



REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

# Academic, Mentoring, and Innovation Program

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## **Executive Summary**

The Academic, Innovation, and Mentoring (AIM) program was created to pilot community-based youth development pilot activities that deliver educational services, mentoring, and linkages to positive out-of-school time activities for youth ages 6 to 18.

The Washington State Boys & Girls Clubs Association was approved for the two-year AIM grant to implement community specific models in five locations: East Bellevue, Mt. Vernon, Spokane, Tacoma, and Vancouver. Each site works with the local school district to ensure a match with community needs and resources. All sites collected data on academic and non-academic outcomes to identify effective interventions and areas for improvement. This final report for the AIM pilot provides program details as well as interim outcomes for participants.

## Introduction

The Washington State 2015–17 Operating Budget (ESSB 6052 Section 501 (40)) appropriated \$250,000 to fund the Academic, Innovation, and Mentoring (AIM) grant program over two years. The program was designed to offer educational services, mentoring, and linkages to positive out-of-school time activities for youth ages 6–18. In addition, programs were required to provide mentoring and academic enrichment that include at least two of three activity areas specified in the legislation:

- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)
- Homework support and high-yield learning opportunities
- Career exploration

The Washington State Boys & Girls Clubs Association (the Club) was approved for the AIM grant to pilot programming in five communities. The full project period extends from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017.

## Program Overview

During the first year of the program, each participating Club site worked closely with the local school district to develop a model that would provide mentoring and academic enrichment. Each site also provided a variety of learning opportunities in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), Career Exploration and High Yield Learning Activities. Though each site implemented a slightly different model, all clubs incorporated the Washington State Institute for Public Policy's (WSIPP) research on proven - and evidence-based programs, including:

- Tutoring and instruction by certified teachers in both one-on-one and small groups;
- Out-of-school-time tutoring by Club staff and volunteers;
- Academically focused summer learning programs; and
- Intensive mentoring support (i.e. *Check & Connect*)

Throughout implementation, all sites have been gathering data on academic and non-academic outcomes to identify effective interventions and areas for improvement. **To date, the five sites have served 351 youth, 77 percent of the participants qualify for free and reduced price lunch and 63 percent are youth of color. Each participant averaged 2.5 visits per week (134 annual visits).**

For a detailed overview of the full program, please see Appendix A: Boys & Girls Club – Logic Model.

## Operating Sites Summaries

**East Bellevue**—BE GREAT: Graduate (BGG), a drop-out prevention and academic success program for middle and high school students, is run every day after school and in the summer months in the Teen Excellence Center at the Teen Campus. BGG is designed to enhance youth engagement by providing consistent educational support from caring and trusted adult mentors so students can develop the skills necessary to be successful in school and in life. Core program components include the mentor-youth relationship that monitors early warning signs and includes three to five contacts each week, as well as goal setting and intentional tracking. This site actively partners with both the Bellevue School District and the King County Housing Authority.

So far in the program the Club served 88 youth, 84 percent of whom qualified for school free/reduced price lunch. 79 percent of program participants are youth of color, and they attend the program an average of twice per week during the school year and summer.

### Participant Outcomes:

- 100 percent of participants successfully moved onto the next grade level and or graduated from High School.
- Grades and GPA in core classes
  - English: 89 percent increased/maintained grade point average in English.
  - Science: 76 percent increased/maintained grade point average in science.

**Mt. Vernon**—The Mt. Vernon site launched a new year round Project Learn program infused with online learning tools, Stride and Kahn Academy. The AIM program focuses on youth in grades 1–6, with emphasis on literacy in grades 1–3. Youth were selected to participate by staff, school teachers, and counselors. The program adapted throughout the year as Learning Center staff got to know students and recognized those who struggled with reading. AIM participants were matched with staff members and steered toward more intensive academic support activities each day at the Club, including individual tutoring. The site leveraged partnerships with the Washington Reading Corps and the local school district.

### Participant Outcomes:

- 100 percent of participants were promoted to next grade, compared to 83 percent of the same group in the prior year without AIM.
- Using school district directed metrics for student success, AIM participants showed the following:
  - 10 percent of youth showed growth in Interest in Learning
  - 40 percent of youth showed growth as Self-Directed Learners
  - 36 percent more youth met grade-level benchmarks in Phonics
  - 33 percent more youth met grade-level benchmarks in Literacy

- Data on reading and math assessments collected using DIBELS and Stride Academy is still being analyzed.

To date, the program has served 60 youth, 58 percent of whom qualified for school free/reduced price lunch. 64 percent of program participants are youth of color, and they attend the program an average of two and a half times per week during the school year and summer.

**Spokane**—BE GREAT: PREP is an umbrella strategy that incorporates targeted education support, leadership development, and post-secondary pathway exploration. The program is built on using regular engagement with mentors, evidence-based programs, case management and “prep checks” of each member’s academic standing to determine ongoing support. Programs and activities implemented so far include: Power Hour/Project Learn, SMART Moves, SMART Girls, Triple Play, Music Makers, Passport to Manhood, Stride Academy, Keystone Club, GU Mentoring Game and Smile Programs, and Lego League/Lego Robotics.

