Creating Educational and Economic Opportunities in the Inland Northwest

BASELINE AND STAKEHOLDER STUDY – SPOKANE COUNTY, WA

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INNOVIA FOUNDATION

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Executive Summary

LaunchNW, a new initiative covering ten eastern Washington Counties, and ten Counties in north Idaho, aims to give every child both the opportunity and the support to access their career or college of choice and meet their full potential. Community Catalyst Partners (CCP), is currently working in collaboration with the Spokane and Kootenai communities and with the support of the Innovia Foundation, is working to develop and sustain the systems, structures, and processes needed to ensure that this goal is met for all young people across the region.

Community Catalyst Partners works across the US, bringing communities together to support youth from pre-K through the completion of postsecondary credential of market value. CCP works with cities, counties, regions, and school districts to galvanize and organize an array of local partners around the goal of creating sustainable education programs that drive growth for the community as a whole. Over the past year, CCP has been working with regional leadership and community stakeholders in the Inland Northwest to better understand the conditions that exist and that are needed to support educational, postsecondary, and economic enhancement.

This report covers the initial phase of work, including two Baseline studies conducted by Johns Hopkins University (JHU) that analyze demographic and achievement data from the public school districts of the region, and a series of stakeholder interviews with representatives from government, education, business, non-profit, faith, and other sectors of the community. The findings from these studies and interviews are summarized in this report.

The report highlights multiple areas of strength within the region, including an engaged and active populace, a strong school system, a dedicated network of community-based and faith-based organizations, a generous tradition of philanthropy, and a commitment to doing what is best for children, especially those in need. However, although there is a clear consensus that individual organizations and sectors are undertaking important work, there is also concern that they are not well aligned nor working closely together to harness and capitalize on their efforts.

The need for greater collective action is especially critical given the challenges facing the LaunchNW region. Economic pressures, such as the increased cost of living and housing, higher demand for goods and services, and unmet employer needs are concerning trends that must be addressed for the region to thrive. At the same time, the region's school systems are straining under the burden of preparing students for a changing labor market, navigating a polarized political landscape, and supporting students' increased mental health and other social and emotional needs as a result of the ongoing pandemic, the deleterious effects of social media, and microaggressions toward minority groups.

The data analyzed for this report point to several themes and recommendations for LaunchNW, which are described in greater detail throughout the report:

- **Tap into the thirst for unity** – Identify common ground to help bridge differences and guide greater collaboration around a shared goal.
- **Orient toward strategic and long-term planning** – Develop a strategic plan that channels the community's passions and resources toward achieving long-term goals and outcomes on a larger scale.
- **Fit the puzzle pieces together** – Strengthen existing structures as well as develop new structures to aid navigation, enhance connectivity, and improve outcomes for young people.
- **Engage the next generation** – Involve students in developing solutions that help keep them and their peers engaged in their local communities for the long term.
- **Address student concerns** – Provide social and emotional supports to ensure the health and wellbeing of the students who live in LaunchNW's service region.
- **Develop pathways from school to college and career** – Create a pipeline of youth who have the information and support to identify their career options early, access needed postsecondary education and training, and achieve needed credentials. Per the data in this report, well into adulthood, most Spokane students are earning less than others from across the state. Fourteen years following high school graduation, the median annual earnings for Washington students who have completed a bachelor's degree or higher is about $62,000. Fourteen years after high school, the median earnings for the Spokane student group is just over $38,000.
- **Strengthen connections to workforce needs** – Align the college and career pipeline with workforce development opportunities and strengthen business sector relationships to nurture the pathways for students in ways that meet employer needs in the community.

Communities across the country are realizing the need to strengthen the connection between their school systems and local workforce demands. In the LaunchNW region, although the building blocks are in place, there has never been a coordinated effort, nor one inclusive of underserved minority communities, to connect educational success to economic development. A focus on increasing the number of students who achieve a postsecondary degree of market value and who stay within the community, will create a common goal that can further develop the overall civic and economic environment, enhancing quality of life for current and future residents of the region. One of the biggest assets of the Spokane and Kootenai communities is the "can do" spirit of community members, who are ready to come together and take action whenever needed. This spirit can be leveraged to help create a better future for the next generation, and for the community as a whole.

Background and Purpose

In the fall of 2021, Community Catalyst Partners (CCP) began working alongside the Innovia Foundation to imagine what systems, structures, and processes needed to be developed or sustained in order to bring the Innovia-service region in the Inland Northwest together to give

every child the opportunity – and support – to access their career or college of choice and meet their full potential. This premise ultimately became the bold new promise of LaunchNW.

The start of process involves exploring the conditions for success that exist in the region by identifying the assets, challenges, and opportunities that were present. Working with Innovia, several key areas were identified as issues that were impeding success for young people and families in the region already, including rising costs of living, homelessness, workforce shortages, and generational poverty.

While work was underway to develop short-term solutions for those challenges in various sectors throughout the region, Community Catalyst Partners' goal is to determine the foundational elements that need to be developed or that could be leveraged as part of long-term strategies designed to create systemic change and sustainably address those underlying concerns.

As a result, Community Catalyst Partners worked together with The Center for Research and Reform in Education (CRRE) at Johns Hopkins University to conduct a seven-month study. The goal of the study was to provide a high-level overview of the region's current public education system within the context of demographic, economic, and social trends through several focuses:

- ***Baseline Profiles*** of the region, including Spokane County, Washington and Kootenai County, Idaho, with regard to demographic and achievement characteristics among its public school districts, for purposes of providing broader contextual information to orient the work of this project.

- ***Stakeholder Interviews*** across the region for purposes of developing cross-sector community buy-in and trust, critical feedback, and ideas to inform implementation planning.

The two major partners for this project (CCP and CRRE) have collaborated for many years as facilitators and evaluators of school and community revitalization initiatives, most recently in association with the Say Yes to Education Foundation in the cities of Syracuse, Buffalo, and Cleveland. In the subsequent sections of this report, we will describe the background and rationale for the study, the methodology, and most critically, the major findings and their implications for LaunchNW to achieve education improvement and community growth goals.

Methodology

Baseline Profiles

In an effort to provide broader contextual information to orient the work of this project, this report provides an overview of the demographic and achievement characteristics of the 19

public school districts in Spokane County (WA) and the four school districts in the Kootenai (ID) region. In order to complete the profiles, the research team gathered a variety of school district data from sources including the Washington State Board of Education Data Repository, the Washington Education Research and Data Center, the Idaho State Department of Education, The US Census Bureau, The Niche Research National School District and Community Database, and others to provide a quantitative summary of region's school system.

Stakeholder Interviews

Between September 2021 and March 2022, CCP worked in coordination with the Innovia Foundation to initiate in-person interviews and focus groups with community stakeholders in both Spokane and Kootenai counties. Among the stakeholders, CCP interviewed superintendents, political office holders, presidents and representatives of higher education institutions, religious leaders, nonprofit and community-based-organization leaders, philanthropic leaders and high-net-worth individuals, along with parents and students. CCP conducted 32 stakeholder focus group meetings and 11 individual data gathering meetings, reaching in excess of 300 people in total.

Baseline Profiles

Spokane, Washington School District Overview

This section provides an education profile of the 13 school districts in the Spokane (WA) region. Among others, data discussed include:

- *Demographic data* related to the ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of the students served in each district
- *Community statistics* concerning median household incomes, home prices, and cost of living ratings for the primary zip codes encompassing each district's boundary
- *Instructional and climate indicators* including per-pupil spending, teacher salary and experience statistics, and student suspension and attendance rates
- *Student achievement trends* in English language arts, mathematics and science, as well as performance trends specific to select student subgroups
- *High school course offerings* including dual credit opportunities and Advanced Placement courses
- *Postsecondary outcome data* related to college degree attainment and financial earnings

Narrative summaries of trends related to these data are provided below. To accompany this section, full data profiles of each of the districts in this region are provided in the Appendix.

School District Demographic Characteristics

The broader Spokane area consists of three relatively large school districts, as well as 10 small to medium-sized districts.[1] The area's three largest districts – Spokane SD (~29,000 students), Central Valley SD (~15,000 students), and Mead SD (~10,000 students) all consist of multiple high schools and numerous feeder patterns of elementary/middle schools. Of the nearly 75,000 K-12 public school students in Spokane, nearly 70% attend school in one of these three systems. The area's remaining 20,000 or so students attend school in one of 10 other districts. About half of these serve between 2,000 and 5,000 students and consist of a small number of elementary and middle schools feeding into a single high school. The other half serve fewer than 2,000 students each. Many of these either consist of only a single elementary/middle school and a single high school.

The demographic composition of the area's districts varies somewhat but is relatively homogenous overall. Eight of the 13 districts serve populations where 80% or more of students are White. Only one district, Spokane SD, serves a student population that is less than 70% White. Across nearly every district, Latino students make up the largest minority subgroup. In about half, Latino students make up roughly 10-15% of the student body population, while in the other half, they make up about 5-10%. Across the vast majority of districts, English language learners make up fewer than 4% of the student population.

Socio-economic characteristics vary slightly between the districts. Most, though, appear to be predominantly composed of students from two key demographics: a) those from relatively affluent, middle-class families and b) those living in poverty. Overall, while there don't appear to be notable differences between the demographic composition of the districts based on district size, the largest districts do appear to serve student populations that are slightly more ethnically and socio-economically diverse.

