MENTORSHIP MATTERS

Preliminary Results from the Kingmakers of Seattle Program Evaluation

Seattle Public Schools

Seattle Department of Education & Early Learning

Mentorship Matters: Preliminary Results from the Kingmakers of Seattle Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

Kingmakers of Seattle (KOS) is a Black education-based mentorship program for middle and high school boys and teens of African descent in Seattle Public Schools (SPS). Participating students take a rigorous Black studies course, receive individual care coordination services, and receive mentorship and leadership development. This report reviews the program design and provides initial findings about student experiences from the partnership program evaluation.

REPORT AUTHORS

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KINGMAKERS OF SEATTLE

Kingmakers of Seattle (KOS) is a Black education-based mentorship program for middle and high school boys and teens of African descent in Seattle Public Schools (SPS). Participating students take a rigorous Black studies course, receive individual care coordination services, and receive mentorship and leadership development. Course instruction, mentorship and supports are provided by Black male mentors. Mentors receive individualized professional development and technical assistance from SPS Office of African American Male Achievement (AAMA) and interested mentors have been supported by SPS on their own education pathway to achieve teacher certification.

KOS aims to create systems, structures, and conditions that foster positive identity development, provide cultural knowledge, increase Black male educator representation in schools, and build academic success for participating students.

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

In a formal partnership among SPS, DEEL, and Oakland Unified School District, KOS was launched in the 2017-18 academic year to advance the goals of the City of Seattle's Families, Education, Preschool & Promise Levy (FEPP), former Office of the Mayor's Our Best Initiative, and SPS's former African American Male Advisory Committee. KOS is currently led by SPS Office of African American Male Achievement (AAMA).

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About this evaluation

The SPS Office of AAMA and the Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) are partners in a three-year effort to evaluate Kingmakers of Seattle (KOS). From KOS launch and expansion between 2017 and 2020, we have relied on school-wide trends in academic performance, attendance, and school climate to understand program outcomes. Beginning in fall 2021, this evaluation partnership aims to deepen our understanding of the program's structure and impact to support continuous improvement and strategic planning.

Key Terms

"Black" in this report is used as a pan-African term, inclusive of people of African descent from across the diaspora. The capitalization of the term connotes its proper noun classification as it represents a reference to a cultural, ethnic, or group of people of African ancestry.

"Black education" refers to course content grounded in the histories of people of African descent *and* culturally responsive instructional approaches that center students' lived experiences.

"Interagency Academy" is a small, alternative high school, with campuses spread out across Seattle Public Schools, designed to engage students who have left a comprehensive pathway or students who would benefit from additional wraparound supports.

"Facilitator" is a Kingmakers of Seattle term used in this report to refer to the program's mentor-instructors, providing instruction, care coordination and capacity-building within schools. Since 2020-21, facilitators have been certified school staff with the title of "Student Family Advocates".

WHY MENTORSHIP?

Strong relationships with nonparental adults are essential to cultivating the brilliance, resiliency and long-term well-being of Black boys and teens (Hurd & Sellers, 2013; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010; Jones & Neblett, 2017; Neblett et al., 2008; Seaton et al., 2011). Black middle and high schoolers with strong, long-term mentoring relationships (e.g., Grossman et al., 2012) have been found to be more academically engaged, have greater psychological well-being and autonomy, stronger racial identities, and greater self-efficacy than their Black peers without such kinds of mentor relationships, or those without mentors at all (DuBois et al., 2006; Hurd & Sellers, 2013; Tolan et al., 2020).

Research focused on mechanisms of change for Black youth specifically is sparse (see Sanchez et al., 2017). However, there are several mentorship success factors such as **age of mentee**, level of **mentor experience** in youth development, clear expectations of length of mentoring relationship, and the **structure of program** (e.g., embedded mentor training, professional development) that have been identified as important to consider for all youth engaged in mentoring programs (see DuBois et al., 2002,2012; Raposa et al., 2019).

Researchers have also identified several factors that may be particularly important for Black youth such as: grounding in youths' cultural background, integrating youth-driven approaches, empowerment approaches, and **similar life experiences between mentor and mentee**.

In addition, emergent research suggests that strong, positive engagement with youth's family and considering personal and environmental factors (e.g., youth's personality, youth's family situation, and youth's access to resources) are also associated with positive mentoring outcomes (Jones, in-prep).

With few Black educators in Seattle Public Schools, school-based, culturally-relevant programs can be an important student resource. Culturally responsive mentoring (CRM), here in the form of Kingmakers of Seattle (KOS), is an inherently complex mentorship model with a range of processes that occur at the interpersonal levels among youth, between youth and mentors, as well as at the programmatic, systemic, and broader policy levels.

KOS is a Black education-based mentorship program where participating 6-12th grade students enroll in a credit-bearing, Black education elective course and receive mentorship from their instructor – a Black male mentor/instructor who provides care coordination and individual support.

*We need people who look like our children to be mentors, to be an advocate for them, to run interference for them, to just love on them during the school day." — **Black mother, central Seattle***

PROGRAM DESIGN

Kingmakers of Seattle Core Elements

1. **Individualized care coordination** where mentors cultivate relationships with students and develop support plans that can involve engagement from their teachers, family and community organizations

2. **Individual and peer-based mentoring** where students are engaged with their peers to build brotherhood and connection.

3. **Black education** course (Khepera curriculum) where students learn about Pan-African history, intersectionality, gender studies, and critical literacies.

