



Lake County School District
Learning Above and Beyond

21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Grant Lake County School District 2026 Cohort IX Evaluation Summary

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Description

Project Dream Out-of-School Time (OST) through the Lake County School District (LCSD) encompasses afterschool, Friday, and Summer programs for the Leadville/Lake County area. Project Dream began afterschool programs in 2010 in response to community need for safe and enriching programs for students during afterschool hours. Project Dream afterschool programs take place Monday-Thursday, with Friday programs filling the youth programming gap left by LCSD's four-day school week. Summer programs are offered in collaboration with local youth programming partners. Activities include social-emotional learning, academic enrichment, physical activity, outdoor skills, club programs, and local partner programs.

Lake County is nestled in the heights of the Rocky Mountains, surrounded by the resort economies of the Vail valley and Summit County. Lake County is considered the affordable county to live in. As such, many caregivers commute out of the county for work. There are just less than 900 students enrolled in the school district. The population is split about 60/40 between Spanish-speaking and English-speaking households. Project Dream aims to provide programs that enrich the lives of our students and families and enhance their academic experience.

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

For the summer of 2025, we tried a new approach to credit recovery for our high school students. For the prior few summers, our high school students in need of recovered credit would have the opportunity to attend programs at Lake County High School staffed by out-of-school time tutors. This program was very similar to the credit recovery support we offered afterschool throughout the school year, and engagement was low. For the summer of 2025 we worked with an organization called the Field Academy to provide experiential credit recovery programs that took place in the Denver Metro area. Students visited museums, talked with local artists and community leaders, and were mentored by the Field Academy staff while being away from home for six consecutive days. In that time, students had the opportunity to recover credit equivalent to an entire school year in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies, amounting to four total credits. We hoped that by providing an experience that got students out of the known environment of the high school they would engage positively in their credit recovery process and spark new excitement for learning going forward.

We explored the following evaluation questions to better understand the impact of the Summer 2025 Field Academy program:

- How did Field Academy program participants rate the impact of their experience in terms of impact on their future learning engagement?
- Did Field Academy program participants show any differences compared to peer students in academic outcomes?
- Were there any particular core subjects that students showed significant improvement in after the Field Academy program?

To measure the outcomes of the Field Academy program, we analyzed student survey results from program participants, and compared academic outcomes between program participants and similar students in need of recovered credit that did not attend the program. Eleven students participated in the Summer 2025 Field Academy program, and all students completed an end-of-program survey conducted by Field Academy staff. End-of-program survey results were shared with LCSD OST staff for analysis. Students responded to the following questions on a 1-5 scale, with 1 indicating lowest agreement and 5 the highest agreement:

- I was able to apply my learning to the real world

- I felt curious when presented with new ideas and concepts
- I feel able to use connections I made this week in my future

All eleven students that participated in the Summer 20205 Field Academy program were enrolled at Lake County High School in grade 11 for the 2024-2025 academic year. We created a comparison group of nine other students at Lake County High School in grade 11 for the 2024-2025 academic year that were in need of recovered credits, but who did participate in the Field Academy program. End-of-program survey results were shared with LCSD OST staff for analysis. We analyzed the following data for both groups:

- Change in cumulative GPAs between the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school year
- Rate of on-time graduation (graduated June 2026)
- Percent of students with continuous enrollment at LCHS through the end of the 2025-2026 school year (did not drop out, enroll at the alternative high school, or transfer)