Based on economic statistics produced by Niche Research, the majority of districts within the area appear to have relatively high costs of living, at least as compared to trends seen across Washington overall. This appears to particularly be the case for districts including Central Valley, East Valley, Deer Park, Medical Lake, and Spokane. In one district, Reardan-Edwall, cost of living figures appear to be significantly lower, however. Across the region as a whole, cost of living trends in the form of housing prices and mean rental prices have increased dramatically during the past three years. While data from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey shows that median home values for the region were under $250,000 in

[1] While the broader Spokane area encompasses 13 districts serving K-12 populations, the area also encompasses two additional districts serving limited grade spans, Great Northern SD and Orchard Prairie SD. These districts each serve roughly 100 total students. Due to the small size and structure of these districts (neither district encompasses a high school) these are not incorporated in the presented analysis.

early 2020 (see Table 3 in Appendix), more recent data from the Spokane Realtor's Association shows that in Summer 2022 these figures now exceed $400,000.

Median household incomes are relatively similar to one another across the majority of the area's communities and reflect a mostly middle-class population. For the communities in all but two districts, median household incomes range from roughly $50,000 to $60,000 annually. One exception to this trend, Reardan-Edwall SD (~$43,000), has median incomes that are noticeably lower. With these trends in mind, across the majority of communities in the area, a significant portion of residents do live in poverty. In about half of the districts, 50% or more of the student population comes from low-income families. While districts such as Mead (29.8% low-income), Nine Mile Falls (26.5%), and Freeman (19.4%) serve relatively few students in this cohort, one district (East Valley) serves a student population that is more than 60% low-SES.

Instructional Characteristics and Indicators

To better understand the instructional environment within schools in Spokane, the research team gathered data related to teacher characteristics, discipline/suspension rates, and district spending. Across the area, districts generally appear to spend less than others across the state. Districts do appear to employ relatively experienced teaching staffs, however, and also have low incidences of student discipline and attendance issues.

The majority of districts (11 of 13) have annual per-pupil spending rates lower than the overall rate for the state of Washington ($17,082). All but three of these districts have rates below $14,000 annually. The biggest exception to this trend occurred in West Valley ($26,519), a district that spent over $25,000 per student in 2020-21. Overall, average teacher salaries are relatively similar in the districts across the area. Nine districts had average salaries between $55,000 and roughly $65,000 annually. The four remaining districts all had average salaries above $70,000. These included East Valley ($73,534), Mead ($73,322), Reardan-Edwall ($72,960), and Spokane ($71,594).

The teaching force in the vast majority of districts appears to be highly experienced. Eleven of the 13 districts have a teaching force whose average years of experience exceeds the average for the state (13.3 years). Two districts have staffs who exceed this average by close to five years – Freeman (18.2 years) and Nine Mile Falls (18.2 years). Reinforcing these trends, in all but one district fewer than 10% of the overall teaching force is in their first or second year. In eight districts, fewer than 5% are in this cohort. Only one, East Valley, has a significant proportion of teachers in this group (21.1%). Student-teacher ratios vary somewhat between districts. Across most of the districts in the region, though, ratios exceed the overall public school average for Washington (18-1).

Other instructional indicators related to school climate appear relatively consistent across the region. In the vast majority of districts (12 of 13), over 80% of students attend school regularly

(Washington State Average = 80.1%)[2]. In four districts, Freeman (95.4%), Liberty (95.2%), Riverside (93.5%), and Reardan-Edwall (91.5%) these figures exceed 90%. Only one district, Cheney (68.4%), appears to have significant challenges with student attendance.

The annual discipline/suspension rate[3] is relatively similar among the districts in Spokane as well and closely mirrors that of Washington State overall (2.4%). In about half of the area's districts, the rate is below 2%. In only a few districts does the rate approach or exceed 4% (e.g., East Valley (4.6%) and Spokane (3.8%).

Student Achievement Trends

Overall Achievement. Student performance in English language arts, mathematics, and science varies slightly among the districts in Spokane. In most areas, recent achievement appears to be similar, if not slightly higher, than overall averages for the state of Washington. In ELA, seven of Spokane's 13 districts exceeded the overall state proficiency rate for 2020-21 (47.7% of students demonstrated proficiency or higher on the state assessment). While most of these districts exceeded this rate by a relatively small margin, two districts, Liberty (63.3%) and Freeman (58.3%), exceeded this rate by more than 10 percentage points. In contrast, only one district, West Valley (37.5%), had an ELA proficiency rate that was 10 or more percentage points below the state average.

The performance of 11th graders (i.e., students nearing the end of their public school tenure) largely mirrored these trends. In most districts, the performance of this cohort exceeded that for the state of Washington as a whole. Roughly half (50.8%) of 11th grade students in the state achieved proficiency on the state's ELA exam in 2020-21. Ten of the districts in Spokane exceeded this proportion, however -- six of which did so by more than 10 percentage points. One district, Liberty (79.5%), exceeded the state average by more than 20 points. Only two districts (Spokane and West Valley) had rates that were well under that of the state average for this cohort.

Similar, if slightly more positive trends are present for student achievement in mathematics. While mathematics achievement is generally lower than that for ELA for students across Washington (i.e., a noticeably lower percentage of Washington students demonstrate proficiency on the state math exam as opposed to the ELA exam) – on average, Spokane students

[2] The Washington State Board of Education (2022) defines "regular attendance" as a student having, on average, less than two absences per month (excused or unexcused). An absence is defined as missing more than half the school day.

[3] As defined by the Washington State Board of Education (2022): "Discipline rate is a measure used to monitor the use of out-of-school exclusionary discipline actions in schools. Discipline Rate is calculated by counting the number of distinct students who have received an out-of-school exclusionary action divided by the number of distinct students enrolled. For the purposes of this calculation, out-of-school exclusionary actions include: Short-term Suspension (SS), Long-term Suspension (LS), Emergency Expulsion (EE), and Expulsion (EX). A student may receive more than one exclusionary discipline action in a school year. This measure, however, only counts a student once even if they have more than one disciplinary action."

perform comparatively well. For 2020-21, eight of the 13 districts in the area had proficiency rates exceeding the state average of 30.4%. Two districts, Liberty (43.2%) and Mead (41.4%), had proficiency rates roughly 10 or more percentage points above this average. No district had a proficiency rate more than 10 points below the state average, and only one (West Valley, 23.3%) had a rate of five points below.

As with what was found for ELA, the performance of 11th graders largely mirrors these overall trends. Only about one-quarter (24.2%) of 11th graders in Washington achieved proficiency on the state mathematics exam in 2020-21 – this figure was exceeded by eight of the districts in Spokane. Two of these exceeded this rate by 10 or more percentage points, Nine Mile Falls (36.8%) and Mead (36.3%). Only two districts, Spokane and West Valley, had proficiency rates that were well under the state average.

Lastly, science also appears to be a relatively strong subject for the districts across the area. Here, 10 of the 13 districts outpaced the overall proficiency rate for Washington (45.8%). Six of these districts, including Nine Mile Falls (64.5%), Reardan-Edwall (63.4%), Liberty (61.1%), Medical Lake (59.1%), Mead (57.7%), and Freeman (56.4%), exceeded this rate by more than 10 percentage points. None of the districts in the area scored more than 10 points below the overall state rate, and only two (Spokane and West Valley) scored more than five points below.

This relatively strong performance also appears to persist as students close out high school. Across the state of Washington, just over one-third of 12th grade[4] students (36.0%) achieved proficiency on the state science exam in 2020-21. This figure was exceeded, often by a noticeable margin, by 10 of the districts in Spokane. Five districts exceeded this rate by more than 15 percentage points, and three districts, Nine Mile Falls (70.2%), Liberty (67.4%), and Medical Lake (66.4%), exceeded it by more than 30 points. Only two districts (Spokane and West Valley) underperformed in relation to the state average by more than 10 points.

Student Subgroup Achievement. Across the state of Washington, the achievement of historically disadvantaged subgroups of students, including students living in poverty, as well as Latino students and African American students, lags behind that of others. In English Language Arts, about 30% of the students in these subgroups attained proficiency on the state exam in 2020-21, a rate that was about 15 percentage points lower than that for students across the state overall. Specifically, the proficiency rates for low-income students (31.2%), Latino students (31.2%), and African-American students (31.6%) were all lower than the overall rate accounting for all Washington students (47.7%). Highly similar trends were also present in mathematics and science. In math, the proficiency rates for low-income students (14.8%), Latino students (14.8%), and African-American students (13.7%) were usually about 15 percentage points below the state rate (30.4%). A similar trend, with slightly more variance between these subgroups, was present in science. Here, the proficiency rates for low-income students (33.2%), Latino students (31.9%),

[4] As opposed to the 11th grade assessment schedule employed for English Language Arts and Mathematics, the Washington Board of Education administers its lead standardized science exam to students in 9th grade and again in 12th grade.

and African-American students (27.3%) typically trailed the overall state rate (45.8%) by about 10-15 points.