A holistic measurement approach is essential to understanding KOS, given how mentorship and Black education impact myriad student outcomes. Below is a summary of program-aligned measurement areas.

Care coordination & Peer Supports

- One-on-one check-ins
- Care coordination & student success planning
- Educator-to-family connections
- Community and cultural events
- Brotherhood and friendships

Learning & Identity Development

- Critical Thinking
- Positive Racial Identity
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Leadership and Agency
- Joy of Learning
- Academic Engagement

Black-education Curricula

- Pan-African, diasporic history
- Hidden, BIPOC historical figures
- Black masculinity and gender studies
- Revolutionary literature and resisting stereotypes

The following dimensions are critical measurement domains to understand students, mentors, content, and embedded wraparound supports.

Relationship Development and Academic Supports

Interpersonal and academic outcomes

Culturally-responsive instructional practices and lesson plans

EVALUATION & ASSET-BASED MEASUREMENT

Evaluating Kingmakers: How does Kingmakers promote student learning and identity development?

Critical to understanding the mechanisms of change is an acknowledgement of assets that students bring to their learning and peer experiences. Where academic outcomes and behavior can tell us how students are engaging and learning, alone, they limit our view on critical interpersonal skills and resources students have and cultivate along the way.

The evaluation's asset-based measures – measures that focus on student skills and knowledge –coupled with a mixed-methods approach aims to elevate nuances within and across student and facilitator experiences. The first year of the evaluation (SY 2021-22) focused on the following:

- Exploring student assets and skills-growth through interviews and focus groups

- Piloting new, asset-based outcome measures using a KOS student survey

- Analyzing SPS climate survey data to compare sentiments of KOS vs. non-KOS Black boys and teens about their learning environment

- Examining trends in academic outcomes among current and former KOS students

Research Questions

Student Assets & Experiences	• What skills-growth areas (e.g., racial identity, agency, efficacy, social-emotional) do Kingmakers students attribute to the program? Do we see growth over time? • How do students' experiences vary by school site and program participation?
Service Model & Care Coordination	• How is Kingmakers (curriculum, mentorship, care coordination) being implemented and supported across sites?
Program Impact Over Time	• Is Kingmakers participation associated with increased academic outcomes compared to same-aged, non-Kingmakers Black males? • How does each element of the Kingmakers model influence student outcomes?

ENROLLMENT & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Facilitator Engagement

Kingmakers of Seattle facilitators (as instructors, individual care managers and mentors) are an essential part of this program. The chart below shows expansion over-time in the role of facilitators, their on-site time allocation within the school day, and instructional course load, as well as additional community partnership capacity where non-KOS students at KOS schools can receive supports from community-based organizations (e.g., Urban League at Interagency).

Program Design and Student Retention

The first four years of Kingmakers were primarily designed to be a two-year program. From the 2017-18 to the 2020-21 academic year KOS was available to 7-8th graders at three middle

schools and just one alternative high school, meaning **few students have had the opportunity to participate in multiple years**. There is robust research on the importance of sustaining mentor-student pairing and engaging students in programs for longer periods, and KOS is currently expanding the program to provide opportunities for extended enrollment. In the short term, AAMA uplifted several alternative mentoring and brotherhood spaces for middle school, KOS alums and students enrolled outside of the KOS sites to engage and continue relationships. Additionally, in 2021-22, KOS was as expanded to include 6th graders and two new high schools. Currently, most KOS students since 2017-18 have participated for just one year. We aim to examine retention considering new high school site participation as this provides more pathways for students to stay enrolled.

> " *You could go to him for anything. You can go to him if you want to get a job. Go to him if you need help in a certain situation. He'll either lead you to the right person, or he'll give you some knowledge that he knows"*
> **Black male KOS student at Interagency Academy**

Student Count by Years Enrolled in Kingmakers
As of the 2021-22 Academic Year

Years Enrolled	Student Count
1 year	338
2 years	140
3 years	23
4 years	2
5 years	1
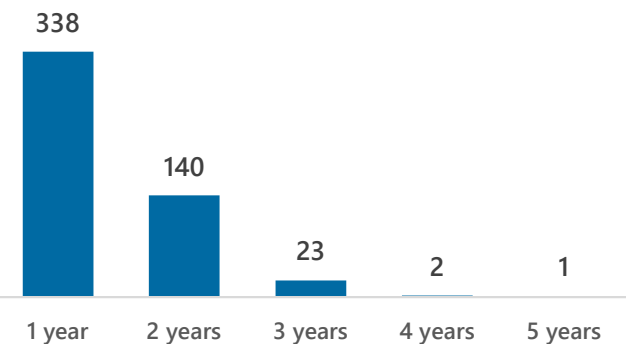
Program growth and mentor roles over time

School site and district-level information	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Number of middle schools	3	3	3	3	3
Number of high schools	1	1	1	1	3
Number of course sections	7	8	10	12	14
Number of facilitators	3	3	3	4	6
Facilitators with 260 full-time status	0	0	0	4	6
Lesson Prep Periods (per school)	0	0	0	1	1
Care Coordination Periods (per school)	0	0	0	1 to 2	1 to 2
Capacity Building Periods (per school)	0	0	0	1 to 2	1 to 2
Funding for additional community-partnerships	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	Y

OUR STUDENTS

Students have participated in KOS since Fall of the 2017-18 academic year. In 2021-22, the program was expanded from four to six schools, adding Franklin and Cleveland STEM High Schools, which are near the middle schools we serve. The table below shows program enrollment by school as of 2021-22.

