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# Report to Ballmer Group

*The ZONE Expanded Learning Initiative –  
Year Two Outcomes*

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## Background

The ZONE serves as Northeast Spokane's collaborative hub—a collective impact initiative founded in 2017 through local neighborhood leadership and supported by the Northeast Community Center. Guided by residents, schools, and over 78 youth serving partner organizations, which is an increase from 50 partners in 2024, The ZONE ([thezonespokane.org](http://thezonespokane.org)) identifies and addresses disparities in education, health, and economic mobility through coordinated and community-informed strategies. As the backbone organization, The ZONE convenes partners, supports strategic alignment, and monitors shared outcomes.

[Ballmer Group](#) has supported collective impact initiatives through work at The ZONE since 2019. Ballmer Group funded Expanded Learning Initiative (ELI) started in 2024 and includes \$2.6 million in Ballmer Group funding that will be invested over the course of three years to support students and families served by The ZONE. This report shares outcomes for year two with a shared goal to:

“Increase access to quality community-based expanded learning programming and health/other services, to meet the diverse cultural, learning, and whole-child needs of Northeast Spokane students.”

Year Two (2024) of the ELI represented significant growth, with programming reaching **2,450 students** through partnerships with **12 community-based organizations**. This marks a substantial increase from Year One (2023), when 1,988 students were served by eight community-based partners, demonstrating an annual increase of approximately **23% more students served** and **50% growth in organizational partnerships**.

Throughout 2024, programming expanded both in scope and depth, integrating culturally responsive supports, academic enrichment, and wraparound services that responded directly to student and family needs. This report highlights key developments and impacts from Year Two with the following sections:

1. **Grantee Progress & Innovations** – Documenting how partner organizations adapted, scaled, or enhanced programming in 2024.
2. **Program Activity and Results** – Capturing quantitative metrics and qualitative insights that reflect student participation and engagement.
3. **Student Characteristics and Outcomes** – Summarizing participation trends, equity measures, academic and social-emotional indicators, and related student outcomes.
4. **Family Engagement** – Highlighting family-centered activities, outreach strategies, and impacts on school–community connections.

As the initiative advances, this Year Two report provides a foundation for ongoing expansion, reinforcing how coordinated collective action through The ZONE is improving opportunity and supporting impactful outcomes for youth and families in Northeast Spokane.

## SECTION 1 – Grantee Programs

Section 1 highlights the diverse ways Ballmer Group-funded grantees are expanding opportunities for youth in Northeast Spokane. Each organization brings its own mission, strengths to their efforts, working together to create safe, enriching spaces for students and families. These profiles showcase how partners are building skills, fostering belonging, and providing meaningful learning experiences before, after, and beyond the school day. Collectively, their work demonstrates the power of a coordinated community effort to nurture the whole child and strengthen neighborhood support systems.

Grantee organizations are presented in alphabetical order with additional program data for each organization provided in Section 2.

### College Success Foundation (CSF)

College Success Foundation ([www.collegesuccessfoundation.org](http://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org)) is a statewide nonprofit dedicated to increasing college access and completion for underserved students. Operating within Spokane Public Schools, CSF delivers comprehensive college and career readiness programming through a schoolwide model that combines universal outreach with targeted support for students who may face greater barriers to postsecondary success.

During the 2024–25 school year, CSF embedded full-time advisors in each of Spokane’s five comprehensive high schools—Ferris, Lewis & Clark, North Central, Rogers, and Shadle Park. Advisors worked closely with students in grades 9–12 to provide college exploration opportunities, admissions support, financial aid guidance, and transition planning. While services are available to all students, CSF intentionally focuses efforts on students who are first-generation college-goers, low-income, or historically underrepresented in higher education. This approach, known as “targeted universalism,” ensures equitable access to resources while recognizing and addressing the varying needs of individual students.

### Girls on the Run – Spokane County

Girls on the Run Spokane County (<https://www.gotrspokane.org>), an affiliate of Girls on the Run International, launched programming in Northeast Spokane through the Expanded Learning Initiative in 2024. Founded in 2014, this evidence-based nonprofit utilizes a unique curriculum combining physical activity, social-emotional learning, and mentorship to empower youth and build resilience, confidence, and community connection. Each eight-week session is intentionally non-competitive, structured around interactive games, social-emotional learnings and movement. The year-end event, a celebratory community 5K, allows participants to showcase their progress and achievements, alongside completing youth-driven service projects such as bake sales, clothing drives, or community awareness events.

In the 2024–2025 school year, Girls on the Run served approximately 245 girls across 11 elementary schools and one middle school, including Logan Elementary and a range of sites across Spokane Public Schools and neighboring districts. Program accessibility and equity was a priority, with 91% of participants receiving financial assistance through partial or full scholarships, and more than 60 girls provided new running shoes to ensure full participation. Additionally, the organization’s summer camp program significantly expanded,

offering five week-long sessions hosted in local church facilities, serving many students from non-traditional educational backgrounds.

The organization has proactively adapted to address accessibility, gender inclusivity, and disability accommodations, reflecting broader shifts toward greater equity and responsiveness to community needs. Coaches receive specialized training to support diverse student populations effectively. Post-program surveys indicate strong satisfaction and positive impacts, with 78% of caregivers reporting increased connections with their child, and participant attendance consistently averaging around 89%. Girls on the Run Spokane County remains dedicated to navigating financial sustainability while maintaining its core mission of empowering youth through a supportive, inclusive, and community-focused approach.

### **Girl Scouts of the Inland Northwest**

Girl Scouts of the Inland Northwest (<https://www.gsewni.org>), covering Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho, significantly expanded their summer and school-year programming through the Expanded Learning Initiative in 2024. The cornerstone of their summer offerings was the Go-Getters Summer Day Camp, an engaging and accessible eight-week program (expanding from five weeks in 2023). The day camps provided well-rounded experiences in leadership, outdoor adventure, and STEM-focused activities. Girls participated in urban hikes, rock climbing, tree planting, robotics, and interactive STEM challenges. Camps operated Monday through Thursday, offering full days with meals, snacks, and transportation at no cost to families, addressing barriers such as sibling care, cost, and transportation.

The Go-Getters school year program also provides financial and family support to launch Girl Scout troops to increase participation for girls in underrepresented communities. The annual cookie sale is at the heart of all Girl Scout programs. GoGetters sold over 17,000 boxes of cookies combined and participated in over 150 hours selling cookies at booths, whether they were girls selling solo or as a group. Proceeds from cookie sales help fund the program.

During the school year, Girl Scouts of the Inland Northwest also piloted an innovative in-school facilitator model and was selected by Girl Scouts USA as one of 14 pilot programs nationwide. Launched at Cooper Elementary and expanding to Regal and Logan Elementary schools, this program leverages partnerships with Communities in Schools and teachers to deliver integrated, curriculum-aligned programming. Weekly activities are structured around Girl Scouts' four leadership pillars: life skills, STEM education, entrepreneurship, and outdoor adventure, alongside critical wellness topics such as healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and financial literacy. Looking ahead, Girl Scouts continues to expand their outreach, aiming to increase end-of-year recruitment, deepen partnerships with Spokane Public Schools, and extend their innovative in-school and summer programming models.

### **Gonzaga University Tribal Relations & Native Education Programming**

Gonzaga's **Office of Tribal Relations** serves to foster meaningful cultural engagement and honor the identities of Native students on campus. Rooted in the university's Jesuit mission, the office works through relationship-building and dialogue to strengthen connections with

tribal communities, support cultural presence, and educate non-Native members about Indigenous history and perspectives. It also maintains **sčintx™ (the Native American Cultural Center, or “The House”)**, providing Native students with a space for community, ceremonies, and shared support.

Through the Expanded Learning Initiative in 2024, Gonzaga University Tribal Relations deepened its partnership with Spokane Public Schools' Native Education program, hosting two high school Preview Days tailored to Native students. The fall event welcomed **49 students** to campus for financial aid workshops, admissions guidance, tours, and engagement with Gonzaga students; the spring session included **32 additional students** in programming centered on the university's Native House and pathways to higher education. These events enhanced student awareness of college opportunities while reinforcing cultural identity and connections.