These patterns of achievement gaps are also present across Spokane. In most districts, these patterns follow highly similar trends. Low-income students, as well as students from Latino and African American subgroups, are achieving proficiency at a rate that is usually about 15 points lower than that for the districts overall. In several districts, however, these trends are especially pronounced – particularly as it relates to that for students living in poverty. In five districts, the ELA performance gap between low-income and non-low-income students exceeds the average gap for the state. Districts including Freeman, Liberty, Mead, Nine-Mile Falls, and Reardan-Edwall all had gaps in excess of 15 points between these subgroups. In four of these (all but Reardan-Edwall), this same widened achievement gap appeared in mathematics. Of the three subject areas, wider than average achievement gaps were found most frequently in science. Here, eight districts exhibited low-income/non-low-income achievement gaps in excess of what is found for the state overall. These again included Freeman, Liberty, Mead, Nine-Mile Falls, and Reardan-Edwall, along with Central Valley, Medical Lake, and Riverside.

Given these trends, perhaps not surprisingly, there appears to be a noticeable correlation between the demographic and socio-economic composition of the districts and their overall achievement rates in ELA, math, and science. The region's consistently highest performing districts, including Liberty, Mead, Nine Mile Falls, Freeman, and Medical Lake all serve comparatively low levels of students living in poverty. By contrast, districts such as East Valley and West Valley serve among the most disadvantaged student populations in Spokane. A full accounting of these trends can be found in Tables 5-7 in the Appendix.

Current Achievement Compared to Pre-COVID Achievement

While the achievement trends discussed throughout the section above focus on assessment data gathered in the Fall of 2021, in light of the instructional circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, it is worth examining how these current trends compare with those occurring in earlier years. Broadly, due to the significant instructional disruptions caused by the pandemic in the Spring of 2020 and throughout much of the 2020-2021 school year, WSBOE significantly altered its assessment schedule during this timeframe. No state assessments were administered in the Spring of 2020, and the assessments initially scheduled for the Spring of 2021 were postponed until the following fall. In terms of the pandemic's instructional impact, widespread school closures during the final portion of the 2019-2020 school year, and the ubiquitous use of virtual learning throughout much of the 2020-2021 school year, dramatically altered the learning experience of K-12 students in the state. As a result of these disruptions, it is not surprising that student "learning loss" during this timeframe has been well-documented across both Washington as well as the United States as a whole.

In comparing current student achievement trends with those from the last pre-pandemic school year (2018-2019), students across Washington appear to have slid considerably in both ELA and mathematics. While 47.7% of Washington students achieved proficiency on the state

ELA exam in 2021, this figure is down from 59.6% in 2019 – a change of roughly 12 percentage points. The drop in mathematics performance is even more severe. In 2021, 30.4% of students achieved proficiency on the state exam, down from 48.9% in 2019 – a change of over 18 percentage points. Science appears to be the lone subject where student achievement was not particularly impacted. In 2021, 45.8% of students achieved proficiency on the state exam, a figure less than one percentage point below the proficiency rate in 2019 (46.7%).

Across Spokane, achievement trends during this timeframe appear to track very closely with these state-level patterns. A full breakdown of the 2019 ELA, mathematics, and science achievement for the area's districts is provided in Table 8 in the Appendix. Pre-pandemic, the 13 districts in the region had proficiency rates that were usually about 10 percentage points higher in ELA and about 15 points higher in mathematics.

In ELA, seven of the 13 districts in the area had learning loss that was *slightly less* than the 12 percentage point drop seen across the state. Though the vast majority of districts had drops that were close to this 12 point mark, a few deviated by greater margins. While Deer Park had a large performance drop of close to 20 points, Liberty, Cheney, and Riverside experienced small losses in the 5-7 point range.

Similar patterns were seen in mathematics. Here, eight of the area's districts exhibited learning loss that was slightly below the drop seen across the state (18.5 points). The majority of these districts had drops of around 15 percentage points. Similar to what was seen in ELA, Deer Park appeared to have the largest performance drop (23.5 points), while Liberty, Cheney, and Riverside each exhibited only small losses (mostly in the 13-14 point range).

Though learning loss was not especially prevalent across the state in science, Spokane districts did demonstrate trends that appear to outpace the state in this area as well. Here, 11 of the area's districts exhibited smaller performance losses than what was seen across the state, and seven districts even exhibited small improvements over their 2019 performance.

Lastly, in terms of the achievement *distribution* of the area's districts in ELA, math, and science, highly similar patterns emerged in 2021 as with what was seen pre-pandemic. In other words, those districts that are *currently* outpacing state achievement averages were also doing so in 2019. This pattern holds true for ELA, math, and science alike. Only two exceptions appear with these trends. In both ELA and math, Deer Park was slightly exceeding state averages in 2019, but is now below the state proficiency rate in both subjects. In contrast, students in Cheney performed below the state average in both subjects in 2019, but now exceed the state average in both.

High School Indicators and Dual Enrollment Trends

Of the roughly 25 high schools in the greater Spokane area, 16 were ranked by US News and World Report as being within the top 200 public high schools in the state of Washington for

2022[5]. Eight of these schools, including Mead SHS in Mead SD, Lakeside HS in the Nine Mile Falls SD, West Valley HS in the West Valley SD, Central Valley HS and University HS in the Central Valley SD, as well as Lewis and Clark HS, North Central HS, and Ferris HS in the Spokane SD – were ranked in the state's top 100. Along with these trends, high school students' access and participation in dual credit[6] and Advanced Placement coursework varies widely among the districts. While larger districts such as Central Valley, Spokane, and Mead have numerous high schools offering over 20 AP courses annually, the high schools in most districts offer fewer than 10.

Though these trends are not altogether surprising, considering that the majority of high schools nationwide only offer a fraction of the 38 AP courses accredited by the College Board, they do reflect a wide variance between the schools in the region. For instance, during the 2021-22 school year, Spokane SD high schools such as Lewis and Clark (26 AP courses offered) and North Central (21 courses offered) provided students with opportunities beyond standard AP courses in English, mathematics, and science. At these schools, as well as others in the region's more affluent districts, students are provided the opportunity to participate in less common AP course offerings, including 3-D Art and Design, Computer Science Principles, Environmental Science, Human Geography, Mechanical Physics, AP Research, and French and Spanish Language and Culture. By contrast, many of the smaller area districts have high schools offering only a handful of AP courses, if any. The sole high school in Liberty SD offered only three AP courses during the current school year, while those in Deer Park and Reardan-Edwall did not offer any. Most other districts had offerings that varied from year to year but generally had 5-10 courses annually. In almost all cases, the courses available reflected relatively standard offerings such as AP Calculus (AB), English Literature and Composition, and Modern World History. A full breakdown of the AP offerings within each of the high schools in the region is provided in Table 9 in the Appendix.

As for the proportion of students actually participating in AP coursework, rates seem to track fairly closely with the overall average for the state but also vary noticeably based on district. Across the state, about 19% of all high school students complete at least one AP course during their high school career. In six area districts, including Spokane (29.8%), West Valley (26.8%), Freeman (26.0%), Nine Mile Falls (23.7%), Liberty (21.6%), and Central Valley (19.7%), the proportion of students exceeds this average. In many other districts in the region, however, this proportion lags noticeably behind. This trend appears most noticeably in districts such as Riverside (10.0%), East Valley (9.9%), Deer Park (<1.0%), and Reardan-Edwall (<1.0%).

[5] Washington state encompasses roughly 850 public high schools.

[6] Dual credit courses are defined by the Washington State Board of Education (WSBOE) as those that allow students to earn credit toward their high school diploma while simultaneously earning college credit. A district's dual credit rate is the percentage of students completing at least one of these classes. These classes include those related to programs such as Running Start, CTE Dual Credit (formerly Tech Prep), College in High School, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Cambridge International.

In terms of participation in dual credit courses more broadly, including participation in not only AP coursework but also Running Start courses[7], technology-focused vocational courses, and others, schools in the region tracked closely with state averages. In most districts, between 5-15% of students participated in Running Start courses. This proportion peaks in districts such as Nine Mile Falls (13.9%), Freeman (13.0%), Mead (12.2%), and Cheney (10.2%), which all exceed the average for Washington (9.4%). As for participation in "Tech Prep" courses, a wider variance is seen among districts. While two districts, Freeman (49.5%) and Medical Lake (49.5%), slightly exceeded the rate seen for the state overall (38.7%), most others have far less participation. Nine districts have fewer than 30% of students participating in these courses, and two – West Valley (7.6%) and Mead (4.0%) have fewer than 10 percent. A full breakdown of these dual enrollment trends, including those related to AP course participation and breakdowns by grade level, can be found in Table 10 in the Appendix.

Postsecondary Outcomes

Across Washington, about 83% of students graduate high school in four years. This rate is regularly exceeded by the vast majority of districts in Spokane. For the most recent cohort of graduates (those graduating in 2021), not only was this rate exceeded by all but one district, but about half had graduation rates between 90-98%. In addition to these data, the Washington State Board of Education, along with the state's Education Research and Data Center, also track the postsecondary activities and earnings of graduates in the years following high school. These data reflect very mixed outcomes for Spokane students that appear to vary widely based on the district they completed school. Despite many of the districts' in the region boasting ELA, math, and science achievement that is in line with or slightly above the state average, a comparatively lower proportion of students from the region attend college. While about 60% of students in the state attend either 2-year or 4-year college in the year immediately following high school, the majority of districts in Spokane had college-going rates below this level (9 of 13 districts). In about half of these, this level was under 50% -- including Reardan-Edwall (47% enrolled), Riverside (46%), Liberty (45%), and Deer Park (37%). To some extent, these figures appear to be driven by a low proportion of students choosing to take advantage of community college or postsecondary trade school options. While about 25% of students across the state enroll in these schools in the year following graduation, this figure is below 20% in about half of the districts in Spokane. This being said, in many districts, enrollment in 4-year college also lags behind the state average (35%). The majority of districts in the area are either very close to this proportion or about 5-10 percentage points below. The only notable exceptions to this trend appear to be Freeman (52%), Nine Mile Falls (48%), and Mead (46%).

