

# Cohort X/Project Dream - Lake County School District

## 2023-2024 EVALUATION SUMMARY

### 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

LAKE COUNTY  
PANTHERS



### 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.

### Swim Lessons with Project Dream and Swim Squared LLC

In the spring of 2021 the Lake County Aquatic Center closed due to maintenance issues. The nearest pool is located in Summit County, about 45 minutes away. Many families in the community have expressed concern about the safety of

their children around water. It has been difficult for local families to make the 1.5 hour round trip to/from Summit County for a 30-minute swim lesson. Project Dream has attempted to fill this need by taking students to aquatic centers in Summit and Chaffee Counties during our full-day Friday programs. However, these trips can only be made a few times per year due to a number of factors including cost, availability of the pools, and road conditions. In the winter of 2024, Swim Squared LLC opened an endless pool in Leadville, CO. Endless Pools are similar to treadmills or stationary bikes, but specific for swimming.



They are small, the size of a large hot tub and can hold still water or create a current,

meaning you can swim in place. Swim Squared LLC reached out to Project Dream to see if it was a possibility to pilot swim lessons on Fridays for students K-2 at the Lake County Elementary School. Project Dream was eager to partner with the organization as this is something families had been requesting and a program we had run in the past with the Lake County Aquatic Center. Swim instructors went through the Lake County School District background checks and a training

with Project Dream prior to providing lessons. Swim Squared LLC provided 18 swim lessons free of charge for 23 students. Each student received two to four swim lessons. A Project Dream staff member was present for all lessons. In addition to the in-water sessions, Project Dream Leaders were trained using an out-of-water curriculum through Colin's Hope ([www.colinshope.org](http://www.colinshope.org)). Project Dream Leaders taught students this out-of-water portion at the school building which introduced skills such as water safety rules, lessons around different types of water, how to properly fit a life jacket, and how to help someone who might be drowning.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the swimming lessons, we utilized two research questions. Through a combination of the two data collection methods, both quantitative and qualitative analysis was used to determine outcomes to the two research questions listed below.

**Research Question 1:** What improvements did Lake County Elementary students K-2 make in swimming from their first lesson to their final lesson?

**Research Question 2:** What were students' thoughts and feelings about swimming lessons with Swim Squared LLC?

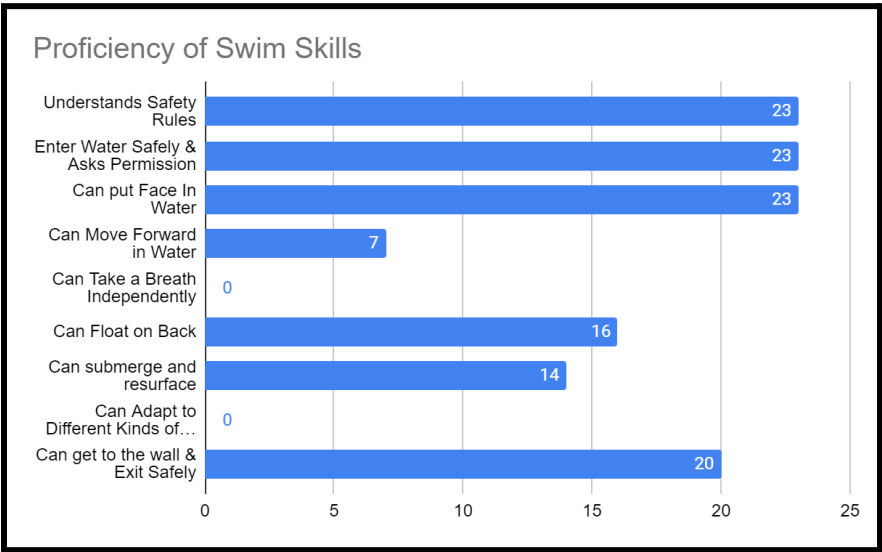
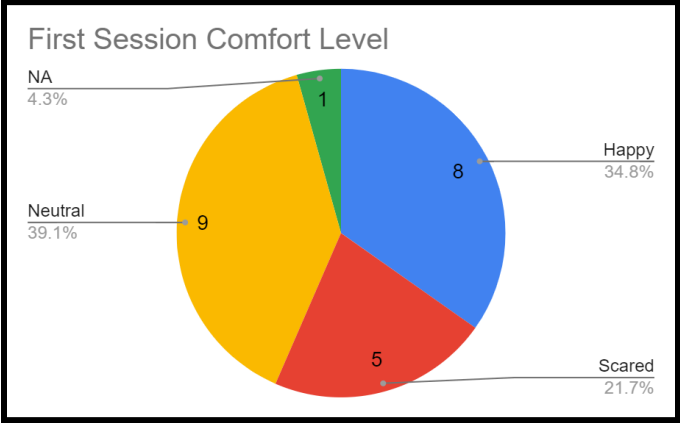
In order to answer Research Questions 1 and 2, Swim Squared LLC used a Swim Skill and Progress Tracker. Swim instructors rated students' comfort level during the first session and final session. Three ratings were on the scale; scared, neutral, and happy. After the final session, the swim instructors marked the skills that students had learned over the course of their lessons. The skills tracked included:

