

Cohort IX/Project Dream - Lake County School District

2023-2024 EVALUATION SUMMARY

21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Grant



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Description

The Lake County School District is nestled in the middle of the Rocky Mountains, surrounded by famous resort areas such as Vail, Breckenridge, and Aspen. Lake County is considered the affordable county to live in. As such, many parents commute out of the county to work in neighboring resort communities. In any given year there are between 900-1,000 students enrolled in the school district.

The population is split about 60/40 between Spanish-speaking and English-speaking households. 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; since 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 different forms depending on the need of the school. All summer programs have an academic enrichment focus. 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 EVALUATION

Research Question 1: What are the most popular Project Dream offerings amongst Lake County Intermediate School (LCIS) and Lake County High School (LCHS)?

Research Question 2: How was student attendance impacted when popular activities were offered?

The two schools included in this evaluation are the Lake County Intermediate School which serves students grades 3-6 and the Lake County High School which serves students grades 7-12. In order to answer Research Question 1, focus groups were conducted with LCIS and LCHS students to learn about their experiences with Project Dream regarding their most favorite activities. Focus groups were conducted with a total of 23 students, 10 of the 23 were native Spanish-speakers, 13 were native English-speakers. Students that participated in focus groups ranged from grades 3-12. In order to address Research Question 2, focus groups findings were analyzed alongside attendance data from the EZReports Attendance Tracking System to determine if there was alignment between the focus group data discussing favorite offerings and program attendance data.

PROGRAM RESULTS

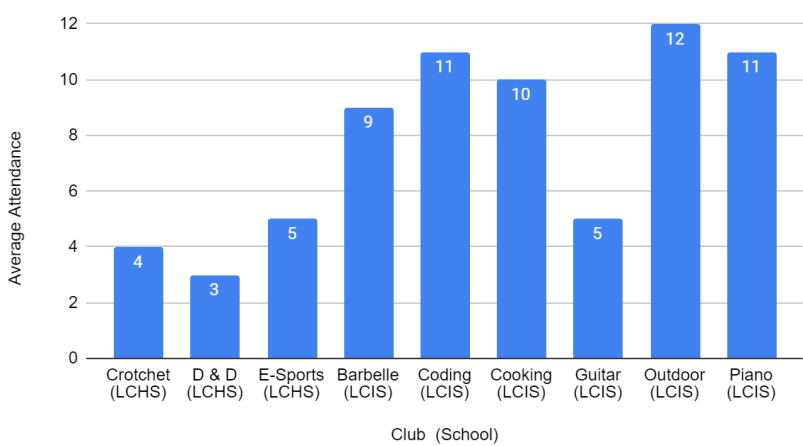
LCHS students in focus groups indicated their top two favorite activities were the individualized tutoring support received from Project Dream staff and the E-sports Club. Students discussed the reason they enjoyed tutoring was because it helped them to increase their grades in classes and they felt a connection with the staff helping them with homework. Some students also talked about how they like that they are able to work on homework with their peers and receive support from fellow classmates rather than go home and work on their homework alone and without support. Many students in the LCHS focus groups spoke highly of the E-sports Club, a club which was implemented in 2022 as a partnership with the athletic department. E-Sports began as a non-competitive club. Students would come to the club and play video games with their peers. Students now have the opportunity to compete in tournaments with other schools (all virtual) when they join the club and are determined eligible according to their grades. Both tutoring and E-sports Club take place during after school hours.

LCIS students in focus groups discussed one of their favorite clubs was the Outdoor Club. They liked this club because they were able to go on bike rides, be at the park, be outside of the school building, and play various games with other students. The Outdoor Club takes place after school. LCIS students that participated in the focus groups, much like the LCHS students, discussed the social factor of Project Dream stating that they like to be with friends they may not see during the school day. Students also mentioned some of their favorite activities were special events trips through Project Dream such as the Turquoise Lake Day and Swim Days. These trips occurred over the course of the year on Fridays (about one per month) when teacher professional development was taking place in the school buildings. The goal with these special events was to both provide something fun and different for students on Fridays and respect teacher learning space while they are in the buildings completing professional development activities.