College *persistence* rates also appear to lag behind the state average in most districts. While about 90% of first-year college students in Washington persist beyond their first year, almost every district in Spokane has rates closer to 80-85%. For students attending 2-year college

[7] Running Start is a program that allows 11th and 12th grade students to take college courses at Washington's 34 community and technical colleges. Through this coursework, students earn both high school and college credits (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 2022).

or vocational school, the majority of area districts have about 50-55% of students persist beyond their first year, a rate about 10 points below the average for the state (63%). Taken in combination, these trends appear to have a relatively lasting impact. Eight-years after graduation, about 34% of Washington public school students have completed a bachelor's degree or more, and about 53% have at least some postsecondary degree. In both these areas, however, the majority of districts in Spokane have lower rates of matriculation. In eight of the region's districts, about 30% or fewer of students attain at least a bachelor's degree within eight years of high school. In eight of the districts, 60% or more of students have not attained *any* postsecondary degree by this time.

The long-term financial earnings of the region's graduates extend upon these findings. Well into adulthood, most Spokane students are earning less than others from across the state. Fourteen years following high school graduation, the median annual earnings for Washington students who have completed a bachelor's degree or higher is about $62,000. Of the 12 districts in the region with available data in this area, almost all (11) consisted of students whose median earnings were below this level. For those whose highest degree is a high school diploma, the median earnings are also consistently below that of comparable graduates from across the state. Fourteen years after high school, the median earnings for this group statewide is just over $38,000. All 13 of the districts in Spokane had figures below this rate. This trend may be particularly important, as this also happens to be the largest cohort of graduates who attended the region's schools. A detailed overview of these postsecondary trends, as well as trends related to college matriculation, can be found in Tables 11-12 in the Appendix.

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, Spokane represents a relatively large region in Eastern Washington serving about 70,000 students across 13 public school districts. While the majority of districts serve fewer than 5,000 students and consist of a single high school, three districts, Spokane SD (~29,000 students), Central Valley SD (~15,000 students), and Mead SD (~10,000 students), serve significantly greater enrollments. In fact, roughly 70% of all students from the region attend school in one of these three districts. Demographically speaking, the student body in the region is relatively homogenous, with a few exceptions. About two-thirds of districts serve populations where 80% or more of students are White. Across nearly every district, Latino students make up the largest minority subgroup. Socio-economic characteristics vary slightly between districts – but almost all serve a large proportion of middle-class students, as well as a notable proportion of students living in poverty. Though most districts have per-pupil spending rates below that of the average for the state, most also boast teaching staffs that are slightly more experienced and appear to have few challenges with student attendance or discipline issues. Access to, and participation in dual credit coursework, particularly Advanced Placement courses, varies widely from district to district with many only offering limited opportunities, however.

Though achievement outcomes appear to track relatively close to state averages overall, variation appears between districts in many notable areas. Rather consistently, Mead, Nine Mile Falls, and Medical Lake appear to be the highest-performing districts in the region. While two

others, Liberty and Freeman, regularly outpace state achievement averages as well, these districts encompass very small student enrollments and account for only a minor portion of the region's students. The majority of the remaining districts in the area have student achievement that closely mirrors, or is slightly below that of the overall state average. Two districts, however, East Valley and West Valley, have achievement in most subjects that is noticeably below that of averages for the state.

Achievement gaps for historically disadvantaged subgroups of students appear to be widespread across the region. Though these gaps are often close to trends seen elsewhere in the state as it pertains to students from non-White/Asian minority groups as well as students living in poverty, in many districts, these gaps are consistently wider. Achievement gaps of large magnitude, particularly as it relates to students living in poverty, regularly exceed state averages in districts including Freeman, Liberty, Mead, Nine-Mile Falls, and Reardan-Edwall. Given these trends, perhaps not surprisingly, there also appears to be a noticeable correlation between the demographic and socio-economic composition of the districts themselves and their overall achievement rates. The region's highest-performing districts, such as Liberty, Mead, Nine Mile Falls, Freeman, and Medical Lake all serve comparatively low levels of students living in poverty – while districts such as East Valley and West Valley serve among the most disadvantaged student populations in Spokane.

Postsecondary outcomes for students graduating from area schools also appear to vary by district – with many of these trends painting a somewhat worrisome picture. Although many of the districts boast ELA, math, and science achievement that is in line with or slightly above the state average, a surprisingly low number of students from the region attend college. Of those who do attend, trends indicate that they are slightly less likely to continue beyond their first year as compared to others from around the state. Data on long-term degree attainment and financial earnings suggest that these trends are having a lasting impact as well. In the years following high school graduation, a relatively low proportion of graduates from the area's districts have earned college degrees, and most appear to have annual earnings that consistently trail those of comparable graduates from across Washington.

Stakeholder Interviews and Analysis

As indicated in the methodology section, individual interviews and focus group meetings were conducted with over 300 individuals holding varied roles in Spokane and Kootenai Counties, including in education, business, non-profits, and government. Qualitative analysis of the interview responses yielded several themes, which are examined in the sections below.

Key Stakeholder Perceptions

Community Assets and Quality of Life

One of the main assets identified by stakeholders is the location of Spokane and Kootenai Counties. Interviewees noted that the region was considered nationally as an attractive place to live, given its proximity to major metropolitan areas yet relative affordability. It was noted that the size of the region provides opportunities that would be difficult to achieve in a much larger city or smaller community. Spokane was described by stakeholders as a "big small town." The size of the community and the proximity it affords makes networking, relationship-building, and collaboration more accessible.

Population growth, driven by new immigrants and refugee populations as well as the migration of retirees and telecommuters from the West Coast (a trend accelerated by the pandemic), has brought new faces and new resources. However, as one interviewee asked, "How do we define our culture for newcomers as something they want, instead of something they're getting away from?" Simultaneously, the region is also facing a "silver tsunami" as younger generations leave for college and careers while older generations age in place. Rural communities were described as having "farms without farmers," according to one interviewee, due the lack of a next generation that wants to stay in the agricultural communities of the region.

Another asset that came across strongly in the interviews was a sense of both individual agency and collective ownership that leads to a passionate and engaged community. Interviewees described it as a region "filled with people who want to lean in" and a community of "go-getters who don't sit around waiting for others," where the "entrepreneurial spirit is strong" and yet there is an "overarching idea that '*we are the community*.'" The independence of community members combined with a sense of communal responsibility was considered a key asset.

Although the region was not described as wealthy, the generosity of its community members and the strength of community non-profit organizations were referenced often by stakeholders. However, there was also concern that the same people and organizations are being tapped continuously for resources. The ability to rally around a cause provides a strong foundation for the future, but as the region grapples with enormous shifts, there is both trepidation about the path forward and simultaneously a curiosity around what comes next. As one community member put it, "There is no way to go back and restart the community the way it used to be pre-Covid." Another interviewee asked, "What are we *not* going back to? How can we create new and better structures and systems?"

Demographic and Economic Shifts

Overall, interviewees felt mostly positive about the economy of the region, where "economic health is as good as it ever has been" and "people are doing better financially." Stakeholders

pointed to the stimulus money provided during the pandemic, the low unemployment rate, and the fact that "business is bustling." At the same time, there was universal acknowledgement of the growing gap between the "have and the have nots," with strong disparities in rural agricultural areas and among immigrant and refugee populations.

Interviewees described demographic and economic shifts driven by retirees and remote workers from nearby cities such as Seattle and Portland who arrived during the pandemic. As a result, "a lot of money is coming into the state" as one interviewee said, but community members are getting priced out and struggling to afford housing, childcare, and transportation costs. Telecommuters and retirees are typically consumers who are looking for goods and services locally, but the communities in the region have not been able to meet the increased demand. Local businesses are struggling with many of the same issues affecting businesses nationally – growth is constrained by supply shortages and wage issues, employers face recruitment and retention gaps, and costs are rising across the board. Interviewees noted that not only small businesses but also the larger established local industries, such as mining and logging, are struggling with these issues.

Furthermore, while the region has attracted a lot of small businesses and start-ups, many interviewees described the persistent challenge of attracting new large businesses to relocate to the region. Interviewees felt that the region's population does not have the credentials that companies are looking for. This is reinforced by the fact that the businesses that do come into the region offer low-skilled jobs with low wages, such as call centers. The area is seen as unattractive to new businesses: "We keep ending up as the runner up for new businesses looking to relocate," as one stakeholder said.

The increased cost of living and housing costs combined with the lack of preparation for high-skilled and high-paying jobs contributes to the ongoing cycle of poverty. Interviewees described increased challenges with homelessness, families in transition living in hotels or multiple families sharing one house, with no food security or access to healthcare. "And the numbers are likely far greater than what we're aware of," as one stakeholder said.

Keeping Young People in the Community

During the student focus group, young people expressed indebtedness to their community, but many shared their eagerness to see the world and explore opportunities outside the region. Ideally, they want to "leave, explore, learn, and bring it back" as one student described, if opportunities exist. If the community is able to build those opportunities for the next generation, then, as one adult stakeholder said, "We can be great where we are, we don't have to send young people to other places."

