



Lake County School District Cohort IX Project Dream Evaluation Report

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Cohort: **IX**

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Program Description

Program History

Project Dream through the Lake County School District encompasses After School, Friday, and Summer programs. Programs are mainly funded through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Grant Program; donations and district funds also sustain programs. After School - Project Dream takes place Monday-Thursday when school is in session after school hours. Friday - Project Dream programs take place on most Fridays throughout the school year. And Summer - Project Dream takes place over summer break in alignment with other local offerings. All programs include social-emotional learning, academic enrichment, athletics, club programs, and activities with local partner organizations. Project Dream began after school programs in 2010 in response to community need; many families in Lake County work out of the county and therefore, need a safe place for their students to be during after school hours. Project Dream soon took on summer programming in the form of Rockies Rock summer camp. This summer camp has since shifted to be under our partner organization, Get Outdoors Leadville! However, Project Dream is still involved by providing scholarships for students to join the camp and running after camp care for families so that they might continue to work full-time during the summer months. For students in grades 7-12, Project Dream offers both summer school and Credit Recovery so that students have a second chance to gain credits and therefore graduate on time. In the fall of 2020, Lake County School District moved to a four-day week calendar. In response to this shift, Project Dream began a full day of Friday programming so students would again have a safe place to be on this day. As illustrated, Project Dream serves the community and their needs. As such, programs have consistently responded to community needs and have formed programming around those needs.

Program Vision

Working together with community partners, we will create a healthier, safer, more prosperous Leadville where children are empowered to learn, encouraged to explore, challenged to grow, and inspired to lead.

Program Mission

LCSD challenges students to reach their fullest potential through personal, engaged and rigorous learning in the classroom and beyond. Through Project Dream we engage families, school staff, and our community to provide students with a variety of enriching activities, positive relationships in a Crew-like setting, and tools for greater social-emotional and academic success, all designed to complement the students' school day.

Program Beliefs

- We believe that LCSD can work alongside strong community partners to enrich the lives of our students.
- We believe that we can create an inclusive environment to engage and empower students and their families.
- We believe that through engagement and empowerment, we can create opportunities that enhance the experiences of students in Lake County.

Program Goals and Objectives

- **Academic Achievement:** Provide opportunities for academic enrichment to help students meet state and local academic standards.
- **Essential Skills:** Offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students.
- **Commitment to School:** Support increased attendance rates and overall commitment to school.
- **Family Engagement:** Offer families of students served by opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education.

Program Activities

- **After School Programs for 7-12:** Tutoring, Cooking Club, Chess Club, Environmental Club, Girls Who Code, Gay-Straight Alliance, Tech Club
- **Friday Programs for 7-12:** Credit Recovery, SAT Workshops, College Visits, Career Exploration Visits
- **Summer Programs for 7-12:** 7 & 8 Summer School for English, Math, and Crew, 9-12 Credit Recovery
- **Programs for Adults:** GED/ESL courses through the local, Colorado Mountain College, Family Learning Institutes, volunteer opportunities through the Parent Mentor Program

Demographics

According to the October Pupil Membership counts on the Colorado Department of Education's website (www.cde.state.co.us), 419 total students attended Lake County High School during the 2021-2022 school year. This site is served along with the Lake County Intermediate School by the Cohort IX grant. This evaluation includes data only from the Lake County High School. Project Dream served 272 of those students or 65% of the total student population at the school. Of Lake County High School students that participated in Project Dream programs at least once over the course of the 2021-2022 school year, 48% were male and 52% were female, 15% were in 7th grade, 18% were 8th graders, 21% were 9th graders, 25% were in 10th grade, 14% were in 11th grade, and 7% were 12th graders. In addition, 50% of Project Dream participants qualified for free or reduced lunch compared to 53% school-wide and 67% identified as Hispanic or Latino compared to 76% school-wide. 10% of Project Dream participants received special education services compared to 16% school-wide, 31% were English Learners compared to 35% school-wide, and 3% qualified for homeless services. Of the 12 Lake County High School students that qualified for homeless services in the 2021-2022 school year, nine, or 75% participated in Project Dream programs.