Additionally, Gonzaga's collaboration with Spokane Public Schools has enriched cultural awareness and inclusiveness within the school district, exemplified by student-led initiatives such as the creation of a professional land acknowledgment video at North Central High School. This powerful student-led project outlined historical impacts, responsibilities, and recommended actions for both schools and community organizations alike. Gonzaga continues to serve as a pivotal partner, fostering educational aspirations and cultural pride among Native youth in Northeast Spokane.

### **If You Could Save Just One**

If You Could Save Just One ([ifyoucouldsavejustone.org](https://ifyoucouldsavejustone.org)) is a grassroots organization launched in 2019 with the mission of providing a safe, nurturing, and accepting after-school environment for youth in Northeast Spokane. The organization operates with a clubhouse model and offers dedicated space for recreation, games, music, and artwork through programmed activity and compassionate, trauma-informed mentoring.

Throughout the past year, Just One continued its rotating programs, offering essential after-school and summer support. Structured monthly activities included experiences in recreation, art, music exploration, and engaging food-related games. Academic support remained a key component of the Just One approach, ensuring homework assistance and tutoring opportunities were available to students needing help.

Community engagement extended beyond the Just One clubhouse through memorable field trips to local attractions such as movie theaters, trampoline parks, thrift stores, and ice cream stores, fostering meaningful community connections and new experiences for the students. Special initiatives, including the distribution of 650 "program in a bag" packages filled with meals and interactive projects, and a substantial December holiday effort that provided 10-15 gifts each to approximately 350 students, highlighted Just One's meaningful commitment to youth.

In recent years, leaders at Just One have worked hard to build staff competency in behavioral health support in programming. Staff training in mental health first aid, motivational interviewing, relationship-building, and de-escalation strategies were offered

this year. Strategic collaborations are also strengthening organizational capacity. Partnerships for additional staffing support with Gonzaga Family Haven (a transitional living facility) are taking place. Preliminary discussions with Big Brothers-Big Sisters Inland Northwest for additional mentoring have also occurred. With a newly awarded five-year capacity-building grant from the Empire Health Foundation, now named Waters Meet Foundation, and discussions underway for a dedicated facility in partnership with a local church, Just One is strategically positioned for ongoing growth and significant impact in Northeast Spokane.

## Manzanita House

Manzanita House ([manzanitahousespokane.org](https://manzanitahousespokane.org)) is a community-based nonprofit dedicated to creating inclusive spaces “rooted in welcome,” where immigrants and refugees can fully participate in Spokane’s civic, cultural, and social life. The organization continues to provide vital services—such as legal support for unaccompanied minors, resource navigation, and community power-building workshops and its youth programs have grown to become a vibrant pillar of its mission. Through heritage language instruction, recreational activities, and culturally affirming events, Manzanita House fosters belonging and strengthens intergenerational connections for newcomer families.

In 2024, Manzanita House expanded its Heritage Language Programs at the Northeast Community Center, offering weekly Dari and Arabic sessions and piloting an eight-week Spanish class for Latinx youth. These programs, complemented by summer heritage camps, emphasized conversational fluency, cultural pride, and family participation—often culminating in community meals and celebratory park gatherings.

Beyond classroom programming, Manzanita House deepened community connection through youth sports and family recreation nights, including an Afghan family coed volleyball program that regularly draws 50 participants, and a spring youth cricket league supported by Launch Northwest. These initiatives, combined with Tea and Cafecito family sessions and culturally appropriate wraparound support, create safe spaces for youth to learn, socialize, and connect.

Despite shifts in state and federal immigrant funding, Manzanita House adapted by consolidating youth offerings under its **Community Power Building** umbrella, enabling nimble programming responsive to community feedback. The approach continues to generate “ripple effects” in Northeast Spokane, strengthening trust, growing peer networks, and uplifting immigrant families with a sense of pride and belonging.

## Refugee Immigrant Connections Spokane – Kids Connect Program

Refugee Immigrant Connections Spokane (RICS - <https://www.ricspokane.org>) **Kids Connect Program** provides safe, welcoming after-school and summer programming for refugee and immigrant youth across five Northeast Spokane sites: Hutton Elementary, Summit Southside, Logan Elementary, Hillyard Library, and North Central High School. Programming is designed to support academic, social-emotional, and physical growth for students who often face barriers to traditional extracurricular activities. Kids Connect begins each session with check-ins over snacks, providing a structured time for relationship-building and



emotional support, followed by creative projects, storytelling, and hands-on learning activities. Each session concludes with active play like soccer, four-square, jump rope, and volleyball—helping students build friendships and confidence in an environment that celebrates their diverse backgrounds.

In 2024, RICS enhanced family engagement and cross-site collaboration with a conscious decision to expand summer programming hours. Field trips and summer experiences—including park visits to Bowl & Pitcher, Palisades, and People’s Park, a private Mobius Museum evening for 30 students and families, and the launch of a new soccer camp with Thrive International—created shared experiences for students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These moments are especially meaningful for youth who may be experiencing Spokane’s outdoor spaces or community resources for the first time, creating connection and often leading youth to return with their families.

Beyond enrichment, RICS focuses on building trust and belonging within the refugee and immigrant community. Staff report that a key measure of impact is when students invite friends to participate, demonstrating comfort and security. Strategic partnerships with Second Harvest, the Lands Council, and Gonzaga University student volunteers help RICS extend its reach and provide holistic support. By combining cultural responsiveness, family engagement, and creative programming, RICS continues to expand opportunities for Northeast Spokane youth to feel seen, supported, and empowered.

*“Everyone belongs somewhere, let it be here.”*

### **Slingshot – Youth Mentorship and Postsecondary Coaching**

Slingshot ([www.helloslingshot.org](http://www.helloslingshot.org)), founded in 2021 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, is a Spokane-based nonprofit dedicated to helping youth—particularly high school students and recent graduates—discover their potential and navigate postsecondary pathways. The organization’s mission is “coaching purposeful direction” and whole-person development, equipping students with the **IDEAS Framework** (Identity, Discovery, Exploration, Adaptability, and Service) to guide academic, career, and life decisions. In 2024–2025, Slingshot engaged more than **3,000 students across seven regional high schools**, deepening its work in Spokane Public Schools, East and West Valley, Riverside, Mt. Spokane, and Lumen High School.

Slingshot operates on a **tiered coaching model** that blends universal outreach with high-touch mentorship:

- **Tier 1: Universal Touch** – Schoolwide College and Career Readiness (CCR) lessons integrated into advisory periods, giving all students exposure to postsecondary planning concepts.
- **Tier 2: Group Coaching** – Focused workshops, mock interviews, and field trips to colleges, apprenticeship centers, and employers, engaging students most ready for deeper exploration.

- **Tier 3: Individual Coaching** – One-on-one sessions for juniors and seniors, guiding students through FAFSA and scholarship applications, postsecondary enrollment, apprenticeships, work-based training (including lifeguard certification), and personal goal-setting.

The program’s impact is centered around relationships and collaboration. Slingshot staff work side-by-side with school counselors, College Success Foundation teams, and Communities in Schools to ensure that each student’s “village of support” is aligned and effective. At Rogers High School, for example, the program director supports seniors across all pathways—including Multilingual Learners (MLL) and Special Education (SPED) cohorts—while mentoring student leaders in Associated Student Body (ASB), Leadership Summits, and The Academy’s flexible learning program. This relational and flexible model continues to show promise in re-engaging students, increasing confidence, and preparing youth for life beyond high school.

### **Spark Central – STAR Program**

Spark Central (<https://spark-central.org>), now led by a new Executive Director, continues to advance its mission of empowering youth through arts, literacy, and mentorship with its **STAR (Storytelling, Teaching Artists, Arts Integration, Resilience) Program** (formerly Level Up). This off-site educational initiative provides creative, low-barrier learning experiences for students and families in Spokane’s West Central neighborhood and in schools that feed into Northeast Yasuhara Middle School. Programming spans school-day arts integration, after-school literacy and storytelling sessions, and summer opportunities hosted at sites such as Holmes, Garfield, and Audubon Elementary Schools, the NATIVE Project, and West Central Community Center.