The common element mentioned among adult interviewees when discussing young people's future was the importance of "providing hope for every child." Another interviewee said, "We need to take the ceiling off their hope so students and parents can hope for even more." Stakeholders talked about how young people are often unable to express their dreams and

plans for the future, and the pandemic has "pushed '*I don't know what I'm doing*' to a whole new level."

Interviewees stressed that building parents' and students' awareness of the opportunities that exist beyond high school was essential to creating hope about the future. Some emphasized the importance of supporting local colleges – "We'll lose kids to other places if they go to school outside the area." Others talked about the need to help students understand the value of credentials and what credentials are needed to achieve the future they want. Interviewees talked about growing pathways to get students "motivated about careers earlier and into the workforce faster." Students echoed the need to identify career pathways earlier in their schooling, but also expressed concern that the pressure of choosing a career pathway can be difficult at such a young age.

Some students also cited the lack of cultural diversity as a motivator to search for a more inclusive community to live. The adults interviewed also expressed concern that students from diverse backgrounds don't want to stay in the region after leaving school – they "want to go where they feel welcome." Other interviewees talked about the changing demographics of the region as immigrants and refugee populations move to the area, and that "our economic future depends on our ability to solve the diversity issue."

Education Connections and Effectiveness

Overall, interviewees praised the strength of the region's public education systems in terms of their leadership and teachers, school buildings, and community support. They noted that the greater community generally supports education and the quality of education is considered good. Several interviewees shared that community members are committed to a common denominator of "what is best for our children," and there is a "real interest in making sure districts are educating students and taking care of their other needs."

Students praised the quality of the schools as well, and described them as having a lot of opportunities and resources to help inform them about their path into the future. However, students noted that these are less accessible to disadvantaged students, students who are not high academic achievers, and students who are not able to advocate for themselves. Adults also talked about the access issues in rural communities, and expressed concern that schools were "committing to outcomes over access." Other interviewees worried about academic inequities resulting in "dropout rates that vary drastically from district to district."

Stakeholders felt that, in general, local school districts were assets and were producing "quality individuals." However, interviewees were more critical about the effectiveness of schools to prepare students for careers. They described a "long, gradual shift" in the notion that a four-year degree is the best preparation for the workforce. Many families and students are skeptical of taking on student debt and then graduating into a local job market where the industries that are hiring do not require an advanced degree. Interviewees noted the importance of moving from "informational learning to experiential learning" to provide life skills, and the need for

industries to partner with districts to offer more internships and apprenticeships to train young people for skilled technical work in a variety of fields.

The strength of the region's higher education sector was emphasized by many interviewees, who noted both four-year and community college options as "great universities in our backyard." Interviewees also described increased coordination between institutions of higher education and the business sector. One interviewee said, "Five years ago, colleges were trying to guess what businesses needed. Now they're asking businesses what they need." In particular, Idaho's programs to support high school students transitioning into the workforce were raised as models to be capitalized on and scaled, including paid internships for high school students and dual enrollment programs through which students graduate from high school with an Associate's degree fully paid for. However, interviewees noted that not all of the students or their families know about the dual enrollment opportunity and greater awareness is needed.

The shock to the education system caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and political polarization was reflected in interviews across the board. The challenges have been severe and are ongoing. Many stakeholders noted the high absentee rate and learning loss perpetuated by COIVD. Others described the staffing shortages brought on by COVID prevention protocols and related economic shifts, resulting in schools struggling to find substitute teachers, teachers departing for higher-paid jobs, and a widespread lack of counselors, case workers, and other support staff. Others described the high emotional trauma and mental health crisis accompanying COVID, and the lack of individual, financial, and systemic resources needed to support children suffering from stress, anxiety, and depression, while facing the stigma and pride that sometimes prevents families from asking for help. As one interviewee stated, "We can't give students hope for the future if we're not addressing their social and emotional wellbeing."

Students spoke openly and despairingly about the politicization of COVID and the increased polarization of their classrooms, where "debate is taboo." As one student said, "schools have lost their ability to be a safe place for opinions." Another shared, "There is so much happening in the world that is not being discussed in the schools. In order to have an opinion about something, we need to learn about it." Community stakeholders also expressed concern that "tensions are high in the school districts" and "the adults are tormenting our students," who are often caught in the middle of the polarization around COVID and politics. Students echoed that COVID and other issues "have become heated points of contention" at school and they called for "more open-mindedness."

When asked about the main issues that are important to them and their school, students talked about experiencing discrimination due to racism, homophobia, sexism, and elitism, and feeling attacked for their beliefs in school. They expressed their lack of trust in the adults, or even an awareness of who they can go to for help. They suggested a broad need for cultural sensitivity training among students and staff, and called for a greater valuing of youth voice. As one students expressed, "We have so many great things to say and we want to see the public schools recognize our voice."

School Support Services

Interviewees described schools at being "at the center of gathering all the support systems" – and in many ways, at the center of a gathering storm. Given the many economic and social stressors on students and their families raised by interviewees, the question of how to shore up and sustain underlying support services is critical. Students talked about having "no way to know how to deal with stress and anxiety." Adult interviewees shared the concern that "Schools are reopening, but we are not honoring the needs of our students."

Community-based organizations and community centers are stepping in to try to bring resources to schools, but interviewees noted that the large volume of people who require services – and the wide range of services they require – is overwhelming. Many community-based organizations feel that they are "on their own." Interviewees described their struggle to address the high rate of absences from school during COVID and ongoing issues related to truancy; the increasing poverty and homelessness affecting low-income and minority families and students; the staffing shortages and that overloaded teachers are often expected to step in as front-line counselors and advocates for students and families; the increased prevalence of self-medication and suicide, including among students and staff; and the overall lack of funding, resources, and service providers. As an interviewee noted, "Educators are the first line of defense to help the families." Another shared, "The only way a kid gets attention is through a teacher or counselor who notices the kid is having issues. Only the kids who are in dire straits are the ones who get attention – you just hope you catch them in time."

Overall, there was discussion of how there are systems in place, but many have not recovered from the pandemic and there is a lack of coordination. One interviewee observed, "The gaps in services are really about the connection points." Interviewees talked about "growing existing programs by scaling the supports and numbers to better connect them to students in need." The need most emphasized by interviewees was navigation – helping schools, families, and students navigate and access the layers of support that are available. As one student said, "There is no difference between a broken arm and a broken spirit."

Collaboration Across Sectors

Interviewees described their community as one that is "quick to step in and fill gaps," but is not always able to develop collaborative, strategic, and long-term solutions. As one interviewee said, "One and done is good, but what does it look like from a sustainability standpoint?"

In general, interviewees described "the partnerships that do exist are not deep enough," often because there is a "level of misunderstanding between systems that needs to be dealt with." They observed a "lack of trust and knowledge for partnerships." "The result," one stakeholder concluded, "is that we play well together, but we stay in our lane."

Interviewees listed a wide range of gaps and disconnects between virtually all sectors and systems, including gaps between K-12 and higher education, and between business owners

who “want to be engaged” but whose connections with community organizations are not well developed. One interviewee said that government agencies, including county, city, and school districts can be “territorial and want to do things separately.” An interviewee shared, “Our philanthropic community and successful nonprofits have trouble finding the puzzle pieces and coming together to support kids.” Another suggested “We need public/private partnerships in order to solve problems – and we need more of a focus on data-based approaches.”

Several stakeholders noted that the gaps were caused by lack of communication and coordination. “There is not a system of communication,” one interviewee said, “We see communication breakdowns every day.” Another said, “We are more impactful when we don’t try to duplicate efforts, but we need a way to know who is engaged and where – with an ongoing ability to connect.”

Overall, interviewees expressed the need to find a common ground around for unity, coordination, and progress. As one stakeholder said, “I believe there is common ground – but what does it look like?”

Themes

Across all the interviews and focus groups, key stakeholders overwhelmingly painted a picture of a region in the midst of upheaval and change. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, new migration patterns, shifts in the economy and employment, and increased political polarization have profoundly affected the educational, economic, and social fabric of the region. There is broad recognition that “the way things have always been is significantly changing,” as one interviewee said, and there is increasing awareness that community structures and systems need to change in response. Although community members are considered active, generous, and passionate, sometimes passions “run in opposite directions” as one stakeholder shared. While there is community commitment, it is not always aligned. Given this, another interviewee said, there is a “thirst for unity” and the need for “something that unifies with common ground for a good cause.”

The quantitative and qualitative data summarized in this report suggest several themes and recommendations that can help chart a path forward for Launch NW:

- **Tap into the thirst for unity** – Stakeholders across all sectors voiced concern about increased polarization in the community, driven by the pandemic, changing demographics, political issues, and economic pressures. They emphasized the need to identify common ground to help bridge these differences and guide greater collaboration around a shared goal. Finding a common cause could help bring the community together around common interests, rather than continuing to split along political, racial, economic, or other lines.