Additionally, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning, the office of AAMA uplifted a new, virtual mentoring program offered to students across middle school called Kingmakers of Seattle Extended. While KOS is concentrated in schools with higher numbers of Black students, KOS-Extended aimed to build cross-school brotherhood particularly among students who are one of few Black students in their buildings. *Note. The KOS-Extended, virtual program has continued through 2021-22 and student participation is not included in the table below.*

> "
> *Kingmakers has taught me about being a better friend, being a good representative and being a good leader whenever."*
>
> **KOS 8th grader,**
> **Denny International,**
> **2nd year in program**

Number of Black boys and teens in Kingmakers of Seattle by School and Academic Year

School Name	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Total Served
Aki Kurose Middle School	24	39	27	36	34	160
David T. Denny Int'l MS	39	44	26	50	52	211
Mercer Middle School	19	30	19	39	35	142
Interagency Academy	34	29	21	34	26	144
Cleveland STEM High School	--	--	--	--	35	35
Franklin High School	--	--	--	--	21	21
Grand Total	*116*	*142*	*93*	*159*	*203*	*504*

*Note. Annual counts include new and returning KOS students. "Total served" is the discrete count of all students by school across all 5 years of the program. 2021-22 and overall totals will be provided after June 2022. **Data Source.** SPS Atlas data warehouse.*

DEMOGRAPHICS

2021-22 KOS Student Demographics & Supports	Non-KOS AAM	KOS Students	Pct. Point Difference
Born in the US	78%	90%	12%
Receiving Special Education Services	24%	23%	-1%
ELL Served	22%	11%	-11%
Experiencing Homelessness	14%	15%	1%
Advanced Learning	8%	4%	-4%
Section 504	2%	5%	3%
Highly Capable	3%	0%	-3%
Top Languages			
English	68%	77%	9%
Somali	9%	12%	3%
Other Languages	23%	11%	-12%

12% Non-binary, trans or other diverse genders

21% Self-identify as LGBTQIA+

Data Source. *SPS Atlas data warehouse; N= 504, KOS students; N = 3,100 Non-KOS AAM (African American male secondary grade students who have never enrolled in Kingmakers)*
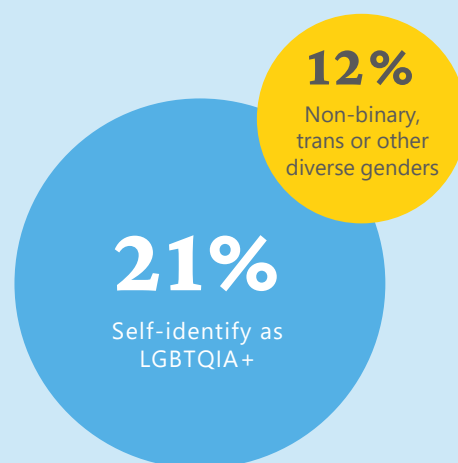
Data Source. *Nov-Dec 2021 Student Survey of School Climate; **Participating Kingmakers of Seattle Students = 91***

STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN KINGMAKERS

December 2021 to January 2022, KOS students (*N* = 64) participated in a brief, **program-wide survey focused on ethnic and racial identity, strong relationships and skills growth**. This survey instrument represents a pilot effort to infuse student asset-based measurement and student voice in program quality. In 2022-23, this pilot survey will be further developed into a pre-post survey to measure results of a full year of program participation.

Racial identity. When reflecting on school experiences and perceptions of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, 78% of students reported strong and positive attitudes about their cultural identity – *with students in the program for two or more years at 84%.* F*ew reported spending individual time learning more about their culture (47%), especially in school settings (55%).
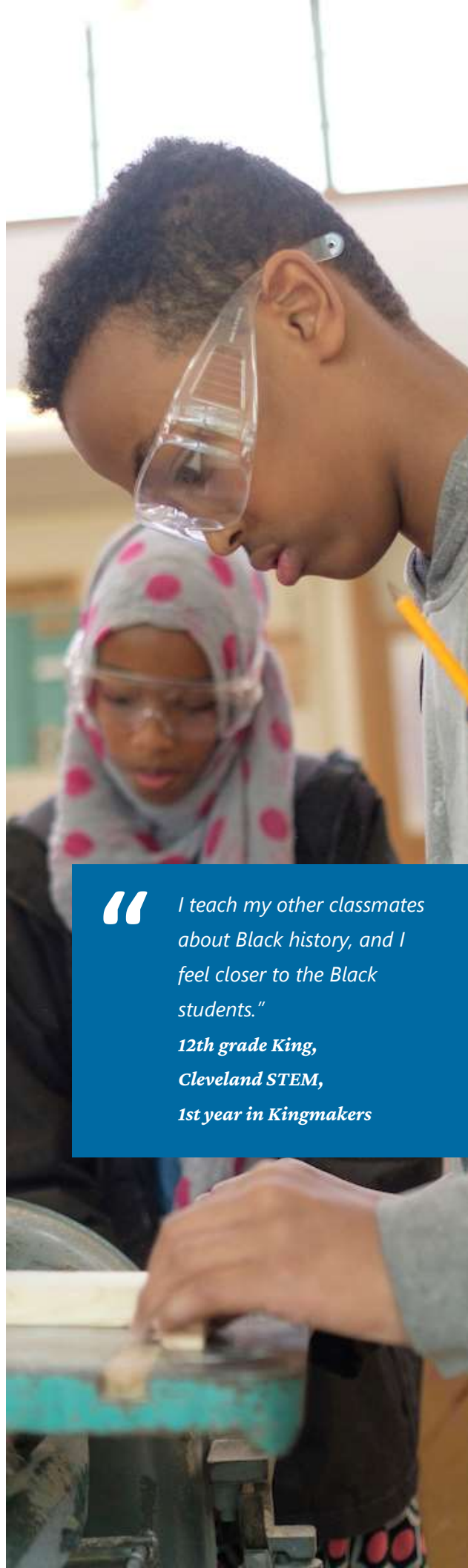
Proportion of students who selected "agree" or "strongly agree" to the following identity items

