



NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Native Youth Community Project
PUBLIC INFORMATION BRIEF • YEAR 4 • DECEMBER 2021

This information brief presents selected findings from the RMC Research Evaluation Report, based on data collected from October 1, 2020, to September 30, 2021.

The Nevada Department of Education's (NDE) *Native Youth Community Project* (NYCP) seeks to prepare Grades 7-12 American Indian (AI) students for college and careers 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 105 Grades 7-12 AI students participated in the fourth year of the project's implementation at these sites.

This information brief includes key points from the evaluation of the fourth 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, attendance data, advanced course enrollment, and college/trade school applications. Qualitative methods were used to collect information from administrators at the NDE, school administrators, site and project staff, parents/caregivers, and students during virtual 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

Project plans were continually impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent school closures. Although many activities were conducted online rather than in person, and several events, such as the Statewide American Indian/Alaska Native Youth Education Summit and the Native American Youth Summer Camp, were canceled altogether, the key project components were implemented according to the approved plan.

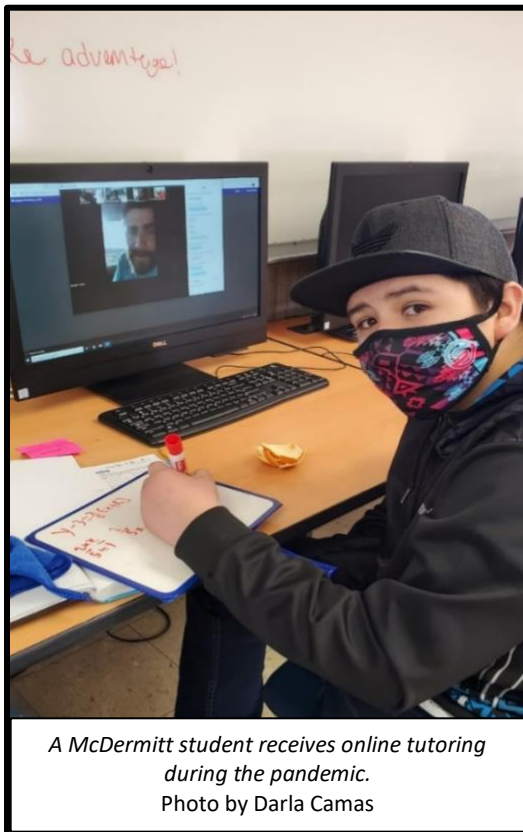
In Yerington, one CCC and two CBIs hired early in Year 1 continued to provide the functions as described in the project application. The CCC left the position during the spring 2021 semester, and one of the CBIs left in May 2021. Some of their responsibilities could not be fully covered by the remaining staff. The McDermitt community, which experienced frequent staff turnover and vacancies in the first two and a half years of the grant due to its geographically isolated location, was able to sustain a team of one CCC and three School Community Liaisons (SCLs) throughout Year 4.

At both sites, the CCCs 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 school break and summer programs for selected students, and organized college tours, both in-person and virtual.

The CBIs in Yerington and SCLs in McDermitt worked closely with the CCCs throughout Year 4. They promoted communication and relationships between the CCC, schools, families/parents/caregivers, and tribal communities. They jointly assessed needs and established community activities to support the needs of the communities. The CBIs and SCLs also collaborated with the CCCs to inform parents/caregivers of upcoming school functions.

Additionally, with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all NYCP site-based staff worked diligently to provide essential services to students and their families. Through their efforts, students received a variety of ongoing supports through virtual instruction and coaching and promotion of overall well-being during the pandemic. The Amplified Nevada Native Youth (ANNY) website, established the previous year, continued to provide a virtual platform for students and their families statewide to strengthen college and career pathways.

There were 107 community collaborative events, both in-person and virtual, during Year 4. Of these, 68 were held in McDermitt, and 39 were held in Yerington. There were approximately 2,330 attendees. The analysis of parent/caregiver perception data indicated that the NYCP community and cultural events had a positive impact on their ability to support their children's learning.



The project successfully met or exceeded its targets for 9 of the 13 fourth-year performance measures for which data were available. These included measures related to:

- increased community collaborative efforts;
- academic learning plan completion;
- participation in college tours;
- increased student motivation and readiness to attend college or vocational training;
- increased rates of college or trade school applications;
- parent/caregiver participation in their children's education;
- the occurrence of community events that promoted and educated families and communities on the importance of education; and
- the extent to which parents/caregivers indicate that these events help them support their children's learning.

Performance measures related to proficiency on state exams, increased GPA, participation in advanced courses, and improved attendance did not meet the specified targets for the project as a whole.