- **Orient toward strategic and long-term planning** – The ability of individual community members and the community at large to step up and rally to address a need or fill a gap was noted as a key asset across all stakeholder groups. This strength could be leveraged by developing a strategic plan that channels the community's passions and resources toward achieving long-term goals and outcomes on a larger scale.
- **Fit the puzzle pieces together** – The need to help students and families access and navigate support programs and strengthen the communication and coordination across systems was mentioned across multiple stakeholder groups. Strengthening existing structures as well as developing new structures to aid navigation, enhance connectivity, and improve outcomes will be critical to supporting young people and the community.
- **Engage the next generation** – Students are asking for a seat at the table. By inviting them to share their perspectives and by recognizing their voices, LaunchNW can involve them in developing solutions that help keep them and their peers engaged in their local communities for the long term.
- **Address student concerns** – While seeking a seat at the table, students – especially those in the Black and Asian/Pacific Islanders communities – are also clearly battling non-academic issues in the form of racism and microaggressions that are communicated both inside and outside of school buildings and on social media. Many minority students are looking for opportunities to leave the region due to the lack of cultural diversity. Providing social and emotional supports are vital to ensuring the health and wellbeing of all students who live in LaunchNW's service region.
- **Develop pathways from school to college and career** – The need for clear pathways that help students transition from school to college and career came across strongly in the interviews. Per the data in this report, well into adulthood, most Spokane students are earning less than others from across the state. Fourteen years following high school graduation, the median annual earnings for Washington students who have completed a bachelor's degree or higher is about $62,000. Fourteen years after high school, the median earnings for the Spokane student group is just over $38,000. Many students have expressed a lack of clear understanding of their postsecondary opportunities and the coaching and counseling needed to point them in the right direction for college and career. In addition, very few programs like Idaho's dual enrollment program exist that help young people earn a market-value credential without a large investment of time and money. By creating a pipeline of youth who have the information and support to identify their career options early, access needed postsecondary education and training, and achieve the needed credentials, LaunchNW can help existing and new businesses grow within the region.
- **Strengthen connections to workforce needs** – Employers, especially those in healthcare, noted the need for more qualified employees. By aligning the college and career pipeline with workforce development opportunities, and strengthening business sector relationships to nurture the pathways for students in ways that meet employer needs in the community, the business community can play a significant role as both benefactor and beneficiary in the LaunchNW endeavor.

Appendix:
Baseline School District Data for Spokane (WA)

Table 1
School District Summaries

	Student Achievement	Student Enrollment	Socio-economic Composition	Demographic Composition
Central Valley SD	Close to WA Average	~15,000	Mixed Affluence	Predominantly White – Little Diversity
Cheney SD	Close to WA Average	2,000-5,000	Relatively High-Poverty	Relatively Diverse – White and Latino
Deer Park SD	Close to WA Average	2,000-5,000	Relatively High-Poverty	Predominantly White – Little Diversity
East Valley SD	Below WA Average	2,000-5,000	High-Poverty	Relatively Diverse – White and Latino
Freeman SD	Above WA Average	500-1000	Affluent	White – Very Little Diversity
Liberty SD	High	500-1000	Mixed Affluence	Predominantly White – Little Diversity
Mead SD	High	~10,000	Relatively Affluent	Predominantly White – Little Diversity
Medical Lake SD	Above WA Average	1,000-2,000	Mixed Affluence	Relatively Diverse – White and Latino
Nine Mile Falls SD	Above WA Average	1,000-2,000	Relatively Affluent	Predominantly White – Little Diversity
Reardan-Edwall SD	Close to WA Average	500-1,000	Mixed Affluence	Predominantly White – Little Diversity
Riverside SD	Close to WA Average	1,000-2,000	Relatively High-Poverty	Predominantly White – Little Diversity
Spokane SD	Close to WA Average	~30,000	Relatively High-Poverty	Relatively Diverse – White and Latino
West Valley SD	Below WA Average	2,000-5,000	Relatively High-Poverty	Mostly White – Some Latino

Note. Figures are based on enrollment statistics reported for the 2020-21 school year by the Washington State Board of Education (WSBOE).

Table 2
School District Demographic Characteristics: Spokane

	Total Student Enrollment	Students Living in Poverty (%)	White (%)	English Language Learners (%)	Other Notable Demographic Groups
Central Valley SD	14,625	36.1	81.4	3.4	5.6% Latino
Cheney SD	5,380	50.5	71.4	5.7	13.0% Latino
Deer Park SD	2,608	51.6	87.4	1.2	6.9% Latino
East Valley SD	3,696	60.8	74.9	3.0	12.8% Latino
Freeman SD	877	19.4	91.8	0.0	4.4% Latino
Liberty SD	590	31.5	85.6	0.2	8.5% Latino
Mead SD	10,297	29.8	81.5	2.9	8.4% Two or More Races; 5.5% Latino
Medical Lake SD	1,875	35.9	72.6	1.4	13.7% Latino; 8.3% Two or More Races
Nine Mile Falls SD	1,411	26.5	82.8	0.6	8.2% Latino
Reardan-Edwall SD	735	47.6	84.4	1.5	5.0% Latino; 4.9% American Indian; 4.5% Two or More Races
Riverside SD	1,551	54.2	86.6	1.1	6.5% Latino; 4.3% Two or More Races
Spokane SD	29,085	57.0	66.4	6.6	13.6% Two or More Races; 11.3% Latino
West Valley SD	3,471	57.5	75.9	3.3	10.9% Latino; 8.3% Two or More Races
Washington State	1,091,309	45.7	50.1	12.4	25.2% Latino; 8.5% Asian; 8.9% Two or More Races; 4.7% African American

Note. Figures are based on enrollment statistics reported for the 2020-21 school year by the Washington State Board of Education (WSBOE).

Table 3
School District Community Characteristics: Spokane

	Median Household Income ($ Annual)	Median Home Value for Area	Median Rent for Area ($ Monthly)	Overall Cost of Living
Central Valley SD	51,961	204,700	946	Higher than Average
Cheney SD	N/A	224,800	913	N/A
Deer Park SD	52,429	190,000	760	Higher than Average
East Valley SD	51,961	204,700	946	Higher than Average
Freeman SD	N/A	224,800	913	N/A
Liberty SD	N/A	224,800	913	N/A
Mead SD	N/A	224,800	913	N/A
Medical Lake SD	60,295	198,300	692	Higher than Average
Nine Mile Falls SD	N/A	224,800	913	N/A
Reardan-Edwall SD	43,125	153,100	533	Lower than Average
Riverside SD	N/A	224,800	913	N/A
Spokane SD	50,306	187,600	866	Higher than Average
West Valley SD	56,364	173,700	781	Average
Washington State	-	-	-	-

Note 1. For purposes of maintaining de-identification of public data, WSBOE does not report figures for subgroups of students below a minimal threshold of size. "Not Available" or N/A designations, are provided in these areas. If made available by WSBOE, broad estimates of percentages may also be provided instead of specifics.
Note 2. Figures are pulled from the Niche Research School District Database and are based on aggregated data generated from the US Census Bureau's 2019-20 American Community Survey. For each, figures are based off the central zip code for each district. For select districts where zip code specific data are not available, figures for Spokane County overall are provided. Cost of living estimates are in comparison to the state of Washington overall.

Table 4
District Instructional Indicators: Spokane

	Annual Per Pupil Spending ($)	Student-Teacher Ratio	Average Teacher Salary ($ Annual)	Teachers: Average Years of Experience	First or Second Year Teachers (%)
Central Valley	13,123	18-1	65,556	15.1	7.9
Cheney	13,405	17-1	59,377	12.6	4.9
Deer Park	12,194	20-1	63,912	15.2	1.8
East Valley	14,532	19-1	73,534	16.3	21.1
Freeman	13,014	18-1	60,619	18.2	0.0
Liberty	13,928	17-1	57,531	16.3	5.5
Mead	12,719	19-1	73,322	15.9	4.1
Medical Lake	13,596	18-1	64,549	12.8	3.1
Nine Mile Falls	13,196	17-1	64,711	18.2	6.0
Reardan-Edwall	17,764	20-1	72,960	15.2	0.2
Riverside	13,854	18-1	64,087	13.8	0.0
Spokane	13,997	17-1	71,594	14.8	4.8
West Valley	26,519	18-1	62,703	15.4	7.7
Washington State	17,082	18-1	-	13.3	-

Note 1. Figures are based on enrollment statistics reported for the 2020-21 school year by the Washington State Board of Education (WSBOE) and the Niche Research National School District Database.

Table 5
English Language Arts Achievement Trends: Spokane

	Overall ELA Proficiency (%)	High ELA Growth (%)	11th Grade ELA Proficiency (%)	ELA Proficiency Low-Income Students (%)	ELA Proficiency Latino Students (%)	ELA Proficiency African-American Students (%)
Central Valley	51.4	31.9	52.2	36.0	35.7	30.4
Cheney	48.9	33.6	50.0	37.4	39.4	31.0
Deer Park	46.0	39.6	60.8	40.3	40.7	33.3
East Valley	41.7	33.4	51.3	32.8	28.9	16.1
Freeman	58.3	30.0	61.1	42.5	56.3	N/A
Liberty	63.3	24.7	79.5	46.7	51.7	N/A
Mead	55.9	35.3	53.9	39.5	48.3	24.0
Medical Lake	52.3	32.1	62.8	42.7	43.4	46.4
Nine Mile Falls	52.5	27.4	65.5	38.7	50.1	N/A
Reardan-Edwall	47.6	32.8	68.9	32.4	42.1	N/A
Riverside	45.4	36.6	51.6	34.7	38.9	N/A
Spokane	46.0	35.0	39.7	32.1	35.0	30.7
West Valley	37.5	32.2	34.1	26.6	28.1	36.8
Washington State	47.7	33.6	50.8	31.2	31.2	31.6