Evaluation Background

Evaluated Components

In this evaluation, we have analyzed our after school program at Lake County High School using a student feedback survey from both participants and non-participants. For many years, we have struggled to engage students at the grade levels served at Lake County High School (7-12) and wanted to dig more into why students did or did not participate in after school program offerings. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance had been steadily increasing at Lake County High School. However, since fall of 2021, after school program attendance has been a struggle with low attendance numbers and low participation in after school program offerings. The same was true of school-day attendance. Project Dream as part of the Lake County School District runs programs for students K-12. Attendance and engagement does not seem to be an issue for students grades K-6. On the one hand, parents need the after school programs as a safe place for their children to be while they are working and not home. Students in grades 7-12 have more autonomy. Most are not forced into programs by their parents and they can choose what they wish to do with their time after school. We know that a large portion of students participate in sports which could be a contributing factor to low attendance rates of after school programs. However, sports have breaks throughout the year and not all students do a sport leaving a large chunk of the student body that could participate in Project Dream's after school programs. In addition, many students grades K-6 give great feedback about Project Dream programs saying it is their favorite part of the day and they love the clubs offered. The main question was, why somewhat suddenly, when students get to the high school, do they no longer seem to have a desire to participate in the programs they loved while in the younger grades? Although few, there are students that attended after school programs almost every day during the 2021-2022 school year. We also wanted to examine why some students, although few, were drawn to attend on occasion or more regularly. As mentioned in the Program History section above, Project Dream changes and adapts to meet the needs of the community. We wanted to learn what we could do better in order to

engage students in grades 7-12. After school programs offered both tutoring and clubs during the 2021-2022 school year. Because so many students were behind and disengaged following the pandemic, we put a huge focus on tutoring to ensure that students would pass classes. Project Dream did this in close collaboration with Colorado Learning Connections, a non-profit based in Frisco, Colorado that offers individualized learning and responsive mentoring to inspire, guide, and empower students and families (www.clcsummit.org).

Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine why students in grades 7-12 at the Lake County High School do or do not attend after school programs. We sought to address the following questions:

- **Research Question 1:** Why do students in grades 7-12 at the Lake County High School choose to attend after school programs with Project Dream?
- **Research Question 2:** Why do students in grades 7-12 at the Lake County High School choose not to attend after school programs with Project Dream?
- **Research Question 3:** What would students in grades 7-12 at the Lake County High Schools like to see improve or change with Project Dream after school programs?

Evaluator Details

The Out of School Time Director conducted this evaluation in collaboration with the Lake County Program Coordinator from Colorado Learning Connections. We used attendance data from EZReports, and an Out-of-School Time survey data distributed by classroom teachers to students using a Google form in the spring of 2022. Project Dream began running after school tutoring and clubs on August 30th, 2021. All Project Dream after school clubs and tutoring at Lake County High School concluded on June 10th, 2022. This report includes students who attended Lake County High School during the 2021-2022 school year and completed the spring LCHS Out-Of-School Time Survey. The complete survey can be found on p. 12-13 in the appendix.

Evaluation Methods

Evaluation Design

After school programs can have a major impact on student achievement both in high school and later in life. In a study done with a 21st Century Community Learning Center in Louisiana, researchers found that regular participation in after school programs had a positive impact on student academic achievement (Hirsch, Hedges, Stawicki, & Mekinda, 2011). Another study on after school programs suggests that it is possible to identify effective programs (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). Project Dream strives to provide the best possible programming for students. We sought to figure out if our programs were positively impacting students and if not, what we could do better. We wanted to hear directly from the students, trying to obtain a large sample size which is why homeroom teachers were asked to distribute the survey to students while in their homeroom.

Evaluation Areas of Interest

Of specific interest was why some students chose to attend programs during the 2021-2022 school year and why some did not. Additionally, we sought to learn more about what would motivate more students to regularly attend after school programs with Project Dream.

Evaluation Tools and Data Used

In spring of 2022, homeroom teachers were asked to distribute the LCHS Out-of-School Time survey to all students in their homeroom. The survey had a total of 15 questions that started with demographic data and a gauge as to how important students thought passing grades and graduation were. The survey then went on to see what Project Dream programs students do or do not attend and why or why not. At the end of the

survey, students were asked to provide some anecdotal feedback on out-of-school time programs. The entire survey can be found in the appendix section of this report.