Across the two sites, 89% of the students who responded to the survey agreed that the NYCP support increased their *motivation* to attend college or vocational training, and 94% agreed that it increased their *readiness* to attend college or vocational training. The results of the survey administered to parents/caregivers during the Back-to-School events in McDermitt and Yerington indicated that 94% of the parents/caregivers viewed the community and cultural events hosted by NYCP as helpful to them in supporting their children's learning.

SELECTED FINDINGS

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

- Most state and school administrators, as well as project and site staff, expressed overall satisfaction with the implementation of the NYCP over the course of the project while acknowledging that project activities were heavily impacted by the pandemic and by the departure of a longtime staff member at one of the sites. Respondents praised the hard work done by staff even under the most challenging of conditions, the supportiveness of staff towards the students, the willingness of students to initiate service projects and other activities, the professional development given to staff, and the inspiring opportunities provided to students through activities such as tutoring, college visits, cultural events, summer programs, and attendance at conferences for Native youth.
- Concerns were expressed about the loss of funding and personnel with the four-year grant ending, ongoing challenges with the NDE's processes for the administration of grant funds, unexpected changes in disbursement policies, challenges in communication with tribal leadership, and the uncertainty about the Yerington community's new federal Accessing Choices in Education (ACE) grant and the types of services it would be able to provide.
- Administrators summarized what they saw as the most beneficial aspects of the project: the building of supportive relationships between project staff, schools, students, and families; the affirmation of students' Native culture and identity; and the presence of Native staff who understood the strengths and challenges of the students in the schools.

Administrators described some of the impacts of the project:

[The project] built relationships that didn't exist before and perhaps built a little trust between [the schools] and the tribal communities.

That [students] had someone who had been in their shoes, from a similar background and culture was important.

The ability...to have [students] recognize that there is so much to be proud of in their heritage. It is a clear social and emotional goal we have for our students [and] we couldn't do it without NYCP.



GOAL 2: Increase Student Academic Performance

- During the 2020-21 school year, 48 NYCP students from Yerington and 3 students from McDermitt participated in an Advanced Placement (AP) or college course.
- Most state, district, and school administrators believed that NYCP had raised the overall level of academic engagement among students. They thought that project staff had encouraged students to

be more responsible for their own learning and made parents/caregivers more aware of the academic supports offered by the program.

- There was broad agreement among respondents that NYCP had a positive impact on student behavior. They attributed behavioral changes to the care and guidance of staff members, the consistent presence of NYCP programs and staff, and behavioral norms established within the UNITY programs and other grant activities.

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

- During Year 4, the pandemic impacted planned in-person college tours for both sites, and virtual college tours replaced many of the in-person group college tours. Across the two sites, 78 of the 105 NYCP students (74%) participated in one or more college tours.
- There was consensus among respondents that NYCP, especially through strong encouragement from staff and the virtual and in-person visits to campuses, greatly increased students' motivation to attend post-secondary training.

GOAL 4: Increase Parent/Caregiver Involvement in Their Children's Education

- During all four years of the project's implementation, there was agreement among respondents that NYCP assumed an essential role in forging bonds between the schools and families.
- Results of the survey administered to parents/caregivers during the Back-to-School events in McDermitt and Yerington indicated that 29 out of 31 (94%) parents/caregivers viewed the community and cultural events hosted by NYCP as helpful in supporting their children's learning.
- Across the two sites, 92% of the students' parents/caregivers were involved in Year 4, as demonstrated by their participation in a parent-teacher conference, an IEP meeting, or an NYCP-sponsored activity.

GOAL 5: Promote the Importance of Education Among the Community and Participating Students' Families

- Across the two sites, 107 community collaborative events, held both in-person and virtually, occurred during Year 4. Of these, 68 were held in McDermitt, and 39 were held in Yerington. There were approximately 2,330 attendees. The analysis of parent/caregiver perception data indicated that NYCP community and cultural events had a positive impact on their ability to support their child's learning.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

During Year 4, although project plans were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent school closures, and numerous activities were conducted online rather than in person, the key project components were nonetheless implemented according to plan. Even with staff having to decrease their attention on college and career readiness due to the urgency of keeping students in school and focused on graduation, there was an overall agreement among respondents from both sites and at the state level that the project was supporting healthy behavior among students, increasing academic engagement, and enhancing students' motivation to attend post-secondary training.

To receive additional information about the evaluation of the Nevada Native Youth Community Project, please contact Dr. Elizabeth Bright at RMC Research in Tampa at 1-800-762-5001.