

PUBLIC INFORMATION BRIEF, YEAR 2

Nevada Native Youth Community Project

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Prepared for
Walker River Paiute Tribe
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Nevada Native Youth Community Project




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The Nevada Department of Education’s (NDE’s) *Native Youth Community Project* (NYCP), in Year 2 of its second grant cycle, seeks to prepare American Indian students in Grades 7-12 for college and careers. The three-fold plan includes (a) the support of College and Career Coaches (CCCs) and School Community Liaisons (SCLs); (b) activities designed to improve student academic performance, including tutoring and summer programs, conferences designed to engage students, guided college tours, and career exploration; and (c) community collaborative events, which include Back-to-School events, motivational speakers, and Walk About in Paiute Country activities.

Students and community members from three tribal groups in three geographic locations receive support in these efforts. Members of the Walker River Paiute Tribe (WRPT) and Yerington Paiute Tribe (YPT) attend school in the Yerington and Hawthorne, NV, areas. Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone tribal members attend school in the McDermitt, NV, area. Across the sites, students in Grades 7-12 participated in the second year of the project’s implementation.

Figure 1. A Map of Participating NYCP Sites



-  **Carson City**
The Nevada Department of Education is in Carson City, NV.
-  **Walker River Paiute Tribe**
Students attend school at Yerington Intermediate and High Schools in Lyon County School District and Hawthorne Junior and Mineral County High Schools in Mineral County School District. Walker River Paiute Tribe is in Mineral County.
-  **Fort McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone Tribe**
Students attend school at McDermitt Combined School, located in Humboldt County School District.

RMC Research used a mixed-methods research methodology to collect information for this report. Quantitative methods were used to collect and analyze community event participation, student academic learning plan (ALP) completion, and college tour

participation. Qualitative methods were used to collect and analyze perceptual data from NDE and tribal and school administrators and staff, as well as students, parents, and caregivers.

Project Description

The approved plan guided the implementation of key project components. Two CCCs and two SCLs continue to serve as described in the project application.

At both sites, the CCCs and SCLs 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, accompanied students to summer college camps, and organized college tours.

“Sometimes as Indian people, we are always taught that the White person is more educated, and we should always believe what they say. But I tell our kids that we are his equal when we get an education. And there’s always going to be a no to questions we don’t ask. So, find out if you can make up this quiz or assignment and do your best to do it.” NYCP Site Staff

Data collected via surveys

after the college camps and college tours indicated that these events impacted students’ motivation and readiness to attend college or vocational training.

Selected Findings

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of NDE’s NYCP in Year 2 of its second grant cycle. The project has the following three long-term goals:

- **Implement a successful NYCP that promotes and prepares American Indian (AI) students for college and careers, with an emphasis on careers in the teaching profession.**

There has been a dramatic expansion of activity related to the grant. Twenty-four community collaborative events with 552 attendees occurred across all sites during Year 2. As a means of comparison, during Year 1 (2022-23), 13 community events were held. These events included college camps, college tours, community events such as Walk About in Paiute Country, Paiute Language Bowl, U.N.I.T.Y., and events featuring motivational speakers. State and local administrators and grant staff said more activities are planned for Year 3, focusing specifically on educational careers, activities to increase academic achievement, and college admissions.

- **Increase student academic performance by including opportunities in the local community to support AI students.**

Reviewing student ALPs with parents, teachers, and counselors can enhance academic learning. However, there is inconsistency across school districts in how ALPs are shared. In some districts, ALPs are sent to families. In others, the process of completing an ALP and disseminating it to parents is less well defined. As a result, some parents and students are aware of ALPs, while others are not. These inconsistencies lead to ineffective actions by parents, teachers, and community members. The ability to support student's academic performance and guide progress toward high school graduation may be adversely affected.