In 2024, Spark Central deepened community partnerships with River City Youth Ops, Side by Side, Growing Neighbors, Spokane Parks & Recreation, Catholic Charities Food for All, and Spokane Public Schools. These collaborations support a multi-layered approach:

- **Classroom integration** of arts and literacy to build creative and academic confidence
- **After-school and summer STAR programming** with storytelling, digital media, and STEAM activities
- **Community engagement** through field trips, mentorship, and family-inclusive events

Looking ahead, Spark Central is exploring the development of a youth-focused community hub in West Central, potentially located at the current Community School building. Plans to reinstate quarterly community conversations alongside PTO/PTA meetings and increased student and caregiver feedback will ensure programming remains inclusive, responsive, and reflective of neighborhood priorities. Through its evolving STAR model, Spark Central continues to strengthen student voice, community belonging, and creative learning pathways in alignment with The ZONE’s Expanded Learning Initiative.

*“creativity, innovation, and imagination”*



## SWAG – Strong Women Achieving Greatness

Strong Women Achieving Greatness (SWAG –

<https://www.strongwomenachievinggreatness.com>), fiscally sponsored by Raze, continues to empower young women in Spokane through its **Preparing for Greatness** program. The initiative provides safe, supportive learning spaces where participants explore self-awareness, trauma-informed healing, leadership, and equity in education. Throughout the 2024–2025 program year, SWAG hosted a series of thematic empowerment events—such as **“You Deserve Good,” “You Deserve Self-Care,”** and **“You Deserve Roses”**—that combined guest speakers, creative activities, and social-emotional learning. Highlights included an October series led by author and keynote Kiantha Duncan, a self-care luncheon with female wellness kits, and a Valentine’s celebration delivering roses and affirmations to over 60 participants.

SWAG also expanded leadership opportunities and experiential learning for its members. Students participated in **Spokane’s Equity Summit** and cultural excursions, such as attending the Broadway show *Come From Away* followed by a visit to Felts Field to explore aviation careers. The program supported selected students on educational and cultural travel experiences, including civil rights tours in Alabama and national competitions in Indianapolis. Through these diverse and intentional activities, SWAG continues to foster confidence, resilience, and leadership in young women across Spokane.

*“equipping young women today for a better tomorrow”*

## Summer

KSPS PBS hosted **four free summer camps** in 2024, including PBS favorites like Ready Jet Go! and Scratch Jr and KSPS-developed programs such as **Game Quest** and **Video Production Camp**. Camps served students in grades 1–7, providing free transportation support, meals, and backpacks with educational resources to remove barriers to participation. Through project-based learning in coding, engineering, and media production, students built creative skills, engaged in hands-on exploration, and shared final projects with their families.

The **Northeast Youth Center** provided a 10-week full-day **Summer Camp Program** for 72 elementary students from across Spokane County, ages 5–11, with 89% qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Funding from The ZONE supported daily field trips—ranging from museums and libraries to hiking, paddle boarding, roller skating, and splash pads—ensuring students had a safe, fun, and enriching summer experience. NEYC emphasized accessible, affordable programming by offering scholarships to 21 families and plans to expand capacity with an additional classroom to serve even more youth next summer.

## SECTION 2 – Program Activity and Results

As demonstrated in Section 1, this Ballmer-funded cohort is working to collectively advance expanded learning opportunities for students in Northeast Spokane, each in ways that reflect their unique missions, capacities and service population. Some of these organizations are well-established community anchors with deep local and statewide networks, while others are newer, grassroots programs embedded in the neighborhoods they serve. Together, they create a dynamic ecosystem of support that reaches students outside of traditional school hours, integrating academic enrichment, social-emotional growth, mentorship, and family engagement.

This section presents self-reported program outcomes—capturing both quantitative metrics and qualitative insights—to illustrate the tangible impact of this work. These outcomes include student participation numbers, descriptions of program activities, voices and photos from participants and families that bring the data to life. The need for student privacy and restrictions on record sharing among populations like refugee and immigrant families makes these qualitative insights even more important when sharing positive results for youth and their communities. In a collective impact framework like The ZONE, these coordinated efforts represent tangible investments in two-generation programming and youth development, demonstrating how diverse organizations can work in alignment to expand opportunity and foster a sense of belonging in Northeast Spokane.

### College Success Foundation (CSF)

From September 2024 through June 2025, CSF engaged 3,611 students across 204 activities, offering a continuum of college and career readiness support. These efforts included college and career workshops, structured help sessions, one-on-one advising, and a blend of in-person and virtual campus visits. CSF's embedded advisors maintained a dual focus: school-wide access for all students, and tailored support for those facing systemic barriers. The equity-centered reach is clear, with 48% of participants identifying as students of color, 70% qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, and 53% identifying as first-generation college students.

One of the year's most impactful moments was CSF–Spokane's 10th annual [College Signing Day](#), held on May 13, 2025, at Gonzaga University. More than 150 high school seniors gathered with families, mentors, and community partners to celebrate their college acceptances. Students also signed college banners, received College Ready Packs (including supplies and a \$50 gift card), and selected attendees were awarded \$500 scholarships College Success Foundation. One senior captured it best, "College Signing Day means so much — every student should have this type of celebration!... It makes you super excited for what comes next"



An end-of-year CSF survey illustrates the programs impact in deepening postsecondary readiness and building community momentum. Over 90% of surveyed students rated CSF services as “good” to “very good,” and over 80% reported increased knowledge of college and career planning. CSF provides both academic support and assistance with the transition to postsecondary pathways, helping students confidently plan and follow through on their college goal.

### Girls on the Run – Spokane County

In 2024, Girls on the Run Spokane County (GOTR) served approximately **240 girls** across 12 school sites, emphasizing confidence-building, social-emotional learning, and community connection. Survey data and caregiver feedback indicate that the program’s greatest impact extends beyond physical activity into meaningful growth in social skills, emotional resilience, and family engagement.

Key outcomes from the [Spring 2024 End-of-Season Survey](#) include:

- **78% of caregivers** reported an **increased connection** with their child because of the program.
- Participants consistently reported **feeling supported and included**, with high agreement that teammates encouraged them and that coaches cared about their well-being.
- Caregivers also observed improved **confidence and stress management**, with 89% *reporting that their child was more confident* and better able to handle challenges after the season.
- Participants shared that they learned to **believe in themselves, support friends, and embrace differences**, highlighting the program’s emphasis on social-emotional growth.

## For every girl

Girls on the Run offers programs designed to inspire girls of all abilities to recognize and embrace their inner strength and make meaningful connections with others.

Trained coaches use physical activity and dynamic discussions to build social, emotional and physical skills while encouraging healthy habits for life.

In today's unpredictable world, the strategies learned at Girls on the Run are more important than ever.

[📍 Learn More](#)



The **Spring 5K** served as the culminating event for families and participants, drawing **over 600 spectators** and engaging parents as running buddies and volunteers, further reinforcing community bonds.

- *“The most important thing I learned at Girls on the Run is that even if I think I can’t do it, I can. I just need to believe in myself.”* – GOTR participant
- *“I learned that I am brave enough to try new things, even if I feel nervous.”* – GOTR participant
- *“I learned how to be a good teammate and encourage others.”* – GOTR participant
- *“She has more confidence and believes she can do hard things.”* – GOTR caregiver

In its tenth year, GOTR Spokane County continues to demonstrate how mentoring, peer support, and family-oriented physical activities contribute to the social-emotional well-being of youth in Northeast Spokane, aligning with The ZONE’s Expanded Learning goals.

## Girl Scouts of the Inland Northwest

The Go-Getters summer and school-year programs provided an engaging, inclusive, and skill-building experience for girls across Northeast Spokane, combining leadership, outdoor adventure, and social-emotional growth. In 2024, participants collectively **sold 17,000 boxes of cookies**, logged **over 150 hours of booth sales**, and contributed **500 boxes** to the Troop to Troop program for overseas military members, with unsold cookies donated to Ronald McDonald House by older Girl Scouts. These activities provided not only real-world entrepreneurial experience but also fostered teamwork, community connection, and a sense of purpose.

End of year survey results highlight the program’s meaningful social-behavioral outcomes:

- **100% of girls** reported learning **new skills**.
- **93% of participants** felt the program helped them become **more helpful and considerate toward others**.