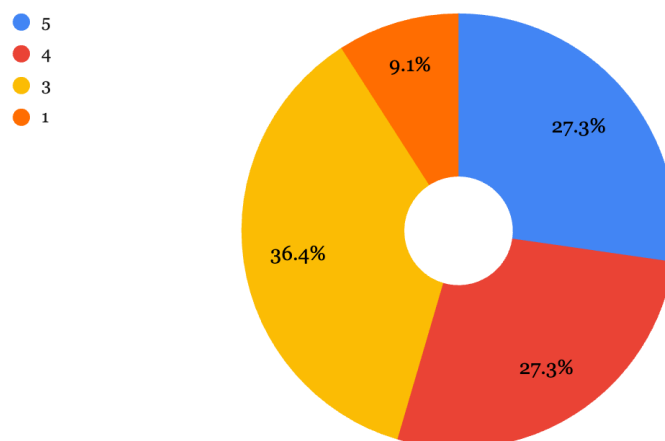
Finally, we analyzed course grades for the 2025-2026 academic year for the eleven students who attended the Summer 2025 Field Academy program to see if there were any particular subjects that students performed better in after the program. For each student, we aggregated all course grades in core subjects (English, Math, Science, Social Studies) into a single grade value of a whole number between 0-4, each correlating to letter grade (0=F, 1=D, 2=C, 3=B, 4=A). We did this for both school years 2024-2025 & 2025-2026. Then, by averaging the aggregate for core subjects we were able to see the amount of average change in academic performance from the 2024-2025 school year to the 2025-2026 school year by subject for the whole group.

PROGRAM RESULTS

How did Field Academy program participants rate the impact of their experience in terms of impact on their future learning engagement?

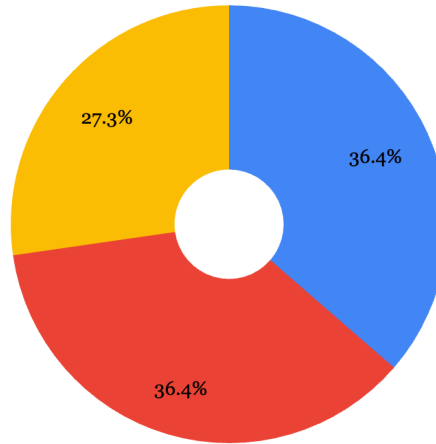
The following pie charts summarize survey responses from the eleven students who attended the Summer 2025 Field Academy program. For these survey questions, students were prompted to respond on a 1-5 scale with 1 indicating lowest possible agreement, and 5 indicating highest possible agreement.

I was able to apply my learning to the real world



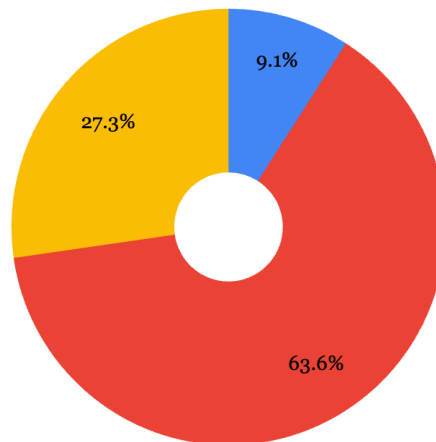
I felt curious when presented with new ideas and concepts

● 5
● 4
● 3



I feel able to use connections I made this week in my future

● 5
● 4
● 3



The responses were overwhelmingly positive, with one one question response indicating lowest possible agreement. In general students not only recovered four credits, but found the alternative educational experience to fit their learning styles and engage them. The largest student agreement to the statement was in response to the prompt “I feel able to use connections I made this week in my future.” This aligns with what Field Academy staff reported, saying that “Their (LCHS students) camaraderie and encouragement of each other was really strong.” Students reported feeling like it was a safe environment to talk about their struggles engaging at school. While it is difficult to say exactly how this experience set students up for success in the following school year, the remaining analysis points to relatively strong academic engagement post-program.

Did Field Academy program participants show any differences compared to peer students in academic outcomes?

Below is a table representing the findings of the analysis of academic outcomes between the two student groups (Summer 2025 Field Academy program participants and similar peer group).