Note 1. Figures are based on enrollment statistics reported for the 2020-21 school year by the Washington State Board of Education (WSBOE).
Note 2. For purposes of maintaining de-identification of public data, WSBOE does not report figures for subgroups of students below a minimal threshold of size. "Not Available" or N/A designations, are provided in these areas.
Note 3. Overall proficiency accounts for all students in grades 3rd-8th and 11th who completed the state assessment. Proficiency percentage reflects the percentage of all students who completed the state assessment scoring at either the proficient or advanced level.
Note 4. In addition to proficiency scores, Washington uses student growth percentiles (SGPs) to measure growth in students' Math and English Language Arts skills from one grade to the next. Student growth percentiles compare students in the same grade level with similar scores in previous years and measures their performance relative to those students. A student with a 60 SGP had growth greater than 60% of students with a similar test score in an earlier grade. For a school, the middle or median SGP in a specific subject and grade level is the school's score for the measure (WSBOE, 2022). Any student with an SGP of 67 or higher is considered to have made "High Growth"
Note 5. All proficiency statistics are based on student performance on Washington's lead ELA exam for students in grades 3rd-8th and 10th (the SBAC). Achievement statistics are provided for the most recent year in which complete data are available (2021). Due to instructional interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, students were administered this exam in the Fall of 2021 as opposed to the previous spring. As a result of this delay, the grade spans of students taking this exam varied slightly from previous years (e.g., though 10th grade students ordinarily would take this exam in the spring, they instead took it in the fall of the following year as 11th graders).

Table 6
Mathematics Achievement Trends: Spokane

	Overall Math Proficiency (%)	High Math Growth (%)	11th Grade Math Proficiency (%)	Math Proficiency Low-Income Students	Math Proficiency Latino Students	Math Proficiency African-American Students
Central Valley	32.4	30.8	26.1	19.9	17.0	15.5
Cheney	30.7	38.8	17.7	19.1	18.8	14.3
Deer Park	29.7	37.4	22.2	23.9	25.7	16.7
East Valley	26.7	29.9	27.7	17.5	14.5	< 10
Freeman	35.1	30.6	26.4	16.0	12.5	N/A
Liberty	43.2	30.9	31.8	24.4	34.5	N/A
Mead	41.4	36.9	36.3	24.1	29.3	10.7
Medical Lake	33.9	36.1	27.7	24.5	25.8	17.9
Nine Mile Falls	37.8	33.7	36.8	23.3	32.9	N/A
Reardan-Edwall	31.4	34.3	28.9	19.1	21.1	N/A
Riverside	29.8	42.4	19.7	19.5	25.9	N/A
Spokane	28.2	34.3	16.4	16.3	18.2	11.8
West Valley	23.3	28.1	11.4	14.6	14.8	13.2
Washington State	30.4	33.7	24.2	14.8	14.8	13.7

Note 1. Figures are based on enrollment statistics reported for the 2020-21 school year by the Washington State Board of Education (WSBOE).
Note 2. For purposes of maintaining de-identification of public data, WSBOE does not report figures for subgroups of students below a minimal threshold of size. "Not Available" or N/A designations, are provided in these areas. If made available by WSBOE, broad estimates of percentages may also be provided instead of specifics.
Note 3. Overall proficiency accounts for all students in grades 3rd-8th and 11th who completed the state assessment. Proficiency percentage reflects the percentage of all students who completed the state assessment scoring at either the proficient or advanced level.
Note 4. In addition to proficiency scores, Washington uses student growth percentiles (SGPs) to measure growth in students' Math and English Language Arts skills from one grade to the next. Student growth percentiles compare students in the same grade level with similar scores in previous years and measures their performance relative to those students. A student with a 60 SGP had growth greater than 60% of students with a similar test score in an earlier grade. For a school, the middle or median SGP in a specific subject and grade level is the school's score for the measure (WSBOE, 2022). Any student with an SGP of 67 or higher is considered to have made "High Growth"
Note 5. All proficiency statistics are based on student performance on Washington's lead mathematics exam for students in grades 3rd-8th and 10th (the SBAC). Achievement statistics are provided for the most recent year in which complete data are available (2021). Due to instructional interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, students were administered this exam in the Fall of 2021 as opposed to the previous spring. As a result of this delay, the grade spans of students taking this exam varied slightly from previous years (e.g., though 10th grade students ordinarily would take this exam in the spring, they instead took it in the fall of the following year as 11th graders).

Table 7
Science Achievement Trends: Spokane

	Overall Science Proficiency (%)	12th Grade Science Proficiency (%)	Science Proficiency Low-Income Students	Science Proficiency Latino Students	Science Proficiency African-American Students
Central Valley SD	44.7	29.5	22.2	33.1	34.7
Cheney SD	50.9	43.2	40.4	44.3	16.7
Deer Park SD	47.4	39.3	44.1	33.3	N/A
East Valley SD	46.2	44.6	40.1	34.0	18.2
Freeman SD	56.4	51.4	41.9	46.2	N/A
Liberty SD	61.1	67.4	42.1	N/A	N/A
Mead SD	57.7	46.2	44.8	51.7	34.1
Medical Lake SD	59.1	66.4	47.9	37.2	42.9
Nine Mile Falls SD	64.5	70.2	52.0	57.1	N/A
Reardan-Edwall SD	63.4	62.1	51.4	N/A	N/A
Riverside SD	49.0	43.8	37.0	30.0	N/A
Spokane SD	39.8	24.0	30.2	33.8	22.8
West Valley SD	38.5	22.9	27.4	27.1	29.4
Washington State	45.8	36.0	33.2	31.9	27.3

Note 1. Figures are based on enrollment statistics reported for the 2020-21 school year by the Washington State Board of Education (WSBOE).
Note 2. For purposes of maintaining de-identification of public data, WSBOE does not report figures for subgroups of students below a minimal threshold of size. "Not Available" or N/A designations, are provided in these areas.
Note 3. Overall proficiency accounts for all students in grades 6th, 9th and 12th who completed the state science assessment. Proficiency percentage reflects the percentage of all students who completed the state assessment scoring at either the proficient or advanced level.
Note 4. All proficiency statistics are based on student performance on Washington's lead science exam for students in grades 5th, 8th, and 11th (the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science -- WCAS). Achievement statistics are provided for the most recent year in which complete data are available (2021). Due to instructional interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, students were administered this exam in the Fall of 2021 as opposed to the previous spring. As a result of this delay, the grade spans of students taking this exam varied slightly from previous years (e.g., though 11th grade students ordinarily would take this exam in the spring, they instead took it in the fall of the following year as 12th graders).

Table 8
Achievement Trends: Annual Comparisons

	Overall ELA Proficiency (%) Fall 2021	Overall ELA Proficiency (%) Spring 2019	Overall Math Proficiency (%) Fall 2021	Overall Math Proficiency (%) Spring 2019	Overall Science Proficiency (%) Fall 2021	Overall Science Proficiency (%) Spring 2019
Central Valley	51.4	64.5	32.4	53.4	44.7	48.7
Cheney	48.9	54.5	30.7	45.4	50.9	47.7
Deer Park	46.0	65.0	29.7	53.2	47.4	47.6
East Valley	41.7	55.1	26.7	39.9	46.2	48.6
Freeman	58.3	67.1	35.1	54.2	56.4	65.3
Liberty	63.3	70.3	43.2	56.2	61.1	56.2
Mead	55.9	70.6	41.4	62.4	57.7	56.1
Medical Lake	52.3	63.2	33.9	50.6	59.1	55.8
Nine Mile Falls	52.5	64.2	37.8	52.9	64.5	64.4
Reardan-Edwall	47.6	61.4	31.4	49.1	63.4	60.4
Riverside	45.4	52.7	29.8	43.2	49.0	42.6
Spokane	46.0	56.0	28.2	45.2	39.8	46.4
West Valley	37.5	50.9	23.3	39.0	38.5	47.2
Washington State	47.7	59.6	30.4	48.9	45.8	46.7

Note 1. Overall proficiency accounts for all students in grades 3rd-8th and 10th who completed the state assessment. Proficiency percentage reflects the percentage of all students who completed the state assessment scoring at either the proficient or advanced level.
Note 2. As outlined by WSBOE "Due to U.S. Department of Education (ED) assessment waivers for Spring 2020, assessment data are not available for that school year. Given the flexibility offered by US DoE, the Spring 2021 assessments were administered in Fall 2021"

Table 9
School District Climate Indicators: Spokane

	Percentage of Students with Regular Attendance	Annual Discipline Rate (%)	Graduation Rate (4-Year) (%)	Number of Classroom Teachers
Central Valley SD	83.2	3.5	88.0	884
Cheney SD	68.4	3.5	92.0	336
Deer Park SD	84.1	2.5	93.0	148
East Valley SD	82.9	4.6	78.0	262
Freeman SD	95.4	<1.0	95.0	55
Liberty SD	95.2	1.4	89.0	35
Mead SD	83.7	2.4	92.0	605
Medical Lake SD	85.1	1.3	94.0	145
Nine Mile Falls SD	87.7	1.5	93.0	90
Reardan-Edwall SD	91.5	<1.0	88.0	45
Riverside SD	93.5	<1.0	84.0	94
Spokane SD	83.1	3.8	89.0	1,961
West Valley SD	89.2	2.3	98.0	223
Washington State	80.1	2.4	83.0	68,625

Note 1. Figures are based on enrollment statistics reported for the 2020-21 school year by the Washington State Board of Education (WSBOE).
Note 2. For purposes of maintaining de-identification of public data, WSBOE does not report figures for subgroups of students below a minimal threshold of size. "Not Available" or N/A designations, are provided in these areas. If made available by WSBOE, broad estimates of percentages may also be provided instead of specifics (i.e., "less than" a given percentage).
Note 3. The Washington State Board of Education (2022) defines "regular attendance" as a student having, on average, less than two absences per month (excused or unexcused). An absence is defined as missing more than half the school day.
Note 4. As defined by the Washington State Board of Education (2022), annual "Discipline rate is a measure used to monitor the use of out-of-school exclusionary discipline actions in schools. Discipline Rate is calculated by counting the number of distinct students who have received an out-of-school exclusionary action divided by the number of distinct students enrolled. For the purposes of this calculation, out-of-school exclusionary actions include: Short-term Suspension (SS), Long-term Suspension (LS), Emergency Expulsion (EE), and Expulsion (EX). A student may receive more than one exclusionary discipline action in a school year. This measure, however, only counts a student once even if they have more than one disciplinary action."