- Average self-reported **skills development** scored **4.6/5**, and **sense of belonging** averaged **4.7/5**.
- **93% of caregivers** said it was a **positive experience** for their child.

Caregivers consistently noted growth in confidence, communication, and social skills, with parent writing:

- *“My daughter gained confidence speaking up and trying new things. She is more willing to take the lead in group activities now.”*
- *“She came home excited every day and told us stories about making new friends and helping others—this program brought her out of her shell.”*

Participants reflected:

- *“I learned that I can do hard things and be a leader, even when I’m nervous.”*
- *“I discovered that I like helping younger girls and that I’m actually good at teaching them new things.”*

The Go-Getters program also created opportunities for family engagement. Many caregivers attended cookie booths, summer camp events, and troop activities, reinforcing the program’s emphasis on community connection. Parents emphasized that the program gave their daughters a safe and fun space to build friendships, develop life skills, and grow into confident leaders.



## If You Could Save Just One

Founded in 2019, If You Could Save Just One (Just One) is a grassroots, community-based program providing a safe, nurturing, and accepting space for youth in Northeast Spokane. Operating out of a converted garage turned drop-in center, Just One offers a variety of hands-on, creative, and skill-building activities such as art, music, gardening, cosmetology, cooking, and games. The activities are designed to engage youth and help them decompress after the school day. The program has grown to serve 150 to over 200 youth each month, creating an environment where kids can “chill, learn, and grow” while forming meaningful connections with caring adults.

The organization’s mission is captured in the founder’s words:

*At If You Could Save Just One, we recognize that youth don’t leave their emotions or experiences at the school doors—they often carry the weight of their day into our spaces. Many of the kids we serve come straight from school still dealing with conflict, anxiety, or trauma, and they need time and a safe environment to decompress and just be kids again.*

*For some, we’re not just an after-school program—we’re their only source of dinner, mentorship, and safety. Violence and risky situations tend to escalate during those critical after-school hours, and that’s exactly why our presence matters. We offer more than just activities—we offer consistent, caring adults and a peaceful space where kids can feel seen, heard, and supported.*

*Investing in safe, structured environments filled with trusted adults is one of the strongest tools we have for violence prevention and community healing*

Testimonials from both participants and family members reflect Just One’s impact:

- *“I finally have a place where I feel safe and welcome every day after school.”*
- *“My child has grown more confident and happy because of the love and support they get here.”*
- *“This program gives our kids a positive place to go and keeps them away from trouble.”*

Through consistent engagement, trauma-informed mentoring, and enriching activities, Just One not only prevents risky behaviors during critical after-school hours but also fosters resilience, belonging, and community healing for the youth of Northeast Spokane.



## Manzanita House

Manzanita House continues to build safe, inclusive spaces where immigrant and refugee youth and families can thrive. Its Heritage Language Programs in Arabic, Dari, and Spanish foster pride, belonging, and intergenerational connection, while summer sessions provide enrichment and opportunities for new families to engage. Through cultural programs, Tea Times, and home visits, Manzanita House strengthens social networks, emotional well-being, and community resilience for Northeast Spokane families.

### Key Outcomes & Impact Highlights

- **116 children** participated in heritage language programs: 33 Arabic, 55 Dari, 28 Spanish.
- **31 youth** participated in Summer 2024 programs, with **22 new students** ages 6–13 from first- or second-generation families.
- Families represented **13+ countries**: Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Sudan, and more.
- Programs focus on **social-emotional growth, cultural pride, and family connection**, creating ripple effects of trust in schools and the community.

In 2024, Manzanita House demonstrated that language and community programs are powerful tools for resilience, belonging, and cultural pride. Through culturally responsive programming and trusted relationships, the organization continues to create safe, inclusive spaces where youth and families can thrive in Spokane. Case studies presented below (provided with permission) speak to program impact at a personal/family level:

#### Case Study 1 – Bilingual Spanish Homeschool Family

*“There are not enough words to express our gratitude to Manzanita House for all the work, dedication, and support in offering Spanish classes to children in our community. As a bilingual homeschool family, these classes have given my children the opportunity to speak, learn, and make friends in their heritage language. This program is an invaluable contribution to our community and to my children’s education.”*

– Fabi H., Parent of Three

This family’s three children, ages 7 to 12, have been part of the Spanish heritage language program since its pilot. Each child engages with the class in their own way—whether using Spanish in math lessons or sharing what they’ve learned with peers and adults during Tea Times. The program reinforces pride in their heritage and strengthens family and peer connections in a supportive, community-based setting.

## Case Study 2 – Arabic and Dari Family Connections

(Adolescent participant) was raised in Turkey. As such he didn't get the chance to learn Dari as a child and was more comfortable speaking Turkish. When first meeting our Dari teacher he communicated with her in Turkish rather than Dari or English. The Dari class is now giving him a chance to connect with his heritage in a third country outside of Afghanistan. Additionally, being a teen and wanting to use Dari in his daily life, our language teacher created a group chat with another teenager in the class so that they could use their language skills in a typical manner used by teenagers. Therefore, relating the language to their daily/social lives.

On only our second lesson together I prepared an activity to talk about our dreams. (Participant) shared four dreams; To have work, to see her mother, to have a car, and to have a house. When we asked her to talk aloud on those dreams particularly about her mother, she burst into tears and shared that she hadn't seen her mother in 14 years. That is a big thing to share, and particularly to feel comfortable crying in front of me, who was practically a stranger to her. I truly believe that the space we have created has fostered a sense of community and support that inspires these levels of trust. In addition, in her discussing her dreams, another woman was able to talk on how her mother had died while she was working on getting a travel permit to see her. Such heavy topics but they brought together these women, and in supporting them and their emotions we can support their families. In discussing emotions in a healthy way, we are modeling healthy communication for families

## Refugee Immigrant Connections Spokane (RICS) – Kids Connect Program

RICS Kids Connect provides safe, supportive after-school and summer programs for refugee and immigrant youth across five Northeast Spokane sites. Students begin with check-ins over snacks, followed by creative projects, storytelling, and games, and end each session with active play like soccer, four-square, and volleyball. The program focuses on social-emotional development, cultural pride, and connection, helping students build friendships and confidence.

### Key Outcomes & Highlights

- **66 youth** actively engaged per month; **700+ youth reached** through check-ins, activity kits, and family engagement.
- **96%** of participants reported feeling **less isolated and more connected**.
- **81%** reported **learning new skills and gaining confidence**.
- **73%** demonstrated increased **social-emotional skills**, and **77%** showed **greater pride in family culture and language**.

### Summer Highlights:

- Field trips to Bowl & Pitcher, Palisades, and People's Park gave 30+ students first-time experiences in local outdoor spaces, inspiring them to return with their families.
- A new soccer camp, also with more than 30 students, united students from all program sites, with each receiving a soccer ball, water bottle, and backpack.



## Slingshot

Slingshot, now in the fourth year of operation, empowers youth in Northeast Spokane to discover their purpose and navigate postsecondary pathways through its IDEAS Framework—Identity, Discovery, Exploration, Adaptability, and Service. Programming blends schoolwide College & Career Readiness (CCR) lessons, small-group workshops, and one-on-one coaching. By combining academic planning, life skills, and mentorship, Slingshot equips students to envision their future and take concrete steps toward college, career, or technical training.

### 2024-25 Outcomes Summary

- **286 youth** engaged in school-year programming across seven high schools.
- **84 students** participated in summer programs focused on academic and career readiness.
- **31 college freshmen** supported through Familia Sumas mentoring and resource connection.
- **28 rising seniors** and families attended Rogers' *Soon to Be Senior Night*; **25 left with college fully funded**

Slingshot programs emphasize the importance of a growth mindset with the core idea that young adults should navigate life on a nonlinear, winding path, experimenting with interests, careers, and education before reaching purposeful direction. This journey is not a failure—it's a normal developmental process where exploration and real-world experiences lead to clarity about personal goals and meaning. In addition, supportive adults, like mentors in Slingshot programs, help youth reflect on experiences and connect them to emerging career and life goals. The end goal is not a single career choice, but confidence and clarity in navigating opportunities, making decisions, and adapting to change. Programs like Slingshot integrate self-reflection, hands-on experiences, and guided mentorship to move youth from uncertainty to purpose-driven planning.