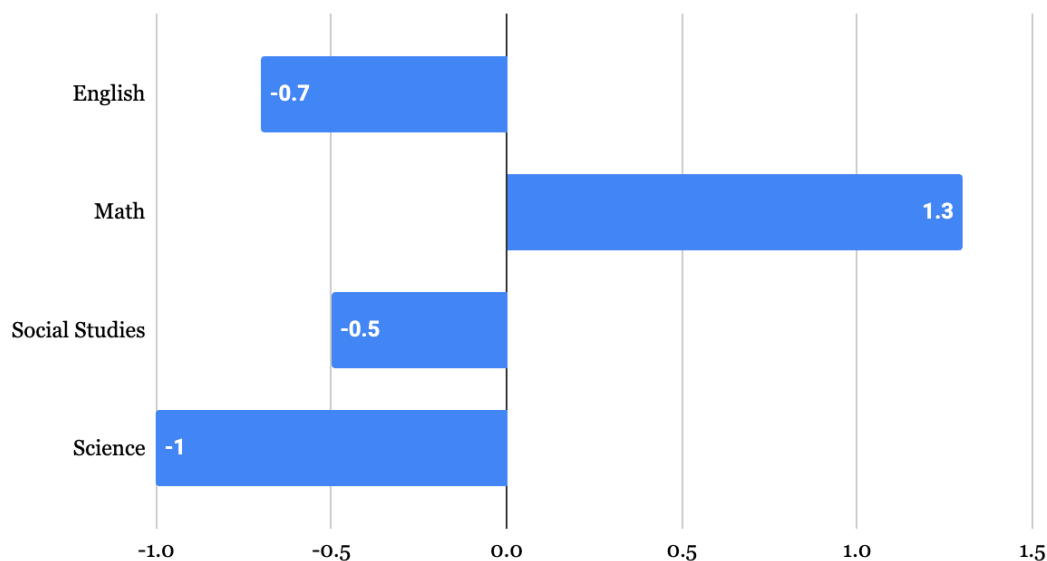
	Attended Field Academy	Did Not Attend Field Academy
Number of Students	11	9
Average GPA Change 24-25 to 25-26	+.92	+.69
Rate of On-time Graduation	91%	50%
% Remained Enrolled at Lake County HS	90%	44%

In each of the three analysis categories, the students who attended the Summer 2025 Field Academy program outperformed their counterparts who did not attend. It was exciting to see that the average change in GPAs was positive for both groups. This may be due in part to GPAs not being reported for students who transferred from the traditional high school program to Cloud City High School, LCSD's alternative high school. However, rates of on-time graduation and percent of continuous enrollment heavily favored the group who attended the Field Academy program.

Were there any particular core subjects that students showed significant improvement in after the Field Academy program?

The below chart displays how the program may have impacted student's engagement in school differently across core subjects:

Average Letter Grade Change by Core Subject



As shown, students who attended the program on average achieved worse aggregate grades during their senior year in English, Math, and Science as compared to their junior year, declining between 1

whole letter grade and half a letter grade. In Math, however, students improved their aggregate grades in Math by more than a whole letter grade. It is worth noting that in analyzing the data we noticed more students taking elective (non-core subject) courses in their senior year as compared to their junior year.

Student Quotes about their Field Academy Experience

"I like it because it was hands-on type of experience, you get to actually get the feel of the work of a field you could go into. It gave me a better picture of what I want to do in life."

"Stepping out of my comfort zone and acting kinda as a leader. Trying to motivate other people to get engaged"

CONCLUSION

In summary, we conclude that students who attended the Summer 2025 Field Academy program had positive academic outcomes following the experience, and outperformed similar peers. Our analysis was fairly limited, and does not prove that the Field Academy program was the definitive reason that these students outperformed similar peers. Many other factors were likely to contribute to our findings, such a group selection bias towards students who were motivated to make a change in their academic performance. However, all analysis, student feedback, and staff feedback point to an alternative, experiential learning opportunity to recover credits during the Summer as a tremendous opportunity to re-engage Lake County High School students.

We recommend LCSD OST programs continue to explore experiential learning opportunities for Lake County students who are in need of recovered credits and academic support. While this program was a targeted, one-time intervention, it points to successful program elements that we could implement ourselves in our OST programs. Students who are at-risk of failing to attain credits, not graduating on-time, or dropping out often benefit from choice and agency in their academic engagement. They often ask for educational experiences that are more relevant to their everyday lives, or allow them to engage in alternative settings that don't carry baggage of their prior experiences in the school building. With the flexibility to provide field trips and coordinate program partnerships, we will look to expand our profile of programs throughout the school year as well as during the summer. We hope to see improved graduation on-time rates, continuous enrollment, and GPA improvement, and other markers of academic success coincide with these program offerings.