

Northeast Spokane Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER3) Funded Programs



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2021-22 Annual Report – Executive Summary

The ZoNE Project at the Northeast Spokane Community Center (NECCA) serves as the lead organization for a 21st Century Community Learning Center (21CCLC) program designed to increase learning opportunities in schools with a high percentage of students living in low-income families. During the 2021-2022 school year, the ZoNE received additional funding from the federal Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER3) program to offer expanded learning programming (ELP) in three additional schools – Bemiss Elementary, Stevens Elementary, and Whitman Elementary.

The 21CCLC/ESSER3 partnership includes enhanced resources for school sites with fewer resources to pay for additional instructors and instructional materials to add educational programming during non-school hours. In addition, the Spokane chapter of Communities in Schools (CIS) also plays a key role in the 21CCLC partnership by staffing each site with a coordinator and developing quality programming outside the school hours.

Despite pandemic-related uncertainties and shutdowns, the programming offered at ESSER sites reached a large number of students in year 2. Recorded participation included over 240 students and 1,309 participation days as shown below:

School	Students	Total Days Attended
Bemiss Elementary School	106	445
Stevens Elementary School	28	n/a
Whitman Elementary School	106	864
Total	240	1,309

ELP staff and contracted support provided a range of activities for participating students including tutoring and dedicated homework assistance, arts and music, and sports and recreation opportunities. Over the duration of this five-year effort, program administrators and staff have set goals to 1) improve student academic achievement, 2) better engage with parents and families, and 3) support student social-emotional learning. Based on an analysis of similar non-participating students (n=210) in neighborhood schools, we found progress in all three of these areas during Year 2.

- The percentage of students that met standard on the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) English Language Arts test was similar for both participating and comparison group students (35% v. 36%). A significantly greater percentage of ESSER3 students met standard on the math assessment, however, relative to comparison students (27% v. 19%).
- Families with a student participating in after school activities reported a weak connection to both their local school (85%) in a family survey at the conclusion of the school year. More work is needed to increase family engagement in year 3.

- While there was little difference in improved absence rates between participating students and students in the comparison group with chronic attendance issues. However, a lower percentage of ESSER3 participants had worse attendance (12% v 34%) during the 2021-2022 school year and 71% showed no significant changes in attendance between both years.

Despite ongoing challenges and the need to adjust to public health requirements, year 2 of the program helped firmly establish quality programming in the three ESSER3-funded sites. We will continue to track established measures in the program logic model and urge program stakeholders to consider shorter-term measures that are more likely to reflect the link between programming and student improvement. These measures could include:

- **Short-term academic assessments** –formative assessments (like STAR assessment) could be adopted to track student progress on a daily or weekly basis.
- **Functional behavior assessment** –ELP staff can work together with school teachers and administrators and contribute to functional behavioral assessments (MTSS plans) that identify problem behaviors and interventions to improve or eliminate those behaviors. Progress could be tracked for identified students where ELP staff are playing a role in behavioral supports.
- **Tailor SEL programming** – rather than track SEL progress in any domain, 21CCLC sites could choose to focus school year programming on one domain and assess student improvement in that particular domain at the end of the year.

Both summer and year 3 programming show improvements in both student participation, staff coordination and program management. In addition, a new student activity tracking attendance portal was implemented by the school district and will ensure participation records are consistent and complete. With this new system and other tools in place, we can provide fuller set of information and feedback to stakeholders with the goal of supporting program improvement in the years ahead.

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