



Lake County School District
Learning Above and Beyond

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

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Description

Project Dream 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

Many reports and research articles have found that participation in out-of-school time (OST) programs can benefit the development of literacy skills. In addition to required reporting for the 21st CCLC grant, we did a further analysis of literacy outcomes for students at Lake County Elementary School (LCES) to discover any reported differences between students who do not participate in OST programs and those who do. OST programs through the 21st CCLC grant include afterschool activities from 3:15-6:00 pm and all-day Friday programs. Programs include a wide array of enrichment activities, including arts, STEM, physical activity, reading and Spanish, and experiential learning. In this report we explore the following questions:

- Are there differences in literacy level and growth over a school year between students who attend OST programs regularly, not regularly, and not at all?
- Are there differences in literacy growth and growth over a school year between students who attend Friday programs and those who don't?

We analyzed all available data for students enrolled at Lake County Elementary School (LCES) for the 2025-2026 school year. Using OST participation data and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) data to create comparison groups. OST participation data was available for all students, and complete DIBELS data was available for most students, resulting in an analysis of 153 total students. We were able to create the following comparison groups with student numbers listed:

OST Participation

- No OST participation: 48
- Less than 75 hours of OST participation: 29
- More than 75 hours OST participation: 78

Friday Programs Participation

- Did not attend Friday programs: 121
- Did attend Friday programs: 32

To measure the literacy level and growth, we used results from the DIBELS assessments provided throughout the year at LCES. Multiple assessment types are administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year (BOY, MOY, EOY). The reporting platform creates a composite score for each student that provides an estimate of a student's overall literacy and reading proficiency. "Level" scores refer to how a student's

composite score compares to grade benchmarks, and “growth” scores compare the rate of growth over time to grade benchmarks. Composite scores are reported numerically, but due to the need to benchmark scores against grade norms numeric scores are assigned the below listed categories. To make group averages between these categories, we assigned integers to each category:

Composite Level

- Well Below Benchmark: 1
- Below Benchmark: 2
- At Benchmark: 3
- Above Benchmark: 4

Composite Growth

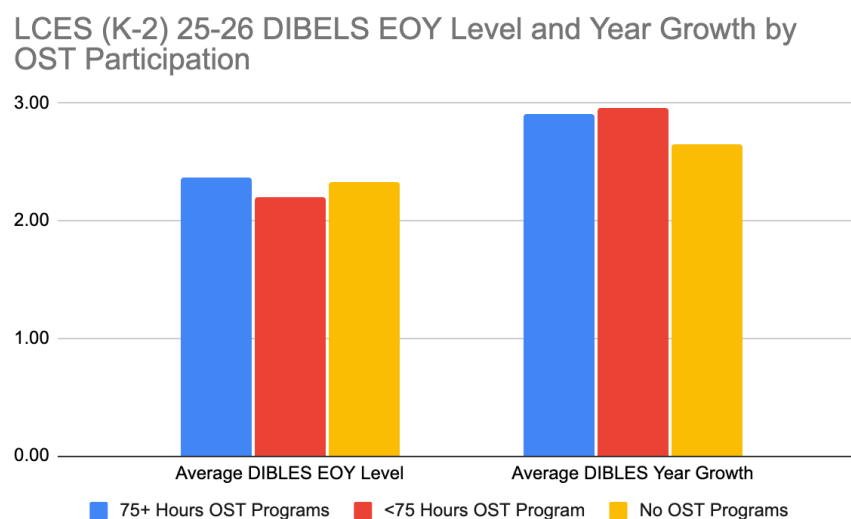
- Well Below Average: 1
- Below Average: 2
- Average: 3
- Above Average: 4
- Well Above Average: 5

Our data analysis included two methods. First, we converted student scores for literacy level and growth to the above integers to make group averages in level and growth that allows for comparison between participation groups. Second, we charted literacy growth by outcome type for our participation groups to better understand reported differences in literacy growth.

PROGRAM RESULTS

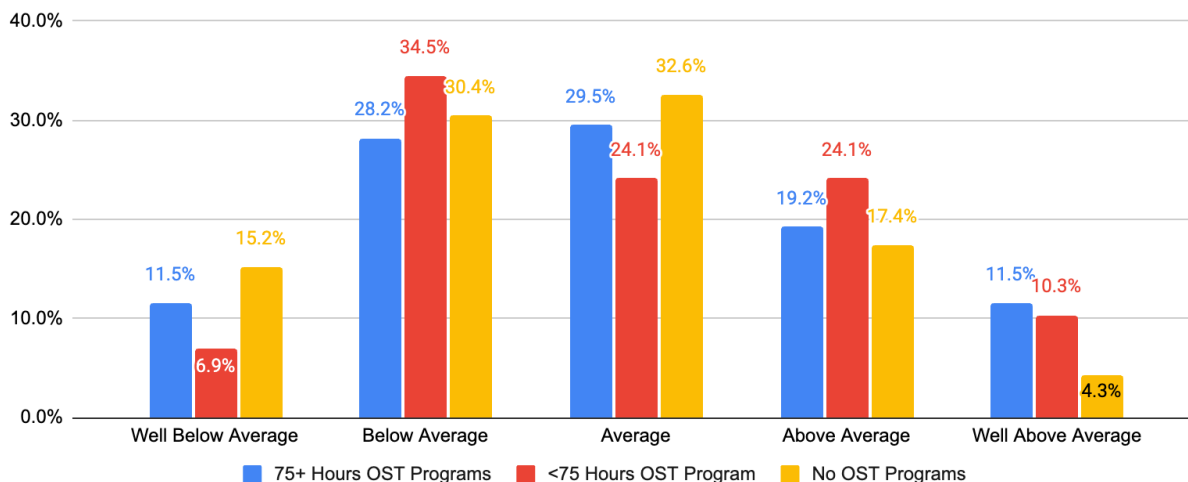
In general, we found that students who participate in OST programs demonstrated mixed results for end-of-year (EOY) literacy level, but higher rates of literacy growth as compared to students that did not participate.

