



Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent

*All students prepared
for post-secondary pathways,
careers, & civic engagement.*

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Academic, Mentoring, and Innovation Program

2018

Authorizing legislation: [RCW 28A.215.080](#)

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Executive Summary

The Academic, Innovation, and Mentoring (AIM) program was created as a pilot program in the 2015–17 Operating Budget. It was then established as a continuing program in 2017 through Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.215.080.

The purpose of the AIM program is to support community-based youth development organizations that deliver educational services, mentoring, and linkages to positive, prosocial leisure and recreational activities for youth ages 6 to 18. The AIM program was designed to provide targeted academic and social emotional development interventions during out of school time as a strategy for improving the academic and life outcomes of Washington students, particularly youth experiencing poverty and youth of color who are in need of additional support.

After a competitive grant process, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) approved the Washington State Boys & Girls Clubs Association (Boys & Girls Clubs) for a two-year AIM grant of up to \$356,000. The Boys & Girls Clubs proposed to implement community specific models in seven locations across the state: East Bellevue, Lacey, Mt. Vernon, South Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, and Vancouver. Each site worked 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.

Each of the participating AIM sites implemented a range of evidence-based academic mentoring programs designed to improve performance in core subjects, provided experiential learning in science and arts, and promoted deeper engagement of social and emotional components of academic success. In addition, AIM participants developed mentoring relationships to further sustain and grow academic and social emotional gains.

Overview of the 2017–18 AIM Program

- Across the seven sites, the program engaged 375 AIM participants.
- The overall program retention rate was 94 percent.
- 55 percent of AIM participants were female, and 45 percent were male.
- 68 percent of AIM participants identified as persons of color.
- 69 percent of the AIM participants demonstrated improvement in reading and/or English language arts skills, according to pre- and post-tests.
- 67 percent of the AIM participants demonstrated improvement in math skills, according to pre- and post-tests.
- Over 90 percent of the AIM participants had either no behavioral referrals or a decrease in referrals at their schools.

Introduction

The Academic, Innovation, and Mentoring (AIM) program launched in 2015 as a pilot program designed to deliver educational services, mentoring, and linkages to positive out-of-school time activities for youth ages 6 to 18. The Legislature codified the AIM program in statute in 2017. This allowed the state to continue supporting community-based youth development organizations providing targeted academic and social emotional development interventions during out-of-school time as a strategy for improving the academic and life outcomes of Washington students.

The Washington State Boys & Girls Clubs Association (Boys & Girls Clubs) successfully implemented the 2015–17 pilot program in five communities. The organization was then the recipient of the AIM program’s first competitive two-year grant award of up to \$356,000 for July 2017 through June 2019 at seven sites. This report provides implementation and outcome data on the first year of implementation.

AIM Program Participation

The target for the first year of the 2017–19 AIM program was for the participating Boys & Girls Clubs to serve 356 students, ages 6 through 18. Seven affiliates received funding to implement tailored AIM interventions in communities where the local Clubs have established partnerships with area school districts. Academic, Innovation, and Mentoring sites built partnerships with school districts to identify youth who needed additional support to reach grade level in reading or math or were at risk for not remaining on-track for graduation.

During the first year, Boys & Girls Clubs in East Bellevue, Lacey, Mt. Vernon, South Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, and Vancouver engaged 375 AIM participants. The Boys & Girls Clubs AIM program leveraged the strength of existing programs to target students who needed academic support the most.

Table 1: AIM Program Participation by Site

Organization	School District	AIM Site Name	Total Number of Participants	% Retained from Start to End	% Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Meals	Male	Female	% Person of Color
Boys & Girls Clubs of SW WA	Vancouver	Washington Elementary	61	100%	100%	46%	54%	64%
Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County	Mount Vernon	Mount Vernon BGC	65	86%	65%	46%	54%	66%
Boys & Girls Clubs of King County	Highline	Southwest BGC/White Center Heights Elementary	22	88%	88%	56%	44%	96%
Boys & Girls Clubs South Puget Sound	Bethel	South Pierce County Branch	13	100%	54%	23%	77%	46%
Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue	Bellevue	Teen Excellence Center	109	98%	51%	52%	48%	71%
Boys & Girls Clubs of Thurston County	North Thurston	G3 Tutoring	36	94%	58%	34%	66%	71%
Boys & Girls Clubs of Spokane County	Spokane	Northtown Club	69	92%	66%	61%	39%	64%
Totals			375	94%	69%	45%	55%	68%

Source: AIM Year-End Progress Report, August 2018

In addition to the data presented in Table 1, 19 percent of program participants identified as English Language Learners or Transitional/Bilingual. The North Thurston site placed a particular emphasis on recruiting youth experiencing homelessness to participate in the AIM program.