Results

Demographic of Participants

So as to prevent socially desirable responses, the only required demographic information that was included in the survey was the student's grade. Students were also given the choice to provide their name and pronouns. A total of 135 students started the survey. Of those, 129 fully completed the survey. Of students that completed the survey, 43% attended after school programs while 57% did not attend programs. 50% of attending students indicated that they attend after school programs once a week or more, 14% said they attend after school programs occasionally, a few times a month, and 36% responded that they attend rarely, less than once a month.

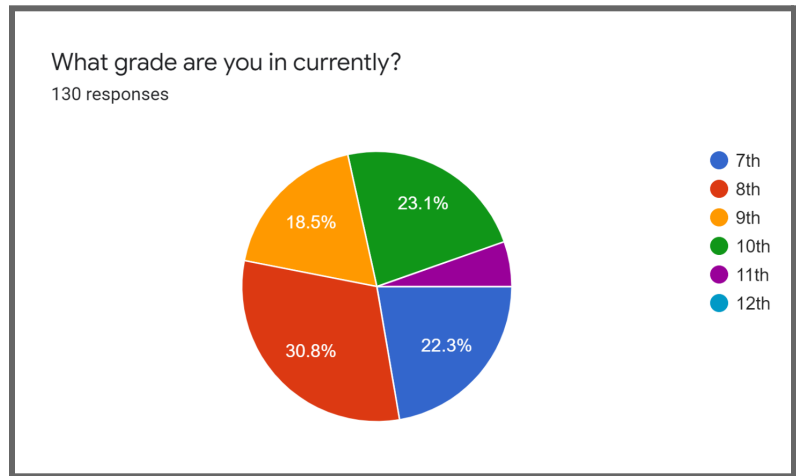


Figure 1

Analysis

Survey data from the spring LCHS Out-of-School Time Survey was used in this evaluation. Students in grades 7-12 at the Lake County High School were asked to respond to a variety of rating scales, multiple choice questions, and written response items.

Findings

Research Question 1: Why do students in grades 7-12 at the Lake County High School choose to attend after school programs with Project Dream?

According to the analysis, some reasons for attending after school programs were more popular than others. Using skip logic in the survey, only students that said they participate in clubs were asked to respond to the item: ***Why do you attend LCHS out-of-school time services (after school tutoring, credit recovery, after school clubs)?*** This question asked students why they attend after school using a "select all that apply" response, a majority of students, 52.6%, indicated they attend after-school for social interaction, ie, clubs, 42.1% of students indicated their primary reason for attending was to get homework help, 31.6% indicated they attend because they are passionate about or enjoy one or more clubs, 26.3% indicated they only attend because LCHS requires them to, 19.3% indicated they attend to stay on track to graduate (likely largely the credit recovery cohorts), and 12.3% indicated they prefer getting their homework done before they get home.

Because there was a large focus on tutoring help during the 2021-2022 school year, we were curious to know how important this help was to students by asking two questions 1) ***How important is it to you (not your parents/guardians) that you pass all your classes?*** and 2) ***How important is it to you (not your parents/guardians) that you graduate high school in 4 years?*** As seen below, the majority of students (81.5%) rated passing their classes as a 4 or 5 and the majority (88.4%) rated graduating on time as 4 or 5 of importance. However, when analyzing students that did not attend versus students that did attend

programs, more of the non-attenders placed importance on passing grades and graduating on time, see Figure 5.

