University of Idaho Extension provides afterschool educational enrichment

AT A GLANCE
UI Extension partnered with the 21st Century Committee Learning Center grant to provide rural youth with afterschool educational opportunities.

The Situation
Hansen School District is a rural district serving approximately 350 pre-K to 12 grade students. Hansen School district has a high rate of students living in poverty, 5 percent more than the Idaho average, where 78 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, 40 percent are Hispanic, and 13 percent identified with special needs. Overall, Hansen students struggle to perform well and demonstrate proficiency on the Idaho State Achievement Test (ISAT). 2016 Hansen grades three thru six English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency percentage was 38.4 percent, while the state performed at 50.8 percent; likewise, Hansen math proficiency percentage for the same grades was 32.1 percent, while the state averaged 44.8 percent.

Hansen School District has developed a comprehensive strategic plan. One of their goals is to ensure that intervention systems and opportunities for enrichment are in place to support the achievement of all students. The school district operates on a four-day school week and students were going home to empty houses with little or no supervision and often no support for additional learning or completion of homework. Quality enrichment programs outside the school setting and the Hansen community are limited and transportation to nearby larger communities where more opportunities are available is not readily accessible to students.

Our Response
With limited opportunities for students outside of the school day, Hansen School District administration solicited community partners for a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant (21st CCLC) to provide a safe, supervised environment for students when school is not in session with programs that focus on increasing student achievement in ELA and mathematics and expose students to an array of enrichment opportunities.

University of Idaho is one of two major community partners committed to supporting a safe, supervised
environment for Hansen students when school is not in session utilizing the 21st CLLC grant awarded to Hansen School District. Through this grant, Hansen School District provided funding for a part-time student intern, hired by UI Extension, and supplies to offset costs of youth programs focusing on the experiential learning model in Healthy Eating and Active Living; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); and Financial Literacy. Programming consisted of three one-hour rotations on designated Fridays throughout the school year and tailored the needs of students in each grade level.

With University of Idaho Extension educators’ guidance, the student intern designed and implemented enrichment curriculum for the duration of the 2017-2018 school year. Two additional interns, funded through the county budget, were utilized in implementing the program. Interns collaborated with program employees and volunteers on a weekly basis to meet the academic needs of students in the program utilizing student centered, authentic, hands-on activities.

**Program Outcomes**

Hansen School District program goals for the first year were to provide a program that supports academics and enrichment opportunities for 100 students in K-eighth grade. Friday attendance varied from 23 to 92 students with an average of 47 students attending 28 Friday sessions. Quantitative data was compiled on the Idhao Reading Indicator (IRI) and ISAT. IRI result increases varied between grade levels with the highest increases in kindergarten of 69 percent for students who attended more than 40 percent of program days. ISAT result increases by students attending more than 40 percent program days also varied depending on the grade level with the highest increases reported in seventh grade math (100 percent) and fifth grade literacy (50 percent).

Many additional community partnerships were established throughout the course of programming including volunteers from the College of Southern Idaho (CSI) diversity counsel, CSI drone club, CSI geology department, CSI fish hatchery, Magic Valley master gardeners and Twin Falls Starbucks employees.

**The Future**

The 21st Century Committee Learning Center grant will continue to fund programming in partnership with the University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development and are currently in the process of planning the 2018-2019 school year expanding UI Extension college intern support to include a robotics program coach/mentor who will work with students to research a real-world challenge focusing on outer space, then innovate and develop their own solutions through designing, building and coding LEGO MINDSTORMS robots to perform autonomous “missions” on a playing field, and compete in a regional tournament.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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