## Slingshot Youth

**STEM Exploration** Two Rogers juniors were selected to participate in an eight-week cancer research internship at a national university. Slingshot prepared them for independent travel, dorm living, and communication with program coordinators, while supporting their families throughout the experience. Both students returned with newfound confidence and earned stipends, providing experiences they will highlight in college essays and scholarship applications.

**Scholarship Success** One high school senior attended Slingshot's *Crushing the Common App* workshop and received individualized coaching on applications and essays. With this support, the student earned a full-ride scholarship to a local university and more than \$30,000 in additional scholarships, illustrating how targeted guidance and encouragement can transform opportunities for motivated youth

**Career Pathway Development** Two seniors enrolled in a flexible learning program at Rogers explored careers in early learning and education with Slingshot's guidance. They completed eight-week internships in a district-sponsored preschool program, gaining hands-on experience and developing professional skills. Both students are now enrolled at a local community college to continue pursuing early childhood and elementary education pathways.



## Spark Central

Spark Central continues to serve as a creative hub in Spokane, empowering youth through arts, storytelling, and literacy-focused programming. During the 2024–2025 program year, Spark Central engaged children and families through a blend of school-based arts integration, after-school enrichment, and community events such as Spark-O-Ween, Elves Workshop, and Bloom Together. Across these initiatives, **over 2.900 youth and community members** participated, with 55 unique days of creative learning and engagement-oriented events. The Level Up Program reached schools like **Holmes, Garfield, and Audubon**, with over 2,800 hours of engagement bringing free, inclusive activities to West Central and other neighborhoods.

## A REVIEW OF LEVEL UP



BY SAPPHIRE  
Grade 4 // Holmes

Level Up is a club where we investigate things and make a newspaper (after winter break we get to make an art magazine!). Mx Terra leads Level Up at Holmes

and she is very kind. There are also nice mentors to help us with investigating and writing. We have Level Up on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays after school. Every kid in the club is very nice. We meet in the lunch room from 3-5pm. One of our leaders left this fall but then

my friend's dad, Nova, became a mentor, which was very exciting.

When I asked a Spark Central employee why we have Level Up at our schools instead of at Spark Central station over in Kendall Yards they said, "We started Level Up in local schools that had few resources because it is our mission to break barriers to creativity and one big barrier for people was distance. Not everyone is able to drive or walk to Spark Central on the regular, so we worked with Spokane Public Schools and got a Memorandum Of Understanding. That means we get to make this club happen right where you future journalists and artists are, at your schools." I know I am glad this club is at my school. They use attention grabbers like when a leader yells "Heads Up!" we yell "Level Up!" and know to listen up. Then we get to do interviews, we play fun games, and get to do activities to help other

club members with their investigations, like Magnet Fishing!

Something new I learned in Level Up Club was what it is like to be a makeup artist. We interviewed Duck E., whose regular job is as a librarian but when she is not doing that she also gets paid to be Duck E., an artistic clown performer. She even makes balloon animals! Another thing I learned at Level Up is how to be nice and share with others. We used kitchen products to make our own makeup and another day we used makeup samples to design makeup looks.

We learned about other things too but I liked the makeup stuff a lot. They try to make it so we investigate things we care about. I would recommend Level Up because I learn so much and everyone in it is very kind. Ten out of ten!

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55240ca5e4b0ef65b027bcb8/t/683a35a96529c705532d3580/1748645345933/WCE\\_Winter2025.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55240ca5e4b0ef65b027bcb8/t/683a35a96529c705532d3580/1748645345933/WCE_Winter2025.pdf)

Spark Central-sponsored experiences foster social-emotional growth, confidence, and creative problem-solving while reducing barriers to participation by offering programs at no cost and in community-based settings. Parents and teachers report that students leave sessions more confident and excited to share their ideas, and community events strengthen local connections among families, schools, and neighborhood partners.

My favorite thing about working with afterschool kids and volunteers has been watching their creative confidence grow. Because we get to serve the same kids throughout the school year with a consistent base of volunteers, we get to see the Day One jitters turn into Last Day expertise. People who were shy and didn't want to share their work lit up when they saw their work published in the *West Central Express*! Kids who were scared to speak in front of the group bravely read their articles and shared their art at our publication parties. It's such a treasure to watch everyone grow. – Leah, Director of Program Operations

## SWAG – Strong Women Achieving Greatness

Strong Women Achieving Greatness (SWAG) continues to create a mentoring community for young women at Rogers High School, connecting students to role models and real-world skills that support their academic and personal growth. Through Preparing for Greatness sessions, local entrepreneurs, educators, mental health professionals, and community leaders engage students in discussions on self-regulation, goal-setting, and resilience. In 2024–2025, program participants explored strategies for self-regulation, an essential skill for managing emotions, behaviors, and academic performance. Post-event surveys revealed that

- ✓ 100% of participants rated SWAG as helpful or extremely helpful,
- ✓ 91% understood the importance of self-regulation, and
- ✓ 75% gained new tools to practice these skills.

Students consistently express how meaningful the program is to them. One participant wrote, “I love this program. We need this to continue,” while another shared, “SWAG tells me a lot about everything.” Feedback reflects the program’s ability to foster confidence, accountability, and empathy, empowering young women of color to see themselves as future leaders. By connecting students to caring adults and equipping them with life skills, SWAG is building the next generation of leaders who are prepared to thrive beyond high school with a strong sense of self and community.





## SECTION 3 – Participant Characteristics and Outcomes

The ZONE Expanded Learning Initiative is designed to increase access to high-quality, community-based expanded learning programs that meet the diverse cultural, learning, and whole-child needs of Northeast Spokane students. In Year Two, the initiative continued to focus on the following goals:

1. **Equitable Access & Participation** – Ensure that the percentage of students served reflects the demographics of The ZONE, including students of color, English language learners, students receiving free and reduced lunch, and students with special needs.
2. **Expanded Community Partnerships** – Increase the number of community-based service providers offering after-school and summer enrichment programs.
3. **Social-Emotional and Academic Growth** – Improve SEL survey scores, attendance, and course performance for students participating in at least one semester of programming or two consecutive summers.
4. **Family & Caregiver Engagement** – Achieve a 20% increase in family engagement and strengthen the connection between home, school, and community.

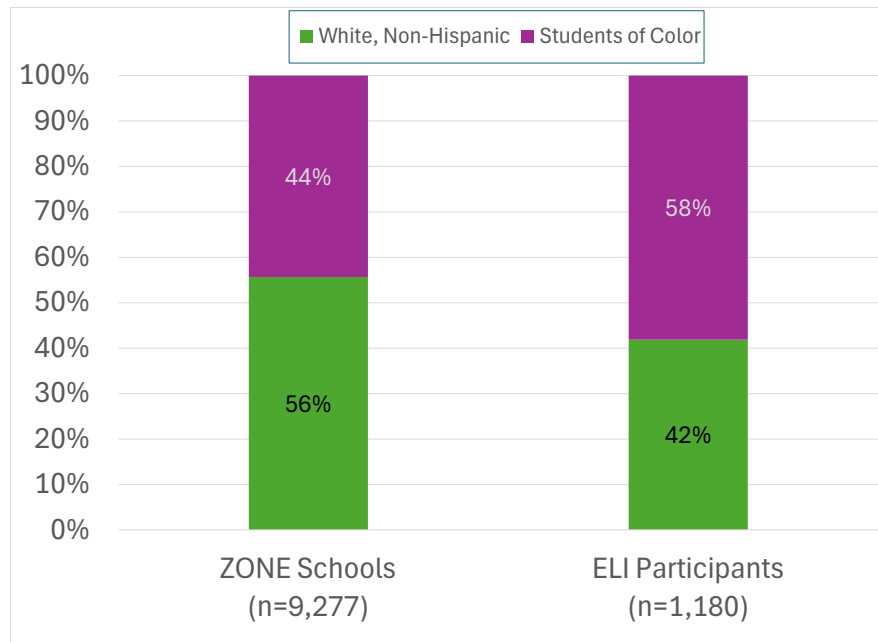
This section summarizes the measurable progress toward these goals, including student participation data, academic and social-emotional indicators, and family engagement trends. It also highlights “bright spots” where students and families experienced meaningful outcomes aligned with the overarching goal of community-driven, whole-child development in Northeast Spokane.