- Understands Safety Rules
- Enter Water Safely & Asks Permission
- Can put Face In Water
- Can Move Forward in Water
- Can Take a Breath Independently
- Can Float on Back
- Can submerge and resurface
- Can Adapt to Different Kinds of Water
- Can get to the wall & Exit Safely

In addition to the Swim Skills and Progress Tracker, focus groups were conducted with LCES students to learn about their experiences during swim lessons. Focus groups were conducted with a total of seven students, six were native Spanish-speakers, one was a native English-speaker. Students that participated in focus groups were in kindergarten, first, and second grade. During focus groups, students were asked to speak about what they enjoyed and what they learned

during swim lessons. Students were given the opportunity to have open conversations that naturally explored their experiences at Swim Squared LLC.

PROGRAM RESULTS



As seen in the *First Session Comfort Level* and *Final Session Comfort Level* pie charts, only eight students or 34.8% of students felt happy in the water during their first lesson. Nine students or 39.1% felt neutral in the water, five or 21.7% felt scared in the water, and one student did not attend the first session. By the final lesson, 100% of students felt happy in the water. Students also learned vital swim skills during their lessons with Swim Squared LLC. As seen in the *Proficiency of Swim Skills* bar chart, 23 of 23 students understood safety rules, entered the water safely and asked for permission, and could put their face in the water. Seven students were able to move forward in the water by the final lesson, 16 students were able to float on their backs, 14 students could submerge and resurface, and 20 students were able to get to the wall and exit safely. No students mastered taking a breath independently (while using arm strokes) or were able to adapt to different kinds of water.

During focus groups students indicated that swimming was one of their favorite activities and they learned swim skills while attending the swim lessons. Students stated that it was fun to be in the water and swim with their friends. They mentioned they would like to go to pools with slides more often and the skills they learned during their lessons with Swim Squared LLC would benefit them when visiting the large pools.

## **CONCLUSION**

By using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, we were able to hear from students about their experiences participating in swimming lessons with Swim Squared LLC and compare those results with the data tracked by the swim instructors. Some students began swim lessons with neutral or scared feelings and by the end of the lessons felt happy to be in the water. We also discovered that students learned vital water safety skills such as understanding of safety rules, floating on their back, and getting to the exit safely. Without a local aquatic center, Swim Squared LLC and Project Dream out-of-school time programs are working together to fill a community need. We will be eager to continue this partnership and see more positive results out of swim lessons.

- <https://www.lakecountyschools.net/outofschoolatlcsl/>
- Taylor Trelka - Out of School Time Director - 719.427.7003 - [ttrelka@lakecountyschools.net](mailto:ttrelka@lakecountyschools.net)