After obtaining focus group data around the most popular Project Dream activities, we analyzed attendance data from EZReports on these offerings. To analyze after school activity attendance, a sample was taken from January and February as these two months were the least interrupted by school breaks and therefore had the most consistent attendance. At LCHS, tutoring takes place every day after school which makes it difficult to analyze attendance from tutoring only.

E-Sports Club however takes place only a few days per week. As such, E-Sports Club attendance data was used and compared to the attendance of other clubs, Crotchet and D & D. Attendance for the Outdoor Club at LCIS was compared

Average Attendance vs. Club (School)

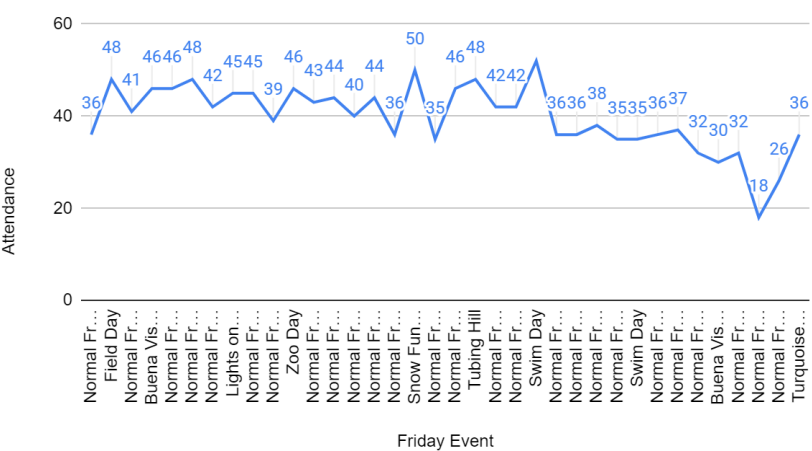


to average attendance from other clubs which occurred on the same day, Barbelle (weightlifting), Coding, Cooking, Guitar, and Piano. As noted in the Average Attendance vs. Club (School) chart, E-Sports attendance shows that E-Sports was the best attended club during the months of January and February. This is in line with data from the focus group data. However, attendance from Crotchet and D & D is not far behind the E-Sports attendance. Also in line with focus groups data, attendance data from LCIS during the months of January and February show that the Outdoor Club was the most well-attended club with an average attendance of 12 students per day. Coding and Piano were close behind E-Sports with average

attendance of 11 students. Attendance data show that focus groups findings of the most popular clubs were reinforced with attendance data.

Typically LCIS Friday programs consist of academic blocks and clubs throughout the day. On teacher professional development days, special events are held where students are taken off-campus to participate in various learning activities. As seen in the LCIS Friday Attendance - Normal Fridays and Special Events chart, attendance, for the most part, peaked when there was a special event. Average attendance for a normal Friday (non-special event) was 39 students while average attendance for a special event Friday was 44 students. Using this data, it becomes apparent that students are more inclined to attend Friday programs when there is a special off-campus event such as a Turquoise Lake Day or Swim Day. This aligns with findings from the focus groups which indicated that students’ favorite activities occurred during special event days. It does appear that some special event days were more popular than others. The highest attendance recorded was a Swim Day where 52 students participated. The Snow Fun Day also appeared to be quite popular with a total of 50 students that attended. It is interesting that the least well-attended event was one of the Swim Days as this was also the highest attended event. This Swim Day did take place on Good Friday, an important holiday for many in our community which most likely impacted the low attendance rate. The second least well-attended special event was the second Buena Vista River with only 36 attendees. This did coincide with a spring snowstorm in the mountains which may have impacted student attendance as the day was to be held entirely outdoors. Although this event had the least amount of attendees, it is still near the average attendance for normal Fridays.

LCIS Friday Attendance - Normal Fridays and Special Events



CONCLUSION

The use of both qualitative data and quantitative data through focus groups and attendance records showed valuable insights into program offerings at the Lake County Intermediate School and Lake County High School. The data complemented each other, showing that the most popular offerings as indicated during focus groups, were also the best attended offerings. This data will impact conversations amongst Site Supervisors in the 2024-2025 school year. Site Supervisors will need to use this data to consider how to promote the most popular offerings in order to promote attendance. The data will be especially relevant at the LCIS Site Supervisor plans for Friday programs as there was an average attendance difference of five students per Friday for normal Fridays as compared to special event Fridays.

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