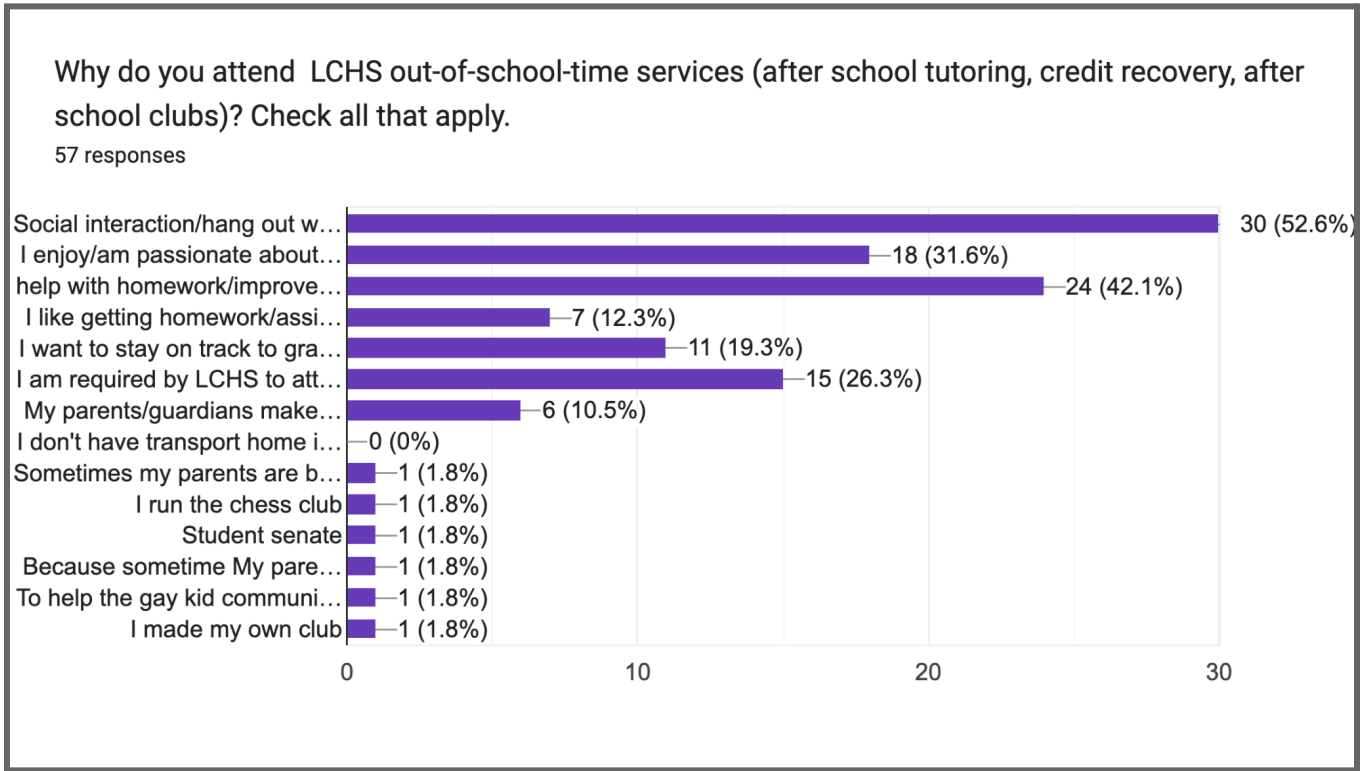


Figure 2

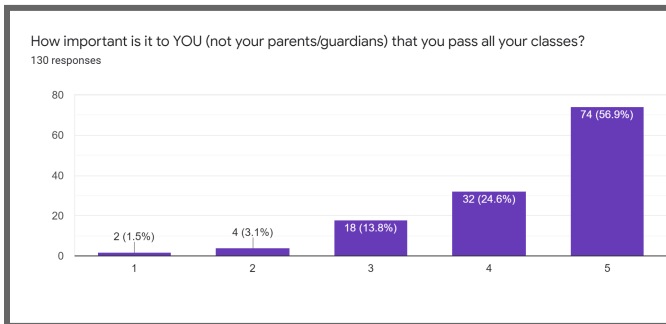


Figure 3

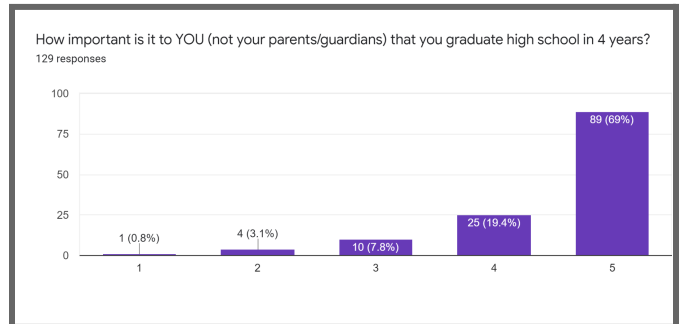


Figure 4

Importance of Passing Classes/Graduating by after school users and Non-users (scale of 1-5 where 1 indicates “not important” and 5 indicates “very important”)

