

IMPACT

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Improved test scores for University of Idaho 4-H afterschool program in Potlatch

AT A GLANCE

Homework support for Potlatch Elementary School students is one objective of the University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development afterschool program.

The Situation

The need for an afterschool program in Potlatch was determined using student test scores, the 2013 Substance Use and School Climate Survey for Potlatch School District, and a community needs assessment. Feedback also was solicited from teachers, parents, youth and community members. In December 2014, a community needs survey was given to families with children attending the Potlatch School Elementary. The survey was anonymous and voluntary. Out of 187 families served by the school, 83 responded to the survey (a 44 percent response rate). Of parents responding, 78 percent said they would or probably would participate in an afterschool program if offered, 21 percent cited concerns about transportation and 43 percent cited money as the biggest barriers for attending an afterschool program. Ninety-five of respondents wanted homework help for children and 55 percent of respondents said they did not feel very comfortable helping their child with homework. Another 9 percent of families reported they did not have any current arrangements for their children after school.

Our Response

In 2015, UI Extension 4-H Youth Development applied for and was awarded a five-year grant from the Idaho State Department of Education to provide afterschool services to 50 first through fifth grade youth at the Potlatch Elementary School. The pro-



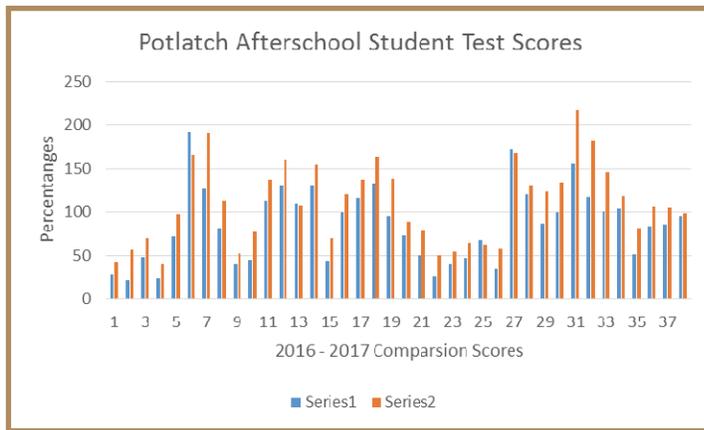
Youth at 4-H afterschool program at their study table.

gram accepts any youth in the area on a first-come, first-serve basis. In addition, slots are reserved for teacher referrals of students who need extra assistance based on their school performance. This program operates 140 days per year for three hours per day. Youth receive healthy snacks, an opportunity for physical activity, school enrichment activities and a half hour of homework help daily. Homework assistance is offered by paid university staff. The program also monitors homework completion by feedback from the student's teacher.

Program Outcomes

The afterschool program began on July 1, 2015 and the first test scores were available in April 2016. These scores were used as the baseline scores. The Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) scores were used for first to third grades and the English Language Arts (ELA) scores were used for the fourth and fifth grades. Students receive either a proficient, basic or

below-basic score. In April 2017, the program received the second set of results to begin a comparison from the 2016 and 2017 years. Although 50 students were enrolled in the program in April 2016, only 38 of the original students were still in the program in April 2017. Test scores improvement for youth enrolled in the program ranged from – 14 percent to 171 percent with an overall average of 37 percent from year 2016 to year 2017. The chart illustrates the student scores from 2016 to 2017.



Since most of the students in the program were in the fourth grade, information about the test scores of all of the fourth-graders at Potlatch Elementary School was gathered from the Idaho State Department of Education to compare how the afterschool program youth performed compared to the overall class performance. Among the afterschool youth, 52.9 percent were rated as proficient, compared to 25 percent the rest of the fourth grade. In addition, 29 percent of afterschool students were rated as below basic, compared to 38.9 percent among fourth grade students overall. While improved tests scores was one of the goals of offering this program, homework assistance in a school setting had an unintended benefit. Parents report less stress and more family time in the evening because the child’s homework is completed at school.

The Future

The University of Idaho Extension 4-H afterschool program is currently in its third year of a five-year program which will end June 30, 2020. In January 2020 the program will reapply to extend the program another five years. Going forward, the program would like to continue to collect the data from the reading as well as math and science scores. By the end of 2020, five years of data will be available to evaluate the effectiveness of the additional homework help.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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