Racial Identity Items	%
I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background	78%
I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means to me	63%
My school provides opportunities for me that connect my racial identity to being a good student	55%
I spend time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions and customs	47%

Proportion of students who selected "agree" or "strongly agree" to the following identity items by Years in KOS

■ Two or More Years (N = 19)   ■ First Year (N = 45)

47% / 47%	84% / 73%	68% / 60%	53% / 56%
I spend time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions and customs	I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background	I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means to me	My school provides opportunities for me that connect my racial identity to being a good student
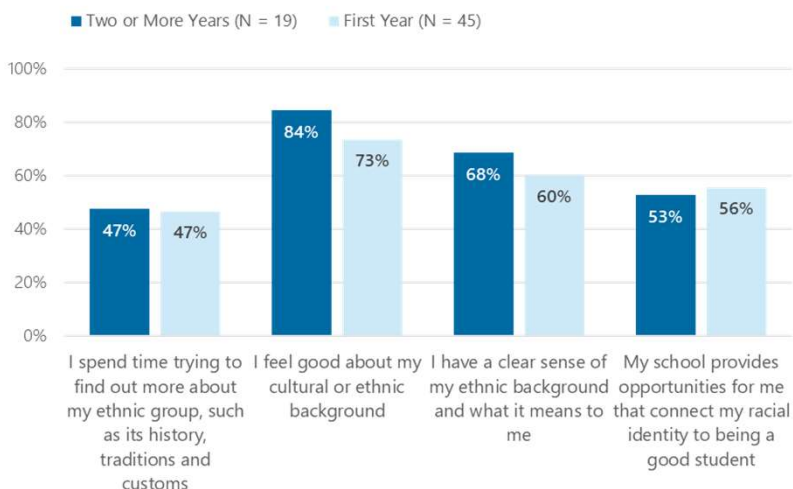
Data Source. *Kingmakers Student Exit Ticket* **N = 64** *| Dec-2021-Jan 2022*

> " *I teach my other classmates about Black history, and I feel closer to the Black students."*
> *12th grade King,*
> *Cleveland STEM,*
> *1st year in Kingmakers*

Relationships and Leadership. KOS students indicated strong leadership and social-emotional skills prior to KOS, yet when it came to meaningful instructional content and comfort in the classroom, few (49%) had experienced classrooms where they were able to connect lessons to life and only 58% reported feeling comfortable speaking their mind in class.

Proportion of students who selected "agree" or "strongly agree" to the following identity items

Relationship and Leadership Items	%
I understand the importance of other people's opinions and ideas	83%
I understand what it takes to be a leader	75%
I feel an atmosphere of acceptance in school	63%
I feel comfortable speaking my mind in classes	58%
My peers support and care about me in school	58%
I use information learned in school to solve problems	49%

> " *It feels like a class where you can really be free and share your experiences with fellow Black students and connect with them in ways you couldn't connect with say, white students"*
> **KOS student at Mercer Middle School**

Skills Areas. Lastly, students reflected on the following program-connected skills and knowledge areas. Most students found KOS to promote friendship, leadership and cultural knowledge, and few students (22%) found KOS to support an overall connection to their school

"Being in Kingmakers has promoted or increased my…"
(Select all that apply)

Skills Growth Areas	%	n
Friendships and sense of brotherhood	70%	45
Leadership skills	66%	42
Knowledge of Black/Pan-African History	64%	41
Cultural and racial identity	61%	39
Overall confidence	39%	25
Critical thinking skills	38%	24
Academic skills	30%	19
Sense of connection to my school	22%	14

Data Source. *Kingmakers Student Exit Ticket* **N = 64** | Dec-2021-Jan 2022

> " *Leading by example and stepping up when needed"*
> **11th grade King Cleveland STEM, 3rd year in Kingmakers**

STUDENT INTERVIEWS & FOCUS GROUPS

To complement and extend inferences about the role of peers, facilitators and the curricula SPS and DEEL partnered with Dr. Kristian Jones, Assistant Professor at the University of Washington School of Social Work, to conduct student interviews, focus groups and class visits.

Sessions were held with KOS students at five of the six participating schools: Interagency Academy, Aki Kurose Middle School, Mercer Middle School, Denny International Middle School, and Cleveland STEM High School, Spring 2022. Qualitative analysis across student transcripts revealed elements of the program that were individually impactful. Students spoke to the role of the curriculum, their facilitator, and the atmosphere created in the classroom.

Questions were focused on the impact of the curriculum, how students interact with their facilitator (the term used for KOS instructor-mentors), and how (if at all) brotherhood was cultivated within the program. See Appendix B for a summary of session questions.