	Passing classes 1-3	Passing classes 4-5	Graduating 1-3	Graduating 4-5
Students who did not attend programs	11%	89%	5%	94%
Students who did attend programs	28%	72%	19%	81%
All Students surveyed	18%	81%	11%	88%

Figure 5

Research Question 2: Why do students in grades 7-12 at the Lake County High School choose not to attend after school programs with Project Dream?

Again using skip logic, students that did not attend after school programs with Project Dream were asked why they chose not to attend. More than half or 53.9% of students said they are not interested in the clubs offered. About half of students or 50.4%, said they don't need tutoring or credit recovery. A decent portion, 34.8% of students said they have other after-school activities to do, 14.8% of students said they attended after school tutoring and it didn't help them, and 11.3% of students said they don't like the tutors/club leads. See Figure 6 below for the full set of responses.

These students also provided some anecdotal feedback as to what would make them want to attend after school programs. What stood out most correlated with the findings from the “select all that apply” item with more club offerings and social interactions being the most desired outcome for after school programs. This also corresponded with the reasons students stated above as to why they chose to attend after school programs. In the anecdotal feedback one student wrote, *Something that would motivate me or make me excited to attend after school clubs would maybe be more options and more friends in the clubs.* Another stated, *Sometimes I want to do some activities after school. But I want to see more clubs I am interested in, because some of the clubs I am not interested in.*

