

Mellen 21st Century grant program

Local Evaluation report

2022-2023



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Introduction and Program Description

The School District of Mellen is a small district located in Northern Wisconsin.

Our 21st century after school program (Digger Center) hours are Monday-Friday 7:00-8:05 (AM) and 3:20-5:30 (PM). 62% of our population qualifies for free-reduced lunch. Only 42% of our students tested basic in math and reading according to last year's STAR testing.

The Digger Center Program encourages all students, particularly ones who need extra help with academics and social emotional skills to attend. According to the United States Census Bureau in 2013-2017, 17.5 percent of people living in the Mellen area were in poverty. An estimated 37.2 percent of children under 18 living in the Mellen area were below the poverty level.

The information for this evaluation was collected by Kate Westerlund, and consists of teacher and student feedback as well as The Community Learning Center Monitoring Survey Tool completed by Kate Westerlund and Kelly Waddle (Co-Coordinator).

Evaluation findings

The students served this year include students in P-K through 8th grade. The AM Program averages 5 hours per week. PM Program average 10 hours per week. The total number of students enrolled in the programs is 119. 66 students attended 1-29 days, 12 30-59 days, 13 60-89 days and 28 90+ days. The average daily attendance was 33.

Students that were being served this school year included students in grades PK-12th grade with most of the attendees coming from the PK-8th grades. We had 12 attendees who are American Indian/Alaskan Native 6 attendees who are Black (not of hispanic origin). 3 of the American Indian/Alaska Native participants were regular or frequent attendees, 3 of the Black (not of hispanic origin) participants were regular or frequent attendees.

The average hours open per week were 12.2 with 4.65 days.

Our staff consisted of 2 coordinators (25 hours per week) and 3 student leaders 1 (5 hours per week) 2 (up to 10 hours per week).

Ratio of staff to students was 10 to 1 on average. Staffing included 2 non day school staff, 2 students and one community member. There was frequent turnover with the student staff and we were unable to fill the adult leader role.

Progress Towards Objectives

State Goal 1: All programs will provide a stable, safe, and supportive environment to meet the needs of the target population.

The Digger Center provides a supportive environment for all our attendees. The attendees are made up of the target population including students who are economically disadvantaged, students who score below basic on reading and math assessments and those who struggle with social emotional skills. We are striving to meet the needs of these attendees by forging and cultivating relationships with them and their families, planning activities that will engage them and supporting them academically and socially when there is a need.

State Goal 2 (Academic Enrichment): Programs will challenge youth to develop as learners.

The Digger Center met with and communicated with the teachers frequently. We worked on homework as well as academic enrichment activities throughout the year. Next year, we will be in a position to meet the academic needs of our attendees more effectively due to splitting the group by grade levels, (PK-2 and 3-5) in two separate rooms. We will also be communicating with the teachers weekly about attendees and their needs.

State Goal 3 (Youth Development and Other Skills Necessary for Overall Success): Programs will support the development of other skills necessary for success.

The Digger Center has offered a variety of activities this year including cooking, art, technology, organized games as well as recreational skills. Next year we will be adding more sports activities including cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. We will also be adding Second-Step for OST to our curriculum.

State Goal 4 (Family Engagement): Programs will engage families and the broader community in support of student learning.

The Digger Center invited parents to several "Community Nights".

- Digger meet and greet Wednesday September 28th 2022. (20 Parents participated)
- Friday night Spaghetti feed (12 parents)
- Meet the board members (2 parents)
- Where in the world geography scavenger hunt (2 parents)
- Halloween Meet and joke (25 parents and community members)
- Sledding party (15 parents and community members)
- Christmas concert after party (canceled due to power outage)

In order to increase our parent/community participation, we intend to take a survey at the start of the 2023-24 school year. We are hoping to be able to provide parent/community nights that will be better attended by offering parents and the community activities and sessions that are more relevant to their needs and interests.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Digger Center has provided a safe and enriching environment for students who struggle with academics, social emotional skills, have experienced poverty and food insecurity and have needs for enrichment activities that are better provided in the Out of School environment. We are able to work on specific conflict resolution skills, life skills (cooking, direction following and communication) and provide a "Safe space" for students who do not fit the norm.

In addition to the recommendations listed above, The Digger Center will occupy 2 rooms (PK-2 and 3-5th) The youth 6-12 will be served by the OST program with support from the Digger Center. The separation will allow us to serve the attendees in a more developmentally appropriate way.

Because of the lack of staff and staff turn-over specifically at the start of the program the data and record keeping duties were unable to be met in a timely manner. The new school year begins with 2 coordinators and the possibility of an adult leader as well as 2 student leaders.

The co-coordinators will keep records (record and assess activities) in a more thorough manner.

In order to attract and retain staff, we will structure working hours and responsibilities so that the Adult Leader position will be more attractive.

The plan this summer is to meet with possible partners in the community to see what they would be willing to provide in material, volunteers and possible activities. This will enhance our community participation as well as provide more resources to the program.