### Participant Characteristics

During the 2024-25 program year, The ZONE supported programming for **2,450 students** through the Extended Learning Initiative. As noted in previous sections, several of the funded programs self-report summary outcomes to protect sensitive information for both students and families. In addition, while the programs primarily serve students attending schools in Northeast Spokane, many of the programs located in this area may serve students enrolled outside the Northeast feeder schools from which our participant characteristics report is based. In total, this section reports on outcomes for **998 students** participating in 2024-25 ELI programming through Girl Scouts of the Inland NW, Gonzaga Office of Tribal Relations, Just One, and Slingshot. This represents more than double the participants reported in Year One (432), demonstrating the initiative’s expanded reach.

ELI programming continues to prioritize equity and inclusion. Over half (58%) of participating students were students of color, exceeding the 44% share in ZONE-area schools. Programs such as Gonzaga’s Tribal Relations and Manzanita House intentionally center culturally specific experiences, while others—like Slingshot and Just One—serve a broad neighborhood population with diverse backgrounds.

**Percent Students of Color: ZONE Students and ELI Participants  
2024-25**



As outlined in the table below, the percentage of students of color in each program ranged between 36% and 100%. While the programs are open to and serve students of all races and ethnicities, several programs like Gonzaga Tribal Relations, develop programming specifically to empower and educate nonwhite students in a culturally relevant way.

**Percent Students of Color: ELI Participants by Program  
2024-25**

Program	Students of Color	Student Total
Girl Scouts	62 (36%)	173
Gonzaga Tribal Relations	64 (90%)	71
Just One	210 (44%)	479
Slingshot	167 (61%)	275
Manzanita House	116 (100%)	116
Refugee Immigrant Connections	66 (100%)	66
<b>ELI Participants</b>	<b>686 (58%)</b>	<b>1,180</b>

\* Manzanita House and Refugee Immigrant Connections based on program report

Socio-economic status of students is typically reported based on families that meet federal income qualification criteria for free and reduced school lunches. Northeast Spokane represents one of the areas in the city with the highest income disparities – nearly half (46%) of adults have income under 200% of the federal poverty level, compared to 27% of adults in other areas of the city (US Census American Community Survey, 2023). The share of identified students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch (80%) closely mirrors The ZONE’s 82%, underscoring the initiative’s focus on reaching youth in families with the greatest economic need.

**Percent Low Income (Free/Reduced Lunch): ZONE Students and ELI Participants  
2024-25**

	Free & Reduced Total	Total
ELI Participants	797 (80%)	998
ZONE Schools	6,344 (82%)	7,765

Nearly one in four students (24%) in ZONE-area schools qualifies for special needs services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP), compared to 20% of ELI participants. An IEP is a legal document that outlines a student's specialized instruction and services. In contrast, a Section 504 plan focuses on accommodations rather than specialized instruction and supports students with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities such as learning, walking, or speaking. Both ZONE-area schools and ELI programs report 4% of students with 504 plans, ensuring these learners receive the accommodations they need to succeed.

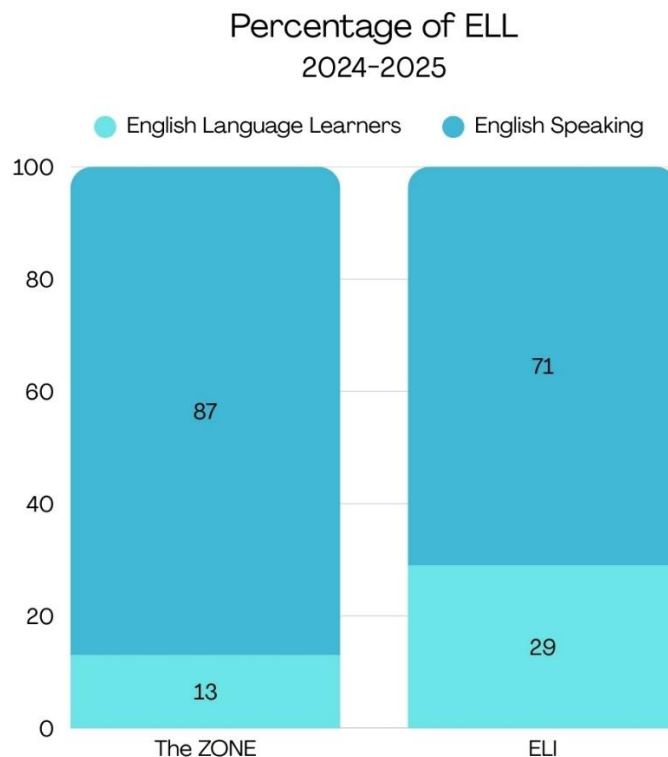
**Percent Special Needs (Individual Education Plan): ZONE Students and ELI Participants  
2024-25**

	Specialized Instruction (IEP)	Accommodations Section 504	Total
ELI Participants	199 (20%)	44 (4%)	998
ZONE Schools	1,829 (24%)	276 (4%)	7,765

Additionally, programs are making meaningful connections with multilingual students: 29% of ELI participants were English language learners, significantly higher than the 13% rate in ZONE-area schools. While student data were not directly available for programs like the Manzanita House or Refugee and Immigrant Connections Spokane (RICS), program-reported totals for English-language learners are included here for inclusivity.

**Percent English Language Learners (ELL): ELI Participants by Program  
2024-25**

Program	English Language Learners	Student Total
Girl Scouts	4 (2%)	173
Gonzaga	11 (15%)	71
Just One	49 (10%)	479
Slingshot	93 (34%)	275
<i>Manzanita House</i>	<i>116 (100%)</i>	<i>116</i>
<i>Refugee Immigrant Connections</i>	<i>66 (100%)</i>	<i>66</i>
<b>ELI Participants</b>	<b>339 (29%)</b>	<b>1,180</b>
<b>Students in ZONE Schools</b>	<b>1,030 (13%)</b>	<b>7,765</b>



Together, these participation patterns reflect a Year Two cohort that is more representative, more diverse, and better connected to high-need students and families in Northeast Spokane. The data demonstrates that ELI is not only scaling in numbers but also maintaining fidelity to the goals of serving children in a community-driven way.

### Expanding Community-Based Service Providers (Goal 2)

In Year Two, the Expanded Learning Initiative (ELI) supported **12 community-based organizations**, reflecting a growing and diverse network of partners delivering after-school and summer programming in Northeast Spokane. This expansion included new grantees such as Girls on the Run Spokane County and expanded programming with Refugee & Immigrant Connections Spokane (RICS), which strengthened the initiative's reach into culturally specific programming and youth wellness.

Alongside these new additions, the initiative continued deep collaborations with long-standing partners such as Slingshot, SWAG, Spark Central, Gonzaga University, Manzanita House, and the Northeast Youth Center, ensuring both consistency and breadth of programming. Together, these organizations offer students a wide array of experiences—from STEM and arts engagement to mentorship, leadership, and cultural heritage programs.

## Social Emotional Learning Outcomes

Students in grades 4 and higher in Spokane Public Schools complete an [annual Panorama SEL survey](#), measuring key skills such as social supports, well-being and sense of belonging. These competencies are vital to student success in school, career, and life. This report focuses on the SEL skills and competencies most aligned with the Expanded Learning Initiative, including:

- Grit – how well students are able to persevere through setbacks to achieve important long-term goals
- Self-Efficacy – how much students believe they can succeed in achieving academic outcomes
- Self-Management – how well students manage their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations
- Growth Mindset – student perceptions of whether they have the potential to change those factors that are central to their performance in school
- Social Awareness – how well students consider the perspectives of others and empathize with them
- Learning strategies – how well students deliberately use strategies to manage their own learning processes in class

The SEL survey serves as an important indicator of student connection and belonging, which are core goals of The ZONE’s Expanded Learning Initiative (ELI). Social-emotional growth occurs across many environments—home, school, and community-based activities—so changes in SEL outcomes cannot be attributed to any single setting. However, comparing the SEL competencies of ELI participants with those of non-participating peers in ZONE-area schools provides valuable insight into focus areas for program staff.