Students were identified through “prep checks” (checks either through the local schools via a data sharing agreement or by individual check-ins with students accessing their online Powerschool account) and through mentoring relationships with staff. The Club targeted middle school students in grades 6–8.

Participant Outcomes:

- All participants successfully advanced to the next grade level.
- During 2016 Summer Brain Gain, improved reading proficiency as measured by pre and post math and reading assessments:
  - Math Progression
    - Operations and Algebraic Thinking: 11 percent growth
    - Number and Operations in Base Ten: 10 percent growth
  - Reading Progression
    - Foundational Skills: 21 percent growth
    - Vocabulary Acquisition & Use: 1 percent growth

The Club has served 98 youth, 69 percent of whom qualified for school free/reduced price lunch. 34 percent of program participants are youth of color, and they attend the program an average of one and a half times per week during the school year and summer

**Tacoma**—The Boys & Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound partnered with Tacoma Public Schools to develop an innovative pilot program designed to reverse summer learning loss for students most at risk of falling behind. The project was designed for third grade students who qualified for free/reduced lunches and who were behind in their grade level. The classroom size remained small throughout the 5-week program, with a ratio of 5 to 10

students per teacher. The School District provided certified teachers trained in current curriculum to lead Summer Boost, provided lesson plans, and offered instruction to students for 2 hours each day. The Clubs provided additional enrichment programming and snacks/meals; participating students were able to stay at the Clubs the entire day and were invited to attend the Clubs for the duration of summer at no charge. This project adopted a “whole child” approach to help improve incoming 4th grade elementary students’ academic progress and social emotional outcomes.

#### Participant Outcomes:

- Improved math and reading skills as measured by pre- and post- math and reading assessments.
- The findings suggest that as a result of this program, over 93 percent of the students did not experience the typical “summer academic backslide,” and 41 percent of them made one year (or more) of literacy growth.
- It was observed that the treatment group students made significant improvement (increased by 6 points on a standardized measure) on social emotional wellbeing while the control group saw a decline (decreased by 2.5 points). Results also suggest that the proportion of high risk students with emotional or peer relationship problems in the treatment group decreased by 16 percent and 21percent respectively. And without the treatment, the control group’s social emotional wellbeing could be characterized as a “summer social emotional backslide.”
- The project was designed for third grade students who qualified for free/reduced lunches and who were behind in their grade level. All students were referred from local school teachers.

The Club served 45 youth, and they attended the program an average of four times per week during the summer.

**Vancouver**—Located onsite at the elementary school (grades k-5), the Vancouver program focused on mentoring, tutoring, and STEM opportunities. The intervention layers basic club programs with additional time for academic support and access to volunteer mentors. A targeted tutoring and mentoring program consists of STEM and literacy-based academic enrichment programming, daily homework assistance, and one-on-one or small group tutoring in specific content areas. During fall quarter, AIM students participated in a STEM Club that met once a week for eight weeks. Every week focused on a different STEM-related activity and cycled through each STEM component twice. The program also supported literacy with a popular “Sundae Reading” program, in which Club members earned a punch on their punch card for every book they read, either independently or with an adult. When members earned enough punches they could build an elaborate ice cream sundae.

Winter quarter, the Club shifted its approach to infuse STEM programming throughout the curriculum. In the gym rotation it ran a Young Olympians program that combined physical challenges with math activities such as measuring distance. In the Art Room, participants created sculptures using LEGO engineering concepts, and in the games room the Club offered a Kids Code Program. In the education room participants took part in science lessons and experiments. In January, the Club launched a “Bookworm Buddies” literacy tutoring program. Bookworm Buddies supports the reading curriculum children receive in school and is designed to build confident, lifelong readers. Adult volunteers are matched with participants who need extra assistance with reading. Pairs meet weekly for an hour to read and do literacy activities together.

This spring the site concentrated its STEM programming in the education room and tech lab. In addition to daily homework assistance and tutoring support, staff ran a Myth Busters science program, LEGO challenges, and Money Matters program.

Youth were selected to participate in the pilot program based on teacher referrals of youth who needed extra academic support. Additional spots were also filled based on staff observation of members’ academic needs, sibling/family relationships, and feedback from school staff.

#### Participant Outcomes:

- All participants successfully advanced to the next grade.
- Improved math and reading skills as measured by pre and post math and reading assessments:
  - The district iReady assessment tracks student progress using an individual growth model and predicts whether students are on track to meet end-of year benchmarks. The vast majority of our AIM participants made gains in reading and math scores, with 77 percent showing improvements in their reading level between fall and spring quarters and 93 percent showing improvement in math.
- Just one AIM participant was suspended during the 2015–16 school year. At the Club, staff has noted a steady decrease in Club-based referrals and behavior issues for AIM participants.

The Club has served 60 youth, 92 percent of whom qualified for school free/reduced price lunch. 70 percent of program participants are youth of color, and they attend the program an average of three times per week during the school year.



