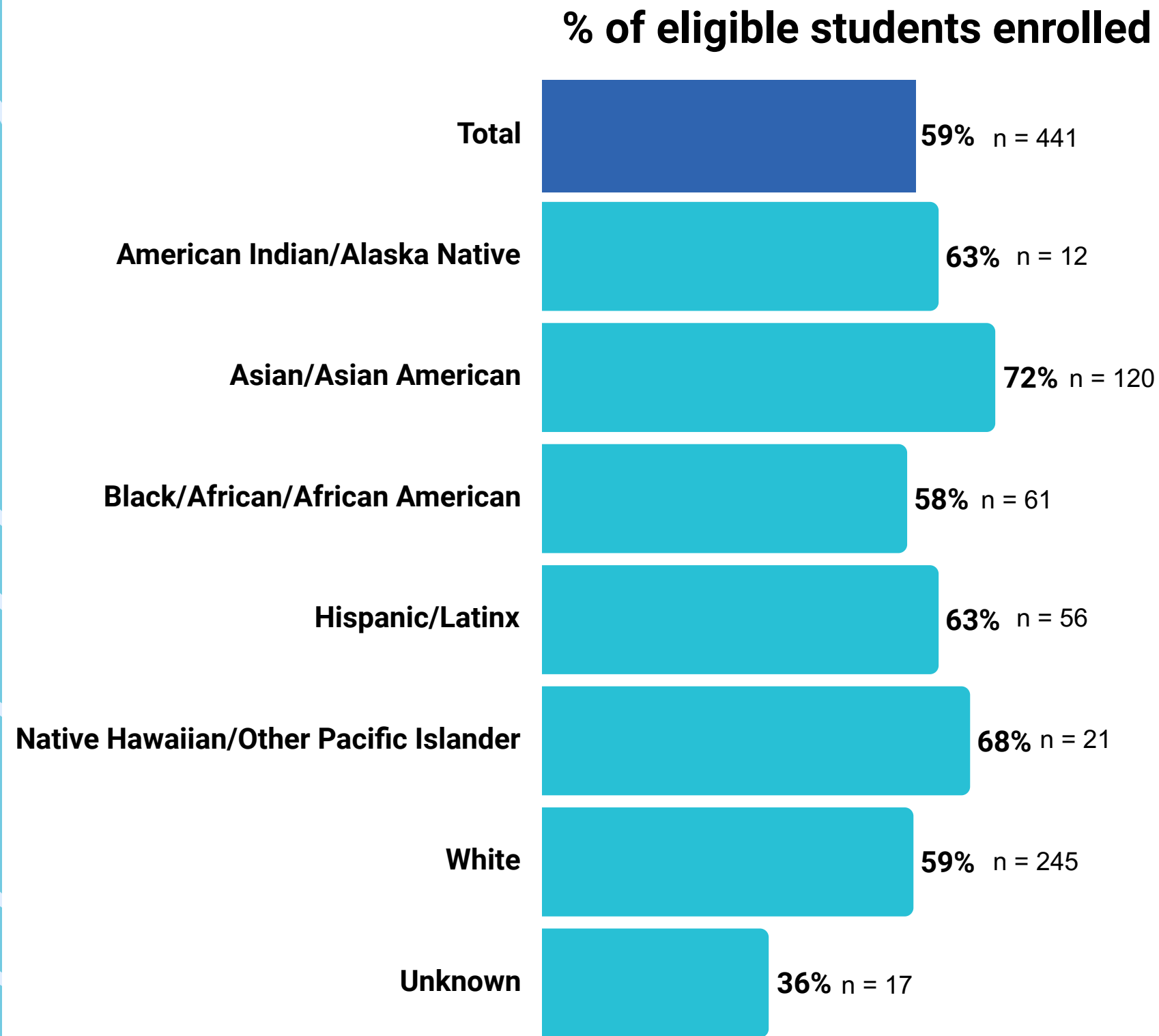


of eligible students needing **low** levels of support were served.

Notes: Out of all potentially eligible individuals identified by DDCS, 22% have an unknown level of support needs because they haven't had a DDCS assessment yet. Only 24% of these individuals were enrolled in S2W.

Share of Students Enrolled By Race and Ethnicity

Centering the experiences of BIPOC students and their families will ensure S2W is accessible and relevant to all eligible students.



What Are We Learning?

To make sure that all students who want to work have the support they need, we must address the ways structural racism and the intersectionality of race and disability make it challenging for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students with support needs to access S2W. The data from 2023 to 2025 reflects this, showing that Black, African and African American students are enrolled at slightly lower rates than their peers. In the last few years, we have seen better parity across race which suggests that our work to center historically underserved students may be having an impact, but a slight dip in overall enrollment, meaning we have more outreach work to do.

What Steps Are We Taking?

We are seeking to partner with community organizations to support the building and strengthening of relationships with BIPOC communities. We are currently working more closely with our providers to review data and develop new approaches to improve reach to BIPOC students and their families. We are also continuing to grow our language access supports like translation and interpretation. All materials are translated in at least King County's top 15 languages and we are continuing to expand our offerings.

Notes: "n" represents the total number of enrolled individuals in each category. Students can identify with more than one race/ethnicity category and therefore may be counted in more than one category.

Summary of Findings & Next Steps

In reviewing the data, the S2W team has identified the following three next steps:

- Between 2023 and 2025, enrollment rates differed significantly across school districts. **In response, we are continuing to connect with more teachers and more school districts to better coordinate services. We are also investing in more technical assistance and training for school district transition program development.**
- About 2 out of every 5 (43%) potentially eligible individuals identified by DDCS need high levels of support based on data from 2023 to 2025. **To address the needs of our students with higher support needs, S2W is partnering with schools to improve approaches such as positive behavioral supports and person-centered planning for students while also engaging in closer program coordination with schools and technical assistance providers to provide these supports.**
- Overall, we have seen better parity across race than in previous years, but a slight dip in overall enrollment, meaning we have more outreach work to do. **To address these findings, we are seeking to partner with community organizations to support the building and strengthening of relationships with BIPOC communities. We are also continuing to grow our language access supports like translation and interpretation**



Next Steps for Outreach

King County S2W is committed to using data and stories from students, families, teachers, and our partners to improve our programming and outreach strategies.

While much of this data story focuses on enrollment among students who are already eligible for S2W, there is much we can do to help more students become eligible in the first place. To increase the number of students eligible for S2W, King County S2W is:

- Working closely with schools to identify students early that may be interested, encouraging them to apply to DDCS and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and supporting with the application process,
- Expanding outreach directly to students and families through in-person and virtual outreach events with language supports to provide them the opportunity to learn about our services, and
- Investing in more technical assistance and training for school district transition program development so that schools are informed on how they can help students get in touch with the services they may need.



Data Note:

Data for this analysis was sourced from DSHS DDCS transition fund year list for 2023-2025 school exit years, King County S2W service data, and DSHS DDCS's AWA database as of 9/15/2025. The transition fund year lists were used to determine those that would be potentially eligible for S2W for the purposes of this analysis.

Acknowledgements:

The King County S2W team thanks our provider agencies for all the great services they provide to our students and for their consistent effort to report this data back to the County to inform our analyses.

If you have questions about the King County S2W program, please email S2Wreports@kingcounty.gov. For questions about this analysis, please email the program evaluator at jrosen@kingcounty.gov.



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