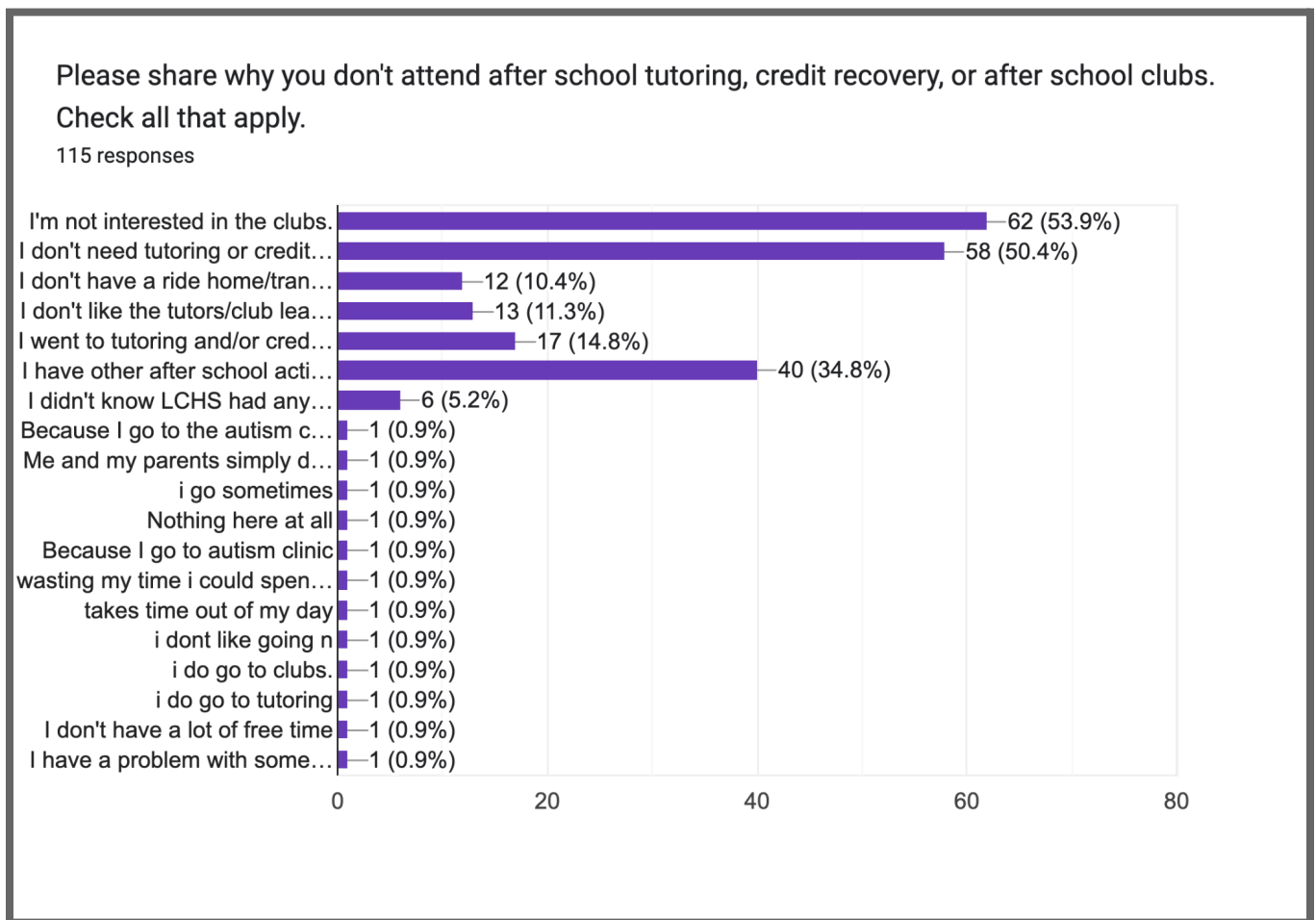


Figure 6

Research Question 3: What would students in grades 7-12 at the Lake County High Schools like to see improve or change with Project Dream after school programs?

Research Question 3 was addressed in the LCHS Out-of-School Time Survey with the following open-response items: 1) ***Please share one thing about LCHS out-of-school time services you would like to see improved/change*** and 2) ***Please share one thing you'd like to see your club leaders/tutors improve/change***. For the first written response items, 25% of students said they would not change anything, 13% requested more or better food, with additional snacks/snack breaks provided throughout after-school time, 10% would like to see more club options and 4% noted they want to see larger participation and more advertising. Finally, about a quarter or 23% had comments around the tutoring portion suggesting *more help like different kinds of tutors for different subjects and to get a better work environment*.

For the second written response item on improvements and changes, a few more than half provided written suggestions for programs and 48% indicated that they had no feedback for the tutors/club leads. However, some of the most common themes included in the feedback for changes and improvements were students feeling like leaders/ tutors could interact better with students. One student said, *help people not just sit and stare*. A few more students stated they would like to see leaders/tutors, *have patience with students and they need to help more when a kid needs help*. Additional students felt like tutors did not provide the support that they needed by saying tutors could improve by, *Explaining a little bit better* and, *make sure they help everyone*. Lastly, some students indicated that they want more of a heads up as to what they would be doing during their time after school. This was captured by one student stating, *warning us what we going to do ahead of time we know*.

Conclusion

In conclusion, all three research questions were addressed in the evaluation conducted using the LCHS Out-of-School Time Survey. When analyzing **Research Question 1:** Why do students in grades 7-12 at the Lake County High School choose to attend after school programs with Project Dream? It was found that most students like the social aspect of after school programs. Another significant portion of students did want the homework help that was offered during after school. However, less attendees of after school programs considered passing classes and graduating in four years important when compared to non-attendees. When considering **Research Question 2:** Why do students in grades 7-12 at the Lake County High School choose not to attend after school programs with Project Dream? The most prominent responses showed that students either did not like the clubs offered or did not need the help to keep their grades up and on-track to graduate. When considering the anecdotal feedback, students provided more insight into this by stating they wanted to have more friends at the clubs after school and more interesting clubs offered. **Research Question 3:** What would students in grades 7-12 at the Lake County High School like to see improve or change with Project Dream after school programs? This item was addressed using anecdotal feedback from the survey. The most prevalent feedback students provided for what they would like to see improve or change included more positive interactions with club leaders and tutors, knowing ahead of time what they would be doing, more food, and additional club offerings.