The table below presents mean scores for each SEL scale from Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, reported for both ELI participants and non-participants. Each domain is measured using a set of survey items rated on a five-point scale, with anchors such as:

- *Not at all – A little bit – Somewhat – A lot – A tremendous amount*
- *Almost never – Once in a while – Sometimes – Frequently – Almost always*

Across these measures, **ELI participants consistently scored slightly higher** than their peers in both fall and spring. This pattern may reflect that students engaged in ELI programming are both ready to learn and benefit from enhanced social-emotional support provided through after-school and summer experiences. The table below also measures change in average student domain scores from Fall to Spring, although we did not see statistically significant changes across either cohort.



**Average Social-Emotional Learning Scores: ZONE Students and ELI Participants  
2024-25**

SEL Measure	All ZONE Students			ELI Participants		
	Fall (n=861)	Spring (n=871)	Change	Fall (n=491)	Spring (n=459)	Change
Grit	3.41	3.41	0.00	3.53	3.44	-0.09
Self-Efficacy	3.28	3.22	-0.06	3.31	3.32	0.01
Self-Management	3.80	3.70	-0.10	3.85	3.76	-0.09
Growth Mindset	3.33	3.38	0.06	3.50	3.48	-0.02
Social Awareness	3.54	3.50	-0.03	3.66	3.62	-0.04
Learning Strategies	3.61	3.55	-0.07	3.65	3.62	-0.03

### Attendance Outcomes

Strengthening connections between students, their schools, and the broader community is a core goal of the Expanded Learning Initiative (ELI). One way to observe these connections is through school attendance patterns, as consistent attendance reflects student engagement and access to learning opportunities. Spokane Public Schools tracks attendance across five categories:

- **Satisfactory** – attended more than 95% of school days
- **At-risk attendance**– attended 90–95% of school days
- **Minor chronic absenteeism**– attended 85–90% of school days
- **Moderate chronic absenteeism** – attended 80–85% of school days
- **Severe chronic absenteeism** – attended less than 80% of school days

Monitoring the attendance of ELI participants helps highlight whether students are maintaining consistent engagement with school throughout the year and the extent to which students at-risk of ongoing poor attendance are improving. The table below follows students with moderate or severe chronic attendance issues (less than 85 percent of days attended) in the 2023-24 school year. For both primary (elementary and middle school) and secondary (high school) participants, we show the extent to which these students continued to have moderate or severe absenteeism during the 2024–25 school year.

**Moderate and Severe Chronic Attendance: ZONE ELI Participants  
2023-24 and 2024-25**

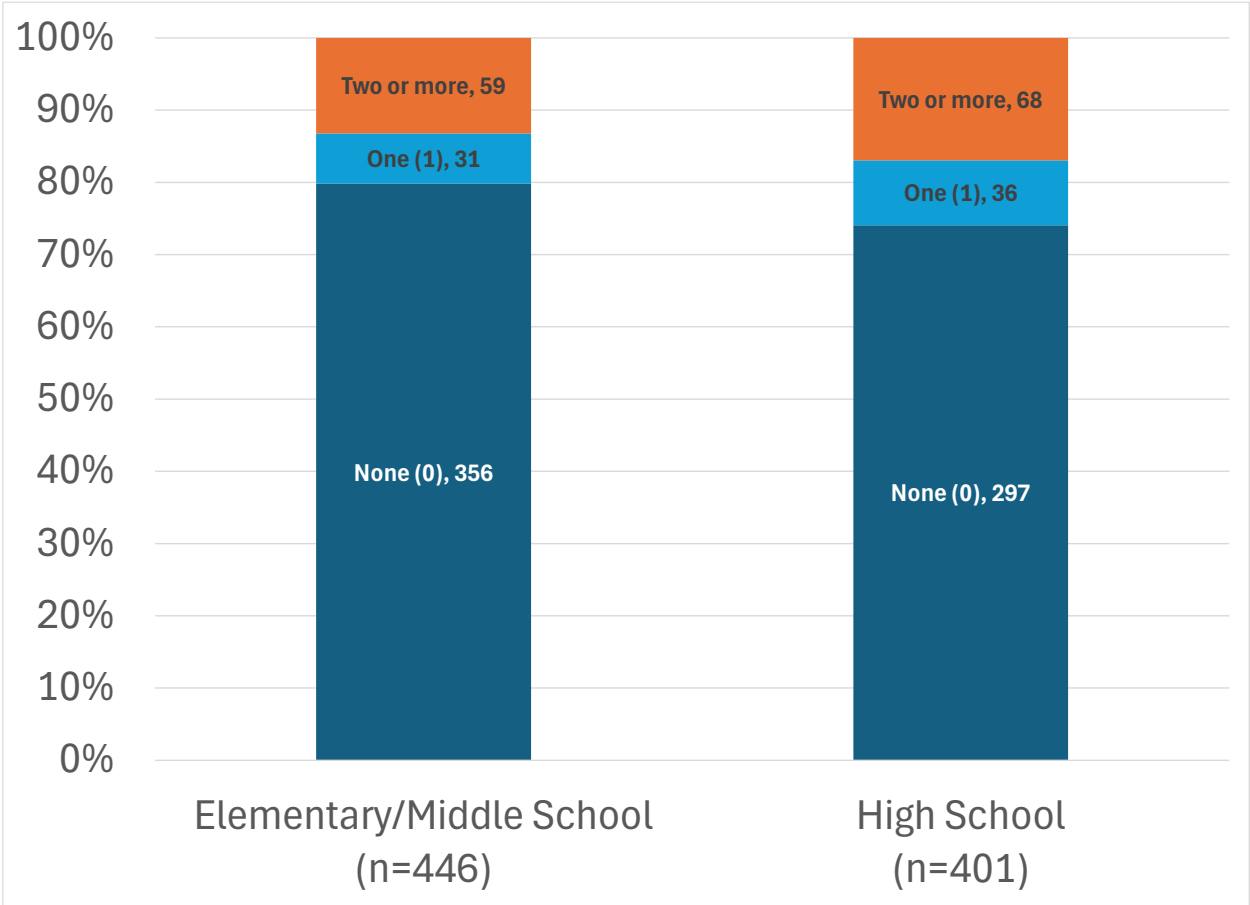
	Moderate-Severe 23-24	Moderate-Severe 23-24 and 24-25	
Primary	72	41	57%
Secondary (HS)	92	62	67%

Overall, 103 participants (41 elementary/middle school and 62 high school) with moderate or severe chronic attendance issues in the base year (2023-24) continued to have the same level of attendance issues the following year. The rate of persistent attendance issues was 57% in primary (elementary/middle) schools and 67% for students in secondary (high) schools. Conversely, we can say that 43% of ELI participants with moderate/severe attendance improved in 2024-25 and one-third (33%) of at-risk high school participants had higher levels of attendance.

**Behavior Outcomes**

Another indicator of student connection to school relates to referral for behavior incidents. For the ELI program cohort, 13% of elementary/middle school participants (n=59) and 17% of high school participants (n=68) had two or more behavioral referrals in the prior school year.

**Distribution of Behavior-Related Referrals: ZONE Comparison Students and ELI Participants  
2023-24**



For participating students entering the 2024-25 school year with prior disciplinary issues (2+), we found that approximately half (46% elementary/middle and 53% high school) had fewer disciplinary referrals (0 or 1) during the program participation year (2024-25). In addition, 12-14% of these students had the same number of discipline issues across both

years. These results highlight how increased connection and support through ELI programming can contribute to improved behavior, helping students feel more engaged and supported at school.