## Conclusion and Next Steps

The Academic, Innovation, and Mentoring (AIM) program has been successfully implemented by the Washington State Boys & Girls Clubs Association at five locations across the state. Through successful partnerships between local schools and Clubs, the AIM program is using research on evidence-based programs to provide high-quality programming to advance prosocial and academic outcomes. Analysis of data and anecdotal evidence from the different sites indicates that programs are achieving the desired results. The Club has effectively leveraged State and private funding to provide targeted programming to support low-income and struggling students. Grant-funded program activities will continue through the end of the pilot period, June 2017.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Washington State Boys & Girls Clubs Association—AIM Logic Model

NEED	INTERVENTION			RESULT
Problem	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
<p>K-12 academic support is critical to ensure success for struggling students, including economically disadvantaged, rural, and ethnically diverse youth who face systemic and individual barriers to academic success, whether it is by having students reading by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or high-school graduation.</p> <p>School, community, family and out-of- school connections are essential to foster the safe conducive learning experiences students need to ensure their academic success.</p>	<p>OSPI funding of \$125,000 and Club matching funding of \$108,250 to implement AIM at five clubs by serving 300 youth from September – June during out-of-school and summer hours. Targeted youth will be those who are identified as behind in school, those from economically disadvantaged circumstances, or those with special needs (ages 6–18).</p> <p>Professional BGC training to equip staff with tools necessary to implement AIM, including: data collection skills, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts &amp; Math (STEM) curriculum, High Yield Learning Activities (HYLA).</p> <p>Tools such as Stride Academy and Kahn Academy to increase learning opportunities as well as assess in real time students’ learning.</p> <p>Leveraged volunteers to provide mentoring services to students who are unlikely to succeed in high school or attend college.</p> <p>BGC and school staff to provide alignment with core curricula and school/Club collaborations. MOUs and data sharing agreements with</p>	<p>Club staff deliver AIM to struggling and economically disadvantaged youth through:</p> <p>1) Check n Connect case management, including mentoring and goal setting;</p> <p>2) Individual and small-group tutoring to help youth gain proficiency and to excel in needed subject areas;</p> <p>3) Summer learning loss prevention programs, including BGC of America’s new Summer Brain Gain curriculum;</p> <p>4) Regular implementation of high-yield activities and STEM activities (i.e. High-yield learning activities include leisure reading, writing activities, discussions with knowledgeable adults, games utilizing math skills, helping others, homework help and tutoring and games like Scrabble that develop young people’s cognitive skills);</p> <p>5) Targeted technology based learning, including</p>	<p>1. 300 students will complete participation in BGCWA AIM Program during the 2016–17 State Fiscal Year.</p> <p>2. <i>Competed participation includes Club attendance of 2 more times per week.</i></p>	<p><u>Short Term Outcomes</u></p> <p><b>AIM program participants will improve student achievement as measured by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving proficiency standards for their grade level on state standardized tests and Club administered assessments such as DIBELS</li> <li>2. Grade Advancement</li> <li>3. Improvement in school attendance</li> <li>4. Improvement in school behavior</li> <li>5. Improvement in school coursework – Grades and GPA</li> <li>6. Improvement in homework completion</li> <li>7. Pre/post evaluating change in participant perception of connectedness to adults as well as their own confidence in learning.</li> <li>8. Teacher feedback on student progress</li> </ol> <p><u>Long Term Outcomes</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Positive gains in attitude about school</li> <li>2. Greater number of students complete high school, gain employment, and earn college degrees</li> <li>3. Strategic partners (schools, Clubs and families) deepen their collaborative relationships that increase sharing of resources and data</li> <li>4. Increased connectedness to school</li> <li>5. Increased parent/family involvement in their child’s education</li> <li>6. Increased views among families that schools and Clubs are positive “hubs”</li> </ol>

NEED	INTERVENTION			RESULT
Problem	Inputs What we invest	Activities What we do	Outputs Direct products from Activities	Outcomes Changes in knowledge, skill, attitude, behavior or condition
<p>Effective summer academic support is essential to combat Summer-learning-loss which disproportionately affects economically disadvantaged youth and significantly inhibits grade progression and K-12 academic success.</p>	<p>schools will help facilitate this.</p> <p>BG Clubs uniquely provide safe, conducive learning environments for out-of-school hours.</p> <p>BGCWA Program Director support sites, report to OSPI, measure outcomes, monitor fidelity, and coordinate planning for ongoing improvement.</p> <p>These five sites will form the Cohort Committee responsible for best practice sharing, collaboration on program evaluation, and future suggestions on program replication.</p>	<p>Kahn Academy instruction and Stride Academy</p> <p>6) Family engagement &amp; outreach</p> <p>7) Youth recognition efforts</p> <p>8) Support of School, Family and Club Partnership</p> <p>9) Field trips, career exploration activities with emphasis on post-secondary education opportunities.</p>		<p>7. Increased belief that Clubs can play collaborative role with schools to ensure K–12 success</p> <p>8. Students independently pursue learning activities</p>

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