Are there differences in literacy level between students who attend OST programs regularly, not regularly, and not at all?



For the EOY literacy level, we saw mixed results between the OST participation groups as shown by the left groups of bars in the above chart. However, the year growth results showed that both groups of students that attended OST programs experienced more growth on literacy over the course of the school year on average.

LCES (K-2) 25-26 DIBELS Composite Growth By OST Program Participation

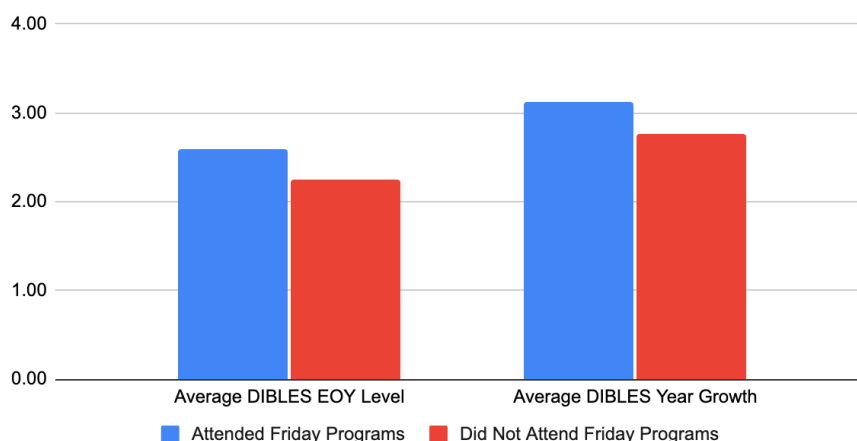


To better understand these literacy growth differences, the above chart maps out what grade benchmark students in each group fell into. We can see that the most noticeable difference between groups is in the “Well Above Average” benchmark, where students who attended OST programs had double the representation in this category as compared to students who did not attend OST programs.

Are there differences in literacy growth and growth over a school year between students who attend Friday programs and those who don’t?

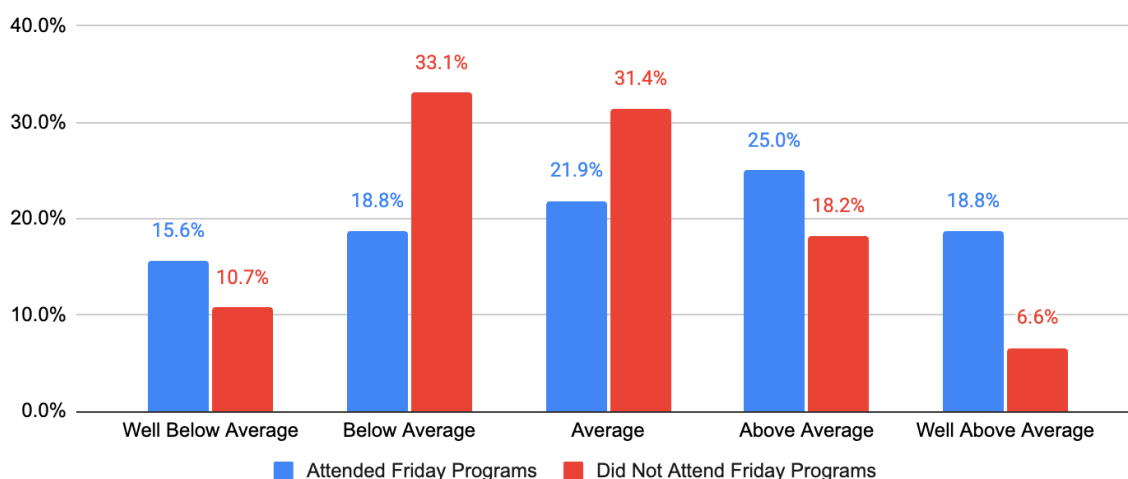
Our analysis comparing LCES students that attended Friday programs and those who did not provided much clearer differences in both literacy level and growth.

LCES (K-2) 25-26 DIBELS EOY Level and Year Growth by Friday Program Participation



The above chart shows that for both literacy level and growth, the 32 students who attended Friday programs had higher average benchmarked scores.

LCES (K-2) 25-26 DIBELS Composite Growth By Friday Program Participation



The above chart for literacy growth by benchmark group showed much higher occurrences of students in the “Above Average” and “Well Above Average” benchmark groups for students who attended Friday programs.

CONCLUSION

Our analysis confirms reports and research showing that OST participation can correlate to higher literacy for elementary students. Our OST programming includes opportunities for students to read, write, create, and play. It is not surprising to us to see that students who remain engaged in enriching activities outside of school hours would show higher literacy rates. However, this analysis does not explore the reasons why we see these effects, and many factors likely contribute, such as family engagement in academics, selection bias for students who are willing to participate in enriching activities, and varied school-day interventions in literacy.

We are especially interested in the results shown for participation in Friday programs to inform future program strategy. The analysis showed both higher literacy levels and growth for students who participated in Friday programs. Because our district does not have school on Fridays, there is a whole day each week when students experience a very wide degree of difference in how enriching their days’ activities are. Additionally, we incorporate reading and language lessons for every student during all-day Friday programs, whereas our shorter afterschool programs do not have a literacy component for every student every day. These results are encouraging that we look to expand enrollment in our Friday programs, and share these results with our families to help them understand the benefits we see.