



NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
**Native Youth Community Project**  
PUBLIC INFORMATION BRIEF • YEAR 2 • DECEMBER 2019

*This information brief presents selected findings from the RMC Research Evaluation Report, based on data collected October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019.*

The Nevada State Department of Education's *Native Youth Community Project* (NYCP) seeks to prepare grades 7-12 American Indian (AI) students for college and career using a three-fold plan that includes: (a) the support of a College and Career Coach (CCC) and Community-based Instructor (CBI); (b) activities designed to improve student academic performance, including tutoring and summer programs, conferences designed to engage students, and guided visits to colleges; and (c) community collaborative events.

Three tribal groups in two different geographic locations receive support in these efforts. Members of the Yerington Paiute and Walker River Paiute Tribes attend school in the Yerington, NV area. Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone tribal members attend school in the McDermitt, NV area. A total of 139 grades 7-12 AI students participated in the second year of the project's implementation at these sites.

This information brief includes key points from the evaluation of the second year of project implementation. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to collect information for this report. Quantitative methods were utilized in the analysis of community event participation, parent participation, student academic learning plan completion, college tour participation, academic achievement and attendance data, advanced course enrollment, and college/trade school applications. Qualitative methods were used to collect information from administrators at the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), school administrators, site and project staff, parents, and students during visits to the two sites. In addition, quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze data obtained from surveys distributed to parents/caregivers, students, and participants in select community events.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

All of the key project components were implemented in accordance with the approved plan. In Yerington, one CCC and two CBIs continued the work they had begun in Year 1 and provided the functions as described in the project application. The CCC focused on preparing students for college and careers, worked directly with the students on improving academic achievement and behaviors, presented community and parent presentations on college and other topics, conducted an intensive six-week summer program for selected students, organized college tours, and facilitated the completion of an individualized academic plan for each student. The CBIs worked closely with the CCC and the community throughout Year 2. In McDermitt, largely due to location-based challenges, Year 2 saw a change in staff in the CCC position, and toward the end of the Year the CBI position was vacant. Tutoring and summer programs occurred during Year 2 in McDermitt.

Students from both sites participated in conferences, including the statewide American Indian/Alaska Native Education Summit in Reno, the UNITY conference in Orlando, and the statewide Native American Youth Summer Camp in Lake Tahoe. Students also participated in guided visits to colleges.

The project successfully met 10 of the 13 second-year performance measures. These include measures related to performance across all five goal areas. Performance measures related to proficiency rates on state exams, participation rates in advanced courses, and the percentage of chronically absent students fell short of the specified targets.

## SELECTED FINDINGS

### GOAL 1: Implement a Successful NYCP that Promotes and Prepares AI Students for College or Career

- Administrators at the state and local levels, as well as project and site staff, generally believed that the project made progress in helping students prepare for postsecondary education and careers during the past academic year and thought that the groundwork was established to extend project impact during the third year of implementation. Respondents were overall highly satisfied with the rate and extent of project implementation in Yerington but characterized project implementation in McDermitt as being far slower and more inconsistent.
- NDE administrators and project and site staff said the most positive aspects of the NYCP were associated with students gaining more pride in and identification with their Native culture, acquiring more confidence in their own intelligence and abilities, and becoming aware of the large range of educational and career opportunities they could access.
- Staff felt that the relationships they had built with students over time were healthy and nurturing to the young people and allowed them to succeed, not only within the activities conducted by the project, but within the larger school environment.
- NDE administrators and project and site staff described some of the beneficial impacts of the project:



NYCP staff are joined by students and other educators at the Unity Conference in Orlando, FL. Photo by Anonymous.

project:

*Children are gaining pride in their culture. They are exposed to successful Native American adults outside of their community who encourage them and show them what is possible...I see more self-esteem, more pride, more effort, more happiness.*

*The relationship that we have built with the students. They know we will get on them [to work harder], but they know that we care...it makes me feel good that a kid is comfortable talking to me. [And] just some of the teachers giving them positive feedback.*

*For the kids to have options. It's an opportunity to give our Native kids hope.*

*[To show them] there is something besides high school. They can keep going further and further with their education and whatever they want their career to be.*

*[NYCP] has been life changing for many, an opportunity to highlight amazing and wonderful things that can happen in a rural/tribal community that in some cases is forgotten...NYCP gave them the opportunity to say, "This is who we are; we have amazing kids, staff, and community."*

### GOAL 2: Increase Student Academic Performance

- Data collected on 9/30/19 indicate that all 33 McDermitt students and all 106 Yerington students completed academic learning plans for the 2018-19 school year.

- Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC) in Math and English Language Arts (ELA) are used in grades 7 and 8, and the ACT is used in grade 11 to determine student proficiency. Proficiency rates for test data collected in spring 2018 were compared to those collected in spring 2019. In McDermitt, there was an increase in the percentage of students scoring proficient in math, from 0% to 15.8%. The percentage of students scoring proficient in ELA stayed the same at 10.5%. In Yerington, there were sharp decreases in the percentages of students scoring proficient in both math (20.0% versus 76.5% the prior year) and ELA (28.9% versus 78.4% the year prior).
- Baseline student cumulative GPA data were collected in September 2018. In September 2019, cumulative GPA was again collected for each student, and compared with their baseline. The percentage of students with increased GPAs was calculated. In McDermitt, 13 of the 24 students (54%) for whom cumulative GPA could be compared demonstrated an increase. In Yerington, 52 of the 66 students (79%) for whom cumulative GPA could be compared demonstrated an increase. Across both sites, 65/90 (72%) students demonstrated an increase.
- During the 2018-19 school year, 35 students from Yerington participated in an advanced placement (AP) or college courses, while in McDermitt 2 students completed AP courses.
- Baseline rates of chronically absent students were collected for the 2017-18 school year and compared with those during the 2018-19 school year. In McDermitt, there was an increase of 13.4 percentage points, in Yerington there was a decrease of 3.5 percentage points, and across both sites there was a .5 percentage point increase.
- Students from both communities attended the American Indian/Alaska Native Education Summit in Reno. At the conclusion of the Summit, students completed an electronic survey. There were 31 respondents. More than 90% of the students strongly agreed that attending the Summit increased their commitment to graduate from high school.

### **GOAL 3: Increase Student Motivation and Readiness to Attend College or Vocational Training**

- There was strong agreement among NDE administrators, district/school administrators, and project staff that NYCP has increased students' motivation and readiness to attend college and postsecondary training.
- A student survey was administered during the 2018-19 school year. Across the two sites, 122 of 135 students (90%) agreed that the NYCP support has increased their *motivation* to attend college or vocational training, and 116 of 134 students (87%) agreed that it has increased their *readiness* to attend college or vocational training.
- In Yerington during Year 2, 82 of the 106 students (77%) participated in college tours, while in McDermitt, 16 of 38 students (42%) participated in college tours.
- In Yerington, all 16 students in grade 12 applied to colleges. Of these, two also applied to trade schools. In McDermitt, one of the three grade 12 students applied to colleges, and none applied to trade schools.



*Students speak with college representatives at the College Fair held during the Education Summit in Reno. Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero.*

#### **GOAL 4: Increase Parent Involvement in Their Children’s Education**

- State and school administrators, as well as project/site staff, thought that the project was forging better relationships with parents and other community members and encouraging them to be more involved in their children’s education.
- By examining participation logs, the percentage of students whose parents/caregivers attended at least one parent teacher conference, an IEP meeting, or a project-sponsored activity was calculated. In McDermitt, 36/38 (95%) and in Yerington, 101/104 (97%) of parents/caregivers were “involved.” Across both sites, 137/143 (96%) of parents/caregivers were “involved.”

#### **GOAL 5: Promote the Importance of Education Among the Community and Participating Students’ Families**

- Prior to the grant, very few community collaborative events occurred. Across the two sites, 19 community collaborative events with more than 1,250 participants occurred in Year 2. The overarching purpose of these events, which focused on Native language and culture, student academic success, physical and mental well-being, and college financial literacy, was to support student learning and achievement and increase both motivation and readiness for college and career. Each of these events was planned at the local level and designed to meet the specific needs of the community.
- An NYCP Parent/Caregiver Survey was administered at the conclusion of Back-to-School Nights in August 2019. A total of 41 parents and grandparents from the two sites completed the survey. Overall perceptions of the various support activities were favorable, with all respondents agreeing that seven of the nine listed meetings and activities were “somewhat helpful” or “very helpful” in supporting their students’ learning. Meetings included those to speak with a child’s teacher or another member of the staff, learn about the college application or financial aid process, or attend the Parent Advisory Council. Other events focused on Native culture and/or wellness, ways to support a child’s learning, and volunteering at a school event.

#### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The NYCP is credited with increasing student motivation and readiness to attend college or vocational training. It is widely viewed as having a great impact due to a combination of factors, including high expectations for student academic success, opportunities to visit college campuses and conferences, ongoing staff encouragement of students, and outreach to parents. These have all contributed to students having greater awareness of postsecondary options and seeing themselves as capable of succeeding in education programs beyond high school.

Respondents said that parents felt more comfortable with having advocates in the school who understood the Native culture and communities and took the initiative in reaching out to Native families. They also perceived that by having more cultural and informal events at the schools for the Native families, and by inviting Native parents to have important roles in the program, parents and other community members were changing their views about education and seeing themselves as partners rather than bystanders in their children’s education.

*To receive additional information about Nevada’s NYCP grant, please contact Fredina Drye-Romero, Education Program Professional, Office of Inclusive Education, Nevada Department of Education at (775) 687-9143. For questions on the evaluation, please contact Elizabeth Bright at RMC Research in Tampa at (800) 762-5001.*