- **Increase student motivation and readiness to attend college or vocational training.**

Many of the activities provided by NYCP were designed to develop students' readiness for college or vocational training in several overlapping ways—including academic, financial, and social-emotional preparedness. NDE administrators, school administrators, project staff, and parents reported that the college camps and tours were especially effective in raising awareness of areas such as prerequisite classes, college applications, scholarship opportunities, housing options, and support services for Native students.

An NDE administrator believes that not all NYCP students are motivated to attend college or vocational training, but *“for those who attended a college camp or college tour, their [the students'] perspectives have changed.”* A long-time school administrator is convinced that the NYCP grant helps students see educational and career opportunities beyond high school. Most importantly, there was consensus among student focus group attendees that the NYCP had increased their motivation to attend college or vocational training. They indicated that the college tours, college camps, and other activities enabled them to see that college was a realistic option for them and enhanced their confidence in being admitted to college.

Figure 2. Students take a culinary lesson from UNLV chefs in the Marriott Foundation Executive Kitchen at Hospitality Hall.



Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero

Summary of Findings

During Year 2, the key project components were implemented according to the approved plan. The project successfully met or exceeded its targets for 6 out of 11 second-year performance measures. These include increases in the following key measures: (a) community collaborative efforts, (b) grade point average, (c) participation in dual-enrollment classes, (d) motivation and readiness to attend college, and (e) students applying to one or more colleges.

Students' overall perceptions of the project were gathered using surveys and focus groups. Data collected via surveys after the college camps and college tours indicated that these events impacted students' motivation and readiness to attend college or vocational training. Over 95% of the students who participated in the surveys following the tours agreed that it helped them learn how to get ready for college or trade school. Focus group respondents viewed the college camps, particularly UNLV's *Native Youth College Camp*, as valuable. All students suggested that the two most important things they learned at the UNLV College Camp were ways to pay for college and the number of majors available to them.

At all sites, the CCCs and SCLs 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, and accompanied students to summer college camps and tours. Additionally, they promoted communication and relationships between the school, families/parents/caregivers, and tribal communities. They jointly assessed needs and established community activities to support the needs of the communities. They also informed parents/caregivers of upcoming school functions.


Many respondents were unfamiliar with ALP completion. Nearly all agreed that completing ALPs and reviewing them at least once a year would be beneficial to ensure student progress. This area will receive additional attention in Year 3. Once student ALPs are implemented with fidelity for all students, NYCP administrators, students, and parents will begin to see the full impact of the grant on these tribal communities.

Several of the NYCP's most positive aspects were noted. These included students having people in the school who looked like them and understood their culture and experiences, the creation of new programs and systems to serve Native students in the state, the opportunities for students to have instructive and immersive experiences outside of their community and to see how these experiences will support their future, and the ability of students to develop leadership skills.

Yet challenges associated with the NYCP were noted as well. These included inadequate communication between the NYCP administrative and project teams, tribal education departments, local school districts, and school administration and staff; a lack of working relationships between the aforementioned groups; a lack of alignment between state and tribal accounting and management systems, resulting in a slower pace of work; and the need for more support from parents. The most glaring challenge associated with the NYCP is reconciling disparate visions of its implementation. District and school administrators would like the NYCP to expand its reach to include all students and hold tribal communities more accountable for supporting its activities. However, the NYCP grant focuses on providing equity and access to AI students. This disconnect threatens the full implementation and success of the NYCP grant if not remedied quickly.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations were put forth to the NYCP project staff based on the findings contained in the report. These included:

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- Ensure that all students have an ALP and that both students and parents review them at least once a year;
 - Give students more opportunities to learn from, integrate, and share information received from college visits and other experiences;
 - Arrange meetings with principals in Yerington, Hawthorne, and Schurz to discuss their roles and responsibilities;
 - Hold trainings for teachers on the NYCP;
 - Provide tours and additional information on trade/technical schools;
 - Create regular channels of communication with parents; and
 - Host more tours and activities related to teacher education programs.



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