1. Seeing yourself in the curriculum is powerful

The program's *Khepera* Black education curriculum is flexible and allows for students to discuss real issues that impact the students' lives (e.g., the policing of Black bodies). During focus groups and interviews **students shared the impact of having a curriculum that reflects people that look like them and underscored the many history lessons they do not typically receive in their core courses.** Many expressed they had not received this anywhere else.

> " *I really liked the women's history lesson he gave. [The facilitator] just picked certain people, and I really liked one. She was a designer. I didn't even know about her. She was one of the only women to design a shoe for [Michael] Jordan, which is really dope."*
>
> **High School King at Cleveland STEM**

Student Focus Groups and Interviews

6
Student sessions

45
Students participated

14
Classroom visits

In addition to learning about historical figures and historical events they had not been exposed to previously, KOS students also highlighted how **facilitators were able to make connections from the curriculum to everyday life as a Black person in the United States**:

> "
>
> *Our facilitator always talks about what we can do as Black males to better the image that people see us as in society because everybody thinks we're hoodlums and we're thugs or something like that, or we're like gangsters, but we're really not. We're the average human being and that's exercised in this program, and I really like the program.*
>
> **Aki Kurose Middle School KOS student**

Overall, the learning about the history of Black culture both inside and outside the United States has provided an **opportunity for students to develop racial pride that may have not been there before**. In an individual interview one King stated:

> "
>
> *"... before, it was probably like elementary, we used to take those surveys that were telling you what's your race and stuff. I would always never want to click Black, African American, because I always thought ... I don't know, I just didn't want to identify as a Black person. But right now, I am so happy to be a Black person."*
>
> **Mercer Middle School KOS student.**

2. Educator relationships are central

Extant research highlights the value of all youth (and especially Black youth) having a Black educator in the K-12 classroom (Brown, 2012). KOS students expressed the many ways having a Black male as their teacher has had a positive influence on them. Furthermore, facilitators from Seattle seem to have a unique impact for Kings from Seattle. Kings expressed **having someone that looked like them, who was from their community, and had their best interest at heart led to them to trust their facilitator**. A KOS student attending Interagency Academy explained: **"You could go to him for anything. You can go to him if you want to get a job. Go to him if you need help in a certain situation. He'll either lead you to the right person or he'll give you some knowledge that he knows."**

Another King discussed how his family members knew his facilitator in the community: "... [My facilitator] talks to my family. He talks with my uncle and my grandpa. So, I mean a little bit but not that much. Before I even [knew] him I think my uncle taught him or something."

More than anything, students expressed the value of having a facilitator that cared about them as a person and discussed how **the climate created in the Kingmakers class was a space in which they felt safe.**

3. Cultivate classrooms as sacred spaces

In Kingmakers classrooms you see pictures of Black activists, athletes, educators, doctors, lawyers. Students are greeted with a personal handshake by their facilitator before the class begins and students freely contribute insights and questions once the class begins. Every focus group mentioned how much they appreciated the environment of the Kingmakers classroom. Specifically, **students identified the space as an inviting space that they can be themselves and they are viewed more than just students but as people.**

Many students explicitly stated that this type of classroom environment was not common in their respective schools. A KOS student at Cleveland High School explained that his experience of feeling valued in the classroom was not as common in his other classes

> *Honestly, out of all my teachers, I really only feel that way with like three.*
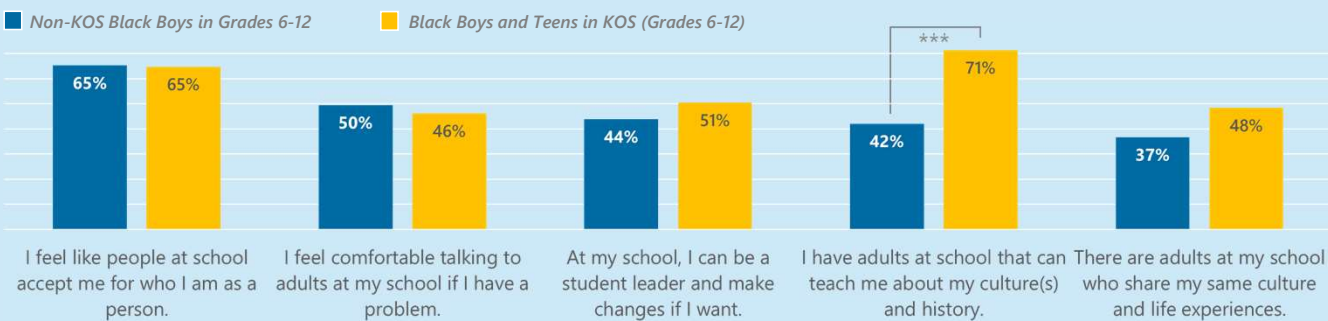> *Cleveland STEM High School KOS student*

Another student, in Kingmakers at Mercer middle school reflected on the role of peers in cultivating this environment: "**It feels like a class where you can really just be free and share your experiences** with fellow Black students and connect with them on ways you couldn't connect with say white students." As we'll see in findings, below, **despite the power of these classroom environments, students still negotiate challenges in the overall environment of our school system.**

SCHOOL CLIMATE

Research confirms what our families, youth, and educators have known for decades: a safe and supportive school environment — where students have positive social relationships, are respected and engaged in their work, and feel competent — matters (Amodio & Mendoza, 2010; Bottiani et al., 2016; Bradshaw et al., 2015). How children and youth experience the overall climate of their schools impacts their achievement and success. Therefore, it is critical to understand the broader experience of school climate to achieve safe, welcoming and joyful learning environments.