Through this survey, students provided great reflections and feedback in order to improve after school programs at Lake County High School. What stands out in this evaluation is a need for students to have more say as to the club offerings after school. In the evaluations, students seemed to care more about social interactions with their peers than they did about the tutoring and homework help that was being offered. The academic component still appears to be important to some students but a suggestion is to primarily focus on fun clubs and getting students involved with their peers first and then moving to tutoring and homework help. Or, let students choose when they arrive if they would like to have more social and club interactions or work on their homework with support.

Our job is to create rooms filled with students' voices. Not be the main voice.
Pernille Ripp

References/Appendices

References

- Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2007). The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills. Collaborative for academic, social, and emotional learning (NJ1).
- Hirsch, B. J., Hedges, L. V., Stawicki, J., & Mekinda, M. A. (2011). After-school programs for high school students: An evaluation of After School Matters. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University.

LCHS Out-of-School Time Survey

Project Dream and Colorado Learning Connections (CLC) want to provide LCHS students with the programming and support that is most beneficial and engaging to you! Please take 5 minutes to complete this survey about how Project Dream and CLC can best support you. Thank you!

- Please share your name and pronouns, if you are comfortable. You may also choose to remain anonymous if you want to share sensitive feedback.
- What grade are you in currently?
 - 7th
 - 8th
 - 9th
 - 10th
 - 11th
 - 12th
- How important is it to YOU (not your parents/guardians) that you pass all your classes?
 - 1-5 (1=not important at all, 5=very important)
- How important is it to YOU (not your parents/guardians) that you graduate high school in 4 years?
 - 1-5 (1=not important at all, 5=very important)
- Have you attended any LCHS out-of-school-time services (after school tutoring, credit recovery, after school clubs) this school year?
 - Yes (skip to Participant Survey)
 - No (skip to Non-Participant Survey)

Participant Survey

Only complete this section if you participate in out-of-school-time services.

- What Out-of-School services do you attend?
 - After school clubs
 - After school tutoring
 - Credit Recovery
- How often do you attend LCHS out-of-school-time services (after school tutoring, credit recovery, after school clubs)?
 - I attend after school tutoring, credit recovery, or after school clubs regularly - once a week or more.
 - I attend after school tutoring, credit recovery, or after school clubs sometimes - once or twice a month
 - I attend after school tutoring, credit recovery, or after school clubs rarely - less than once a month.
- Why do you attend LCHS out-of-school-time services (after school tutoring, credit recovery, after school clubs)? Check all that apply.
 - Social interaction/hang out with friends.
 - I enjoy/am passionate about 1 or more clubs.
 - help with homework/improve grades/finish assignments.
 - I like getting homework/assignments done before I go home.
 - I want to stay on track to graduate on time.
 - I am required by LCHS to attend (after school tutoring).
 - My parents/guardians make me attend.
 - I don't have transport home immediately after school/need a place to stay after school.

- Other - write in
- Please share one thing you enjoy about LCHS out-of-school-time services.
- Please share one thing about LCHS out-of-school-time services that you would like to see improved/changed.
- Please share one thing you think your club lead/tutors do well.
- Please share one thing you'd like to see your club lead/tutors improve/change.
- Please share anything else you feel is important (suggestions, improvements, critical feedback, etc)

Non-Participant Survey

Only complete this section if you don't participate in out-of-school-time services.

- Please share why you don't attend after school tutoring, credit recovery, or after school clubs. Check all that apply.
 - I'm not interested in the clubs.
 - I don't need tutoring or credit recovery.
 - I don't have a ride home/transportation.*
 - I don't like the tutors/club leaders.
 - I went to tutoring and/or credit recovery and it didn't help me.
 - I have other after school activities to do (sports, off-campus clubs, groups, hobbies, etc).
 - I didn't know LCHS had any out-of-school-time services.
 - Other - write in
- Is there anything that would motivate you/make you excited to attend after school tutoring, credit recovery, and/or after school clubs. In other words, what do YOU want to see during YOUR after school time at LCHS?

*Transportation was provided home from after school programs, this item was included as we were unsure that students were aware of the transportation.