Table 10
High Schools and AP Coursework Offerings: Spokane

	High Schools, US News and World Report Rankings, Number of AP Courses
Central Valley SD	• Central Valley HS (USNWR State Rank = 101; Current AP Courses = 21) • University HS (Current AP Courses = 18) • Mica Peak HS (AP courses currently not listed)
Cheney SD	• Cheney HS (USNWR State Rank = 141; Current AP Courses = 12) • Three Springs HS (Current AP Courses = 1)
Deer Park SD	• Deer Park HS (USNWR State Rank = 180; AP Courses offered since 2012 = 3; Current AP Courses = 0)
East Valley SD	• East Valley HS (Current AP Courses = 17)
Freeman SD	• Freeman HS (USNWR State Rank = 135; Current AP Courses = 7)
Liberty SD	• Liberty HS (USNWR State Rank = 155; AP Courses offered since 2012 = 3; Current AP Courses = 1)
Mead SD	• Mount Spokane HS (USNWR State Rank = 59; Current AP Courses = 21) • Mead SHS (USNWR State Rank = 62; AP Courses offered since 2012 = 18; Current AP Courses = 14)
Medical Lake SD	• Medical Lake HS (USNWR State Rank = 113; Current AP Courses = 9)
Nine Mile Falls SD	• Lakeside HS (USNWR State Rank = 75; Current AP Courses = 10)
Reardan-Edwall SD	• Reardan Middle-Senior HS (AP Courses not currently listed)
Riverside SD	• Riverside HS (USNWR State Rank = 152; AP Courses offered since 2012 = 6; Current AP Courses = 5)
Spokane SD	• Lewis and Clark HS (AP Courses offered since 2012 = 29; Current AP Courses = 26) • North Central HS (AP Courses offered since 2012 = 29; Current AP Courses = 21) • Ferris HS (USNWR State Rank = 64; AP Courses offered since 2012 = 25; Current AP Courses = 20) • Shadle Park (USNWR State Rank = 94; AP Courses offered since 2012 = 25; Current AP Courses = 15) • Rogers HS (USNWR State Rank = 108; AP Courses offered since 2012 = 24; Current AP Courses = 12) • The Community School (USNWR State Rank = 125; AP Courses not currently listed)
West Valley SD	• West Valley HS (AP Courses offered since 2012 = 11; Current AP Courses = 7) • Spokane Valley Technical HS (AP Courses offered since 2012 = 8; Current AP Courses = 7)

Note 1. US News and World Report Rankings are based on data from 2021.
Note 2. AP courses offered refers to the number of distinct courses offered by the high school for the current 2021-22 school year (out of 38 total offered by the College Board). This measurement does not account for multiple sections of a given course being offered.

Table 11
High School College Prep Outcomes: Spokane

	Have Taken Some form of Dual Credit Course	11th Graders Taking Dual Credit (%)	12th Graders Taking Dual Credit (%)	Students taking Advanced Placement (AP) Courses (%)	Students taking Running Start Courses (%)	Students taking Tech Prep Courses (%)
Central Valley	50.2	60.1	73.1	19.7	9.6	26.9
Cheney	50.8	61.1	73.5	17.2	10.2	26.4
Deer Park	41.0	40.1	40.2	1.0	4.5	35.4
East Valley	28.7	37.6	42.7	9.9	9.0	10.2
Freeman	81.9	95.8	96.7	26.0	13.0	49.5
Liberty	36.2	71.4	69.6	21.6	9.7	11.4
Mead	31.3	49.2	57.2	19.1	12.2	1.4
Medical Lake	65.3	57.5	62.1	14.5	6.3	49.5
Nine Mile Falls	50.5	64.6	64.0	23.7	13.9	15.3
Reardan-Edwall	33.2	46.3	91.5	1.0	9.0	15.7
Riverside	43.0	58.8	58.1	10.0	6.5	32.3
Spokane	51.3	65.4	72.7	29.8	6.7	18.3
West Valley	34.6	41.0	55.5	26.8	7.4	7.6
Washington State	62.1	71.7	73.7	19.2	9.4	38.7

Note 1. Figures are based on enrollment statistics reported for the 2020-21 school year by the Washington State Board of Education (WSBOE).
Note 2. For purposes of maintaining de-identification of public data, WSBOE does not report figures for subgroups of students below a minimal threshold of size. "Not Available" or N/A designations are provided in these areas.
Note 3. Dual credit courses are defined by the Washington State Board of Education (WSBOE) as those that allow students to earn credit for their high school diploma and college at the same time. A district's dual credit rate is the percentage of students completing at least one of these classes. These classes include those related to programs such as Running Start, CTE Dual Credit (formerly Tech Prep), College in High School, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Cambridge International.

Table 12
Short-Term Post-Secondary Outcomes: Spokane

	1st Year Post-HS Graduation Attending 4-Year College (%)	1st Year Post-HS Graduation Attending 2-Year College/CTC (%)	1st Year Post-HS Graduation Not Enrolled in Post-Secondary Learning	4-Year College Attendees % Who Persist Beyond 1st Year	2-Year College/CTC Attendees % Who Persist Beyond 1st Year
Central Valley SD	37.0	22.0	40.0	84.0	56.0
Cheney SD	36.0	15.0	49.0	76.0	48.0
Deer Park SD	20.0	17.0	63.0	81.0	52.0
East Valley SD	30.0	23.0	46.0	77.0	58.0
Freeman SD	52.0	20.0	28.0	88.0	55.0
Liberty SD	35-39	6 – 9	55-59	N/A	N/A
Mead SD	46.0	21.0	33.0	87.0	56.0
Medical Lake SD	34.0	18.0	49.0	87.0	59.0
Nine Mile Falls SD	48.0	24.0	28.0	86.0	58.0
Reardan-Edwall SD	30.0	17.0	53.0	80-100	67.0
Riverside SD	28.0	17.0	56.0	81.0	72.0
Spokane SD	34.0	23.0	43.0	85.0	51.0
West Valley SD	37.0	27.0	36.0	85.0	57.0
Washington State	35.0	25.0	40.0	90.0	63.0

Note 1. Figures are based on enrollment statistics reported for the 2020-21 school year by the Washington State Board of Education (WSBOE).
Note 2. For purposes of maintaining de-identification of public data, WSBOE does not report figures for subgroups of students below a minimal threshold of size. "Not Available" or N/A designations, are provided in these areas. If made available by WSBOE, broad estimates of percentages may also be provided instead of specifics.

Table 13
Long-Term Post-Secondary Outcomes: Spokane

	Highest Degree Attained 8-Years After HS *Bachelors or Higher (%)*	Highest Degree Attained 8-Years After HS *Associates or Certificate (%)*	Highest Degree Attained 8-Years After HS *No Degree (%)*	Median Annual Earnings 14-Years After HS *Bachelors or Higher*	Median Annual Earnings 14-Years After HS *Associates or Certificate*	Median Annual Earnings 14-Years After HS *High School Diploma*
Central Valley	37.0	11.0	52.0	58,600	35,800	31,800
Cheney	31.0	9.0	60.0	45,800	30,300	33,400
Deer Park	19.0	14.0	67.0	63,000	40,200	34,300
East Valley	28.0	14.0	58.0	57,200	32,400	31,000
Freeman	42.0	11.0	47.0	52,600	37,000	33,400
Liberty	20-29	0-10	60-69	N/A	N/A	35,100
Mead	41.0	11.0	48.0	61,700	42,900	32,500
Medical Lake	22.0	8.0	70.0	44,400	32,100	31,500
Nine Mile Falls	35.0	13.0	52.0	53,200	36,000	31,100
Reardan-Edwall	22.0	15.0	63.0	55,800	N/A	30,400
Riverside	18.0	14.0	65.0	59,900	39,100	23,800
Spokane	27.0	12.0	61.0	56,600	37,300	32,700
West Valley	25.0	10.0	64.0	50,200	37,000	30,200
Washington State	34.0	13.0	53.0	62,400	42,200	38,100

Note 1. Figures are based on enrollment statistics reported for the 2020-21 school year by the Washington State Board of Education (WSBOE).
Note 2. For purposes of maintaining de-identification of public data, WSBOE does not report figures for subgroups of students below a minimal threshold of size. "Not Available" or N/A designations, are provided in these areas. If made available by WSBOE, broad estimates of percentages may also be provided instead of specifics.