65% of secondary Black boys and teens (both KOS and non-KOS) experienced general acceptance at school, yet far fewer (50% and 46%) felt comfortable talking to adults when they are having issues, and just **37% of non-KOS Black male secondary students reported having adults in the building that represented their life experiences and culture.** More KOS students experienced cultural representation in school staff, with **71% of KOS students affirming that they have an adult in-school to teach them about their culture and history – compared to 42% of non-KOS peers.**

Proportion of Kingmakers and non-Kingmakers, Black secondary students who responded "Agree" or "Strongly Agree"

■ *Non-KOS Black Boys in Grades 6-12*   ■ *Black Boys and Teens in KOS (Grades 6-12)*

	I feel like people at school accept me for who I am as a person.	I feel comfortable talking to adults at my school if I have a problem.	At my school, I can be a student leader and make changes if I want.	I have adults at school that can teach me about my culture(s) and history.	There are adults at my school who share my same culture and life experiences.
Non-KOS Black Boys	65%	50%	44%	42%	37%
Black Boys and Teens in KOS	65%	46%	51%	71% ***	48%

*Data Source. Select items from the SPS districtwide Student Survey of School Climate, Nov-Dec 2021; *** = p < .001; t(871) = 5.42, p < .001*

> " *I joined that class with not as much knowledge, not a lot of knowledge of my African heritage, and I just learned so much"*
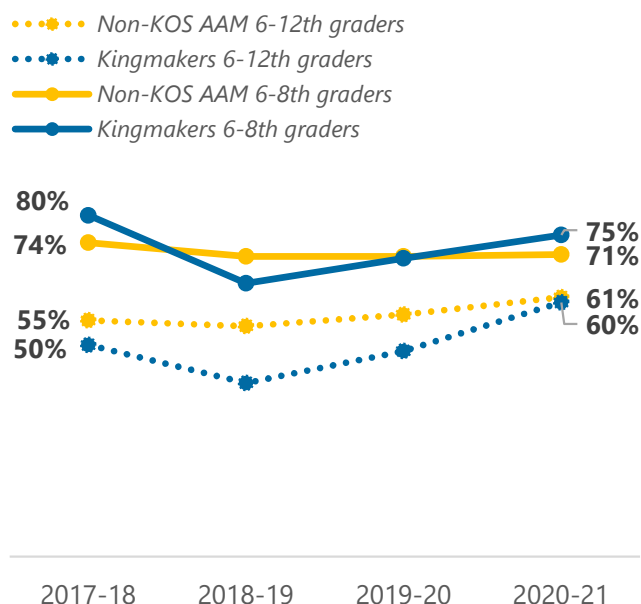> **High School KOS student.**

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

When students are in safe, supporting learning environments, research (and students themselves) report deeper engagement and improved academic outcomes. The following results are baseline outcomes this evaluation aims to further examine – ultimately testing, longitudinally which program elements impact academic outcomes. Given the short duration of students in Kingmakers, we are looking at current and former KOS students as one group compared to their Black, male (same-aged) peers who have never been in the program. *Note that 2021-22 academic, end of year data was not yet available at the time of these baseline analyses.*

Attendance

Attendance is a central indicator of student engagement and school connection. Regular attendance impacts many facets of educational outcomes, including reading levels, academic achievement, graduation and likelihood of disengaging from school (Allensworth & Easton, 2005). While Black male middle school attendance has been declining, we see **increased attendance among KOS and former KOS middle schoolers** over the last three years.

Percent of students attending 90% or more of the school year

- Non-KOS AAM 6-12th graders
- Kingmakers 6-12th graders
- Non-KOS AAM 6-8th graders
- Kingmakers 6-8th graders

| 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |

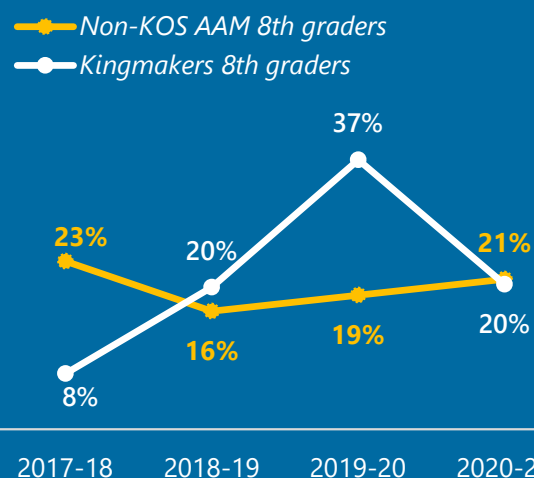80% / 74% ... 55% / 50% ... 75% / 71% / 61% / 60%

*Data Source. SPS Atlas data warehouse. **Note**. 2019-20 attendance data was calculated for Sept 2019 – March 2020 and in 2020-21 attendance rates may be higher than expected due variance in how attendance was tracked during remote learning.*

Passing Algebra I

When examining rates of current and former KOS students taking and passing Algebra I in 8th grade we see variance over time. Few 8th graders in 2017-18 passed Algebra and among 8th graders in 2019-20 37% had passed compared to their same-aged peers (19%) who had never been in the program. While these descriptive differences do not tell us direct impacts of program participation, they point to the need to more deeply examine how KOS promotes student success in core courses.