**Reduction in Behavior-Related Referrals (2+): ZONE ELI Participants  
2023-24 to 2024-25**

	<b>Expanded Learning Initiative Participants</b>		
	<b>Total 2+</b>	<b>Improved (0-1)</b>	<b>Same (2)</b>
Elem/Middle	59	27 (46%)	8 (14%)
High School	68	36 (53%)	8 (12%)

## **Bright spotting – Telling Youth Stories**

### **If You Could Save Just One**

*Through a partnership with Next Generation Zone/Spokane Workforce Council, we opened opportunities and referral pipeline for youth who had left school to get their GEDs and/or workforce development resources. We had one youth who wanted to enroll with Next Generation Zone/Spokane Workforce Council and graduate with his GED but he had a lot of hesitation enrolling. He had been jumped violently by a group of kids and had a lot of physical healing and then psychological fear and anxiety about running into the kids at Next Generation Zone. We were persistent - it took a lot of persistence on our part! - in convincing him to attend. But he did, we were consistently encouraging, and we are so proud to say that he graduated. He still comes by and thanks me!*

*We have another youth who had been with us multiple years. He came from a home with high levels of domestic violence. He had a very violent and unstable home, and his parents had kicked him out multiple times. We helped him over the years, providing resources, support, and programming on-site as well as referrals. He was a homeless youth and we connected him with the United Way/Volunteers of America Diversion program. We also connected him with TeamChild for him to learn his rights and to create a parenting plan. He aged out of our program recently, and he now has successfully obtained employment in food service and he is growing forward despite his past challenges.*

## Slingshot and College Success Foundation

*What does it mean to be a ZONE Kid?*

*Hayley and two of her sisters were adopted by a ZONE family who already had kids in their home. Five of the children were attending Regal Elementary at the same time, and have been in ZONE funded summer programming every year since 2017. Now graduating from Rogers High School, and still served by ZONE partners Slingshot and College Success Foundation, Hayley has good grades, is active in sports, and was interested in what kind of scholarships she could find to follow in her brother's footsteps (currently at Northwest University).*



*QuestBridge reached out to her- matching low-income high-achieving students to full rides at 55 of the nation's highest ranked colleges and universities. 25,000 students applied. 2200 students got accepted. Hayley Ying is one of them. She's headed to a full 4-year inclusive scholarship at Wellesley College in Massachusetts. Never having left our community, and definitely never having been on a plane, The ZONE gave Hayley and her Dad the opportunity to visit the campus together this spring for Admitted Students Day.*

## SECTION 4 – Family Engagement

Family engagement continues to be a cornerstone of the Expanded Learning Initiative (ELI), strengthening the connection between home, school, and community. Throughout 2024–25, ZONE-sponsored initiatives hosted a variety of family-focused events that encouraged meaningful participation and celebrated student growth, *meeting the goal of increasing family engagement programming participation by 20% annually.*

Family engagement services during ELI Year Two were focused in the following three areas:

### 1. Shaw Middle School Embedded Program Services

Throughout the 2024–25 school year, The ZONE coordinator embedded at Shaw Middle School supported a wide range of family-centered activities designed to promote wellness, strengthen school-family relationships, and remove barriers to student success.

- Weekly **Bite2Go food bags** were distributed to Shaw students every Friday, offering consistent food support. In addition, the Second Harvest Zilch gleaning program, provided fresh produce and essential groceries to families.
- The **Shaw Block Party**, serving the Hillyard Community Campus, drew more than 350 attendees and offered food, music, and local resource tabling. Families could access basic necessities, and information about community services.
- At the start of the school year, Shaw hosted a **Launch Conference**—a two-day event allowing students and families to meet teachers and build connections. The ZONE team staffed a table throughout, offering materials and information on available supports. This presence ensured families were aware of year-round services and built trust early in the academic year.
- A **vaccine clinic** at the Northeast Community Center was coordinated in collaboration with the **Spokane Regional Health District**, helping students meet immunization requirements for school enrollment and improving health access.
- The ZONE coordinator at Shaw worked closely with school staff and students to **improve attendance outcomes**. This included identifying chronically absent students and connecting families to tailored resources and referrals that supported consistent school participation.
- In addition to weekly Zilch and Bite2Go programs, the coordinator provided food boxes and emergency support to families experiencing food insecurity. These efforts were tailored to **individual family needs** and based on trusted relationships built over time

A total for the number of events and families served through Shaw Middle School family connections appears in the table below.

**Family Engagement and Outreach: Shaw Middle School**  
**2024-25 School Year**

	Events	Families
Weekly Bite2Go and Zilch (Second Harvest)	42	2318
Launch Conference	2	650
Block Party for Hillyard Community Campus	1	600
Vaccine Clinic (with SRHD)	1	240
Attendance Support	8	70
Emergency Food Support	6	38

*Regular parent updates (text, social media and web posts) on ZONE supported work reach 675 families monthly*

## 2. On Track Academy Embedded Program Services

On Track Academy (OTA) is an alternative choice high school in Spokane Public Schools that offers students in grades 9–12 personalized learning plans in a smaller setting. The program helps students complete graduation requirements and prepare for college, careers, apprenticeships, or the military. OTA is located in NE Spokane and a ZONE embedded staff member there supports family and community engagement through planned activities and outreach listed below:

- In partnership with the Spokane community, OTA students created a student forest on campus during the **Tree Hero event**, part of a broader wellness initiative. Students participated in a heart-monitor and stress study, learning how tree canopy and nature access contribute to mental health and stress reduction.
- During back-to-school season, The ZONE team coordinated a **Boosted Market and Backpack Drive**, fueled by community donations. OTA students also took the lead in identifying needs at nearby elementary schools—including Regal, Bemiss, and Willard—and helped secure and deliver backpacks and hygiene kits to younger students and families.
- For students at OTA who are also parents, The ZONE coordinator **secured diaper donations** to help meet the needs of their infants. This support helped student-parents remain engaged in their own education while caring for their children.
- In a creative partnership with **Beacon Hill Event Center**, leftover catered meals from weddings and events were packaged and delivered to OTA students, providing ready-to-eat food and reducing waste through sustainable redistribution.
- OTA's Youth Wellness Zone initiative was formally recognized at the **Chase Youth Awards**, where this student group received two awards. Students presented their work at Spokane City Hall, reinforcing the importance of elevating youth voice in public platforms.



- During **summer school enrollment**, The ZONE coordinator hosted an information table to help students and families understand available programs. This proactive engagement ensured sustained connection through summer months and helped bridge into the next school year.

Detail on the level of family participation and reach for each of these events appears in the summary below.

**Family Engagement and Outreach: On Track Academy  
2024-25 School Year**

	<b>Families</b>
Tree Hero Community Event	400
Back to School Boosted Market	175
Backpacks and Hygiene Kit Distribution	73
Diapers for Parenting Students	5
Chase Youth Awards	7
Summer School Information Event	150

*Regular parent updates (text, social media and web posts) on ZONE supported work reach 350 families monthly*

### **3. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center**

Family engagement remained a central priority across school sites in The ZONE participating in the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21CCLC) program. Both Spokane Public Schools and The ZONE operated a 21CCLC program during the 2024-25 school year. The 21CCLC program provides high-quality academic enrichment and family engagement programming designed to strengthen school connection, improve academic outcomes in English Language Arts (ELA) and math, and promote positive youth development. Both SPS and The ZONE contract with Communities in Schools of Northeast Washington (CIS-NEW) to coordinate activities at eight school sites: Bemiss Elementary, Cooper Elementary, Lidgerwood Elementary, Logan Elementary, Regal Elementary, Stevens Elementary, Garry Middle School and Shaw Middle School.

CIS-NEW coordinated family events at each site included a diverse range of activities from parenting and financial literacy workshops to job skills classes, resource nights, and family celebrations. Events such as school-community dinners and neighborhood festivals helped reinforce a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, while support-oriented events connected families to practical resources such as hygiene supplies and local service providers.

In 2024-25, 21CCLC outreach events reach 1,070 (unduplicated) parents and adult family members:

- 365 adult family members in ZONE 21CCLC programs, and
- 705 adults family members in the second cohort of the ZONE 21CCLC programs

The increased family engagement activity in 2024-25 represents more than double the number of parent/caregivers reached in 2023-24 from 486 to 1070 in 2024-25, easily surpassing the goal of a 20% increase in family engagement programming participation.

## Conclusion

The second year of the Expanded Learning Initiative demonstrates both meaningful growth and continued alignment with The ZONE's vision of equitable, community-based support for Northeast Spokane youth. Partner organizations have expanded reach, deepened cultural responsiveness, and delivered programming that strengthens academic, social-emotional, and family outcomes. Data from student participation, family engagement, and school indicators confirm that these efforts are reducing disparities while building lasting connections. As the initiative enters Year Three, the collective impact approach remains a powerful driver of opportunity, ensuring that students and families are supported across multiple dimensions of their educational journey

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