Percent of 8th graders Passing Algebra I by Enrollment in Kingmakers

- Non-KOS AAM 8th graders
- Kingmakers 8th graders

| 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |

23% 20% 37% 21% / 8% 16% 19% 20%

Data Source. SPS Atlas data warehouse. Note rates may be impacted by shifts in grading policies during remote instruction.

Assessments

During the first two years of KOS, fewer participants met standard in English Language Arts Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA). However, KOS students performed near their non-KOS peers in mathematics.

Academic Year	English Lang. Arts		Mathematics	
	KOS	*AAM	KOS	*AAM
2017-18	29%	36%	27%	28%
2018-19	34%	37%	24%	25%

Data Source. SPS Atlas data warehouse. 1) AAM = African American Males not in KOS, KOS = students in Kingmakers of Seattle; 2) data not available for 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years due to Covid-19 remote instruction

High School Credit Earning

KOS mentors and AAMA staff support students in many elements of academic life. From tracking student assignments, grades and attendance to connecting students, families and educators in coordinated care. The measures below show the proportion of current and former KOS students meeting credit accumulation standards in core courses (Math, Science, Reading and History) compared to their Black, male peers who have never participated in KOS. **Ninth grade KOS students and program alums had slightly higher rates of credit taking by the end of 9th grade.**

Percent of 9th graders with 6 or course credits by enrollment in Kingmakers and grade-level group (2018-19 to 2020-21)
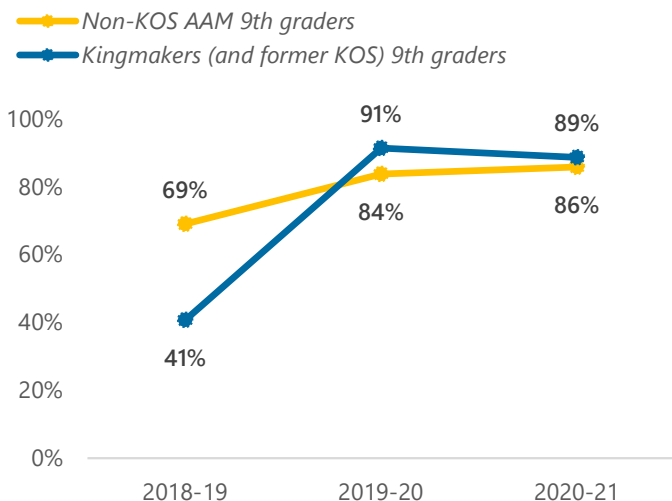
- ⏤ *Non-KOS AAM 9th graders*
- ⏤ *Kingmakers (and former KOS) 9th graders*

Credit Earning. This measure is used by Seattle Public Schools to look at course taking in core courses and determine which students are on track (with enough credits and appropriate course sequence) to meet the district's 24-credit requirement for graduation.

When it comes to meeting these on-track requirements, across 9-12th graders Black boys and teens we see growth over the last three years: 35% of all current and former KOS students passed credit criteria, compared to 41% of their peers. On-track rates for current and former KOS students are like Black male students who have never been in the program.

Percent high schoolers meeting on-track credit accumuluation for their grade-level by KOS enrollment

- ⏤ Non-KOS AAM high schoolers
- ⏤ Kingmakers (and former KOS) high schoolers
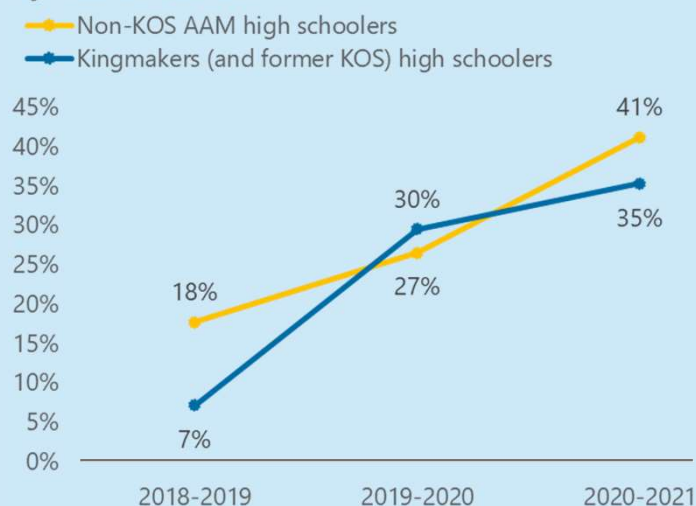
DISCUSSION

Culturally responsive mentoring has strong positive impacts on student well-being, academics and provides buffering effects for students of color navigating racism and bias at school and in their lives (e.g., Sánchez, et al., 2017; Seaton, et al., 2011). While mentorship's impacts are greatest when relationships start early and are stable over time, myriad short- and long-term social emotional, well-being and academic benefits can be found (Grossman, et al., 2012; Jones, et al., 2021; Sánchez, et al., 2017). Additionally, culturally responsive, identity affirming curricula in-school has been found to increase Black student academic self-confidence, and have longitudinal, positive impacts on grades (e.g., Del Toro & Wang, 2020).

Given what we know from the literature, year one of this evaluation set out to understand how students experience the Kingmakers of Seattle program and for the first time examine how current and former KOS students differ from their same-aged Black, male peers in their perceptions of overall school climate and academics.

Kingmakers provides critical access to culturally responsive supports, and extended participation is associated with stronger positive sentiments about racial identity.

We found KOS students more often experienced cultural representation in school staff and had greater opportunity to learn about their culture and history. **Seventy-one percent of KOS students affirmed that they have an adult in-school to teach them about their culture and history –compared to 42% of non-KOS peers.**

Multi-year participation in Kingmakers was associated with stronger positive attitudes about racial identity: 84% of KOS students who had the **opportunity to participate in more than one year of the program reported positive attitudes about their racial identity**, compared to 73% among KOS students in year one.

Qualitative coding from student interviews and focus groups underscored the importance of Black education, strong relationships and nurturing classroom environments as critical features of the program, mentors, and course:

> ### Inferences from Our Kings
>
> **1** Seeing yourself in the curriculum is powerful
>
> **2** Educator relationships are central
>
> **3** Cultivate classrooms as sacred spaces

Yet, to explore more deeply are "spillover effects" of the culture and climate in these classrooms to students' overall experiences in their schools. Few KOS students reported spending individual time learning more about their culture (47%), especially in school settings (55%). Low rates about having educators that cultivate joy in the classroom among all secondary grade Black boys and teens may suggest that **despite the power of these classroom environments, students still negotiate challenges in the overall environment of our school system**.

Attendance and course taking varies by current and past program participation.

While attendance among non-KOS Black male middle schoolers has been declining, we found an increase in attendance among KOS and former KOS middle schoolers over the last three years. Findings in course taking showed higher rates of passing 8th grade algebra among KOS students and alums compared to peers and 9th grade KOS students and program alums with slightly higher rates of credit taking by the end of 9th grade. While **these descriptive differences do not tell us direct impacts of program participation**, they point to the need to more deeply examine how KOS promotes student success in core courses.

RESOURCES

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APPENDICES

Kingmakers of Seattle: Student Asset and Program Experience Pre-post Survey

Racial and Ethnic Identity Development

I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background

I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means to me

My school provides opportunities for me that connect my racial identity to being a good student

I spend time trying to find out about my ethnic group(s), such as its history, traditions and customs

Relationships and Leadership

I understand the importance of other people's opinions and ideas

I understand what it takes to be a leader

I feel an atmosphere of acceptance in school

I feel comfortable speaking my mind in classes

My peers support and care about me in school

I use information learned in school to solve problems

Skills Growth Areas (Select all that apply)

Being in Kingmakers has promoted or increased my...

- *Friendships and sense of brotherhood*
- *Leadership skills*
- *Knowledge of Black/Pan-African History*
- *Cultural and racial identity*
- *Overall confidence*
- *Critical thinking skills*
- *Academic skills*
- *Sense of connection to my school*

Demographics

How many years have you been in Kingmakers?

How do you racially or culturally identify?

What school do you attend?

Appendix B

Student Focus group and Interview Questions (full protocol available upon request)

1. **When reflecting on your Kingmakers class, what do you think were the lessons and experiences that were most meaningful to you?**
   - How does the Kingmakers class talk about experiences that impact youth of color?
   - What is important, in the beginning, to feel comfortable in the Kingmakers class?

2. **How have current (or past) Kingmakers facilitators impacted your overall school experience?**
   - How would you describe your relationships with your facilitator?
   - What is important when it comes to building a strong relationship with your facilitator?
   - How does your facilitator make you excited to learn?

3. **How do your classmates in Kingmakers impact your overall school experience?**
   - How (if at all) do the Kings support each other inside and outside the classroom?
   - What does brotherhood mean to you? And how do you build a brotherhood with your fellow Kings in the classroom?

Constructs	Student Survey of School Climate Items: Secondary Grade Version (grades 6th-12th)
Belonging and Relationships	I feel comfortable talking to adults at my school if I have a problem
	Adults at school care about me
	There are adults at my school who share my same culture and life experiences
	I feel like people accept me for who I am as a person at school
Identity and Culturally Responsive Teaching	My teachers connect what we learn to my interests, experiences, or cultural background
	My racial or ethnic group(s) is an important part of who I am
	I have adults at school that can teach me about my culture(s) and history
	My teachers have high expectations of me
Equity and Anti-Racism	This school is a safe and welcoming place for people of all races and cultural backgrounds
	Adults take action to address racial issues and acts of racism at school
	Students of different races and backgrounds treat each other with respect at this school
	I feel safe and welcomed at my school
Pedagogical Effectiveness	My teachers encourage me to think deeply, critically and creatively
	My teachers help me find joy in what we learn
Positive Behavior & Safety	Behavior rules and expectations at this school are applied fairly to everyone
	Adults at school take action to stop hurtful or mean behavior
	At this school, we restore relationships and repair harm after conflicts occur
Social Emotional Learning	Adults at school teach and encourage me to speak up for myself and my needs
	Adults at school teach and encourage me to develop healthy and safe relationships
	Adults at school teach and encourage me to make good choices for myself and the community
Student Voice & Leadership	My ways of knowing and understanding the world are valued here
	At my school, I can be a student leader and make changes if I want
Demographics	Race and Ethnicity (Items from Spring 2021 + write-in)
	Gender Identity (Items from Spring 2021 + write-in)
	Sexual Orientation (Items from Spring 2021 + write-in)