AIM Program Implementation and Outcomes

Each AIM site implemented a range of evidence-based academic mentoring programs designed to improve performance in core subjects, provide experiential learning in science and arts, as well as ensure deeper engagement of social and emotional components of academic success. All seven Boys & Girls Clubs organizations reported AIM programming benefits during the first year of the 2017–19 project.

Academic, Innovation, and Mentoring interventions were modeled on basic tenets of the evidence-based approaches of Project Learn and Power Hour, which are two Boys & Girls Clubs programs designed to create a positive learning environment for students completing homework, and engaging in high-yield afterschool learning activities. Mid-year student evaluations at all sites showed fairly consistent progress toward improvement in reading and math, as well as greater levels of engagement with school work, expressed feelings of excitement about or enjoyment of school activities, higher levels of optimism about individual ability to complete work, and closer interactions and involvement with Club staff.

In comparing beginning and end of year scores, 65 percent of the cohort demonstrated improvement in reading or English language arts. In addition, 62 percent of the cohort demonstrated improvement in math skills. Sites in Vancouver and Lacey reported the highest rates of improvement in both reading and math – 90 percent and 88 percent for Vancouver; and 71 percent and 74 percent for Lacey. The program in Skagit County produced particularly strong results in reading interventions, with 81 percent of participants testing “Above Grade Level” upon program completion.

At several program sites, Club staff worked closely with school districts to utilize teaching technology already familiar to students, such as Khan Academy and Lexia Core5. These partnerships in King and Skagit counties ensured students had a smooth transition from school to Club, and continued to learn within already mastered digital frameworks. This, in turn, minimized time necessary to learn how to use the tools, instead focusing student energy on progress and competency. Other programs reported innovative utilization of a variety of Club-based learning programs, such as Stride Academy.

In addition to a focus on academics, participating Clubs employed a variety of strategies to ensure a strong social and emotional learning component. Interventions utilized across participating sites were designed to bolster social and emotional skills, including awareness of own emotions, fostering respect and care for others, establishing strong relationships, and handling adversity constructively.

After consistent participation in AIM activities, most students demonstrated higher levels of self-efficacy. Specific examples of demonstrated self-efficacy included increased student resilience when faced with challenging tasks, demonstrated ability to ask for help, and improved ability to more precisely identify encountered difficulties to their adult mentor.

Through a combination of approaches, programs sought to actively engage participants in order to promote attendance and retention. Sites reported regular attendance significantly increased participants' educational attainment and improved their chances of gaining better social skills, learning to problem-solve in a positive manner, and building stronger relationships with their adult mentors. Across the cohort, frequency of attendance increased by 13 percent by the end of program year, from 2.6 days per week to 3 days per week on average. In addition, by the end of the program, over 90 percent of program participants had either no referrals or a decrease in behavioral referrals at their schools.

Finally, many of the AIM sites provided opportunities for students to participate in hands-on science activities, often in a group format, and in a variety of settings. Participants in Thurston, Skagit, Pierce, and Spokane counties, as well as throughout Southwest Washington, took part in programs that taught basic scientific concepts, encouraged team approaches to problem-solving, and allowed for direct interaction with nature. Post-secondary educational options were skillfully highlighted throughout program offerings, with some sites incorporating partnerships with local institutions of higher education.

The AIM program, as implemented at the seven Boys & Girls Clubs across the state, successfully engaged target populations and succeeded with the academic, social, and emotional development of students as intended.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The Washington State Boys & Girls Clubs Association is implementing year two activities for the Academic, Innovation, and Mentoring (AIM) grant through June 30, 2019. Results from the second year will be reported through the December 2019 update for the AIM program.

If additional funds are appropriated in the 2019–21 Operating Budget, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction will hold a new two-year AIM grant competition.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: AIM Program by Site

The italicized text is included as written by the programs.

Boys & Girls Clubs of King County (*White Center Heights Elementary, 79 percent free or reduced-price lunch [FRPL]*)

BGCKC's Club Read provided students with additional support in reading, with teens working as reading assistants – listening to reading, helping with vocabulary and understanding, and discussing books with the elementary students. Reading and language development was supported through a range of means; including maximizing interest in graphic novels and ensuring each student build a small library of their own books. The Master Minds initiative was developed to encourage a positive image of the student cohort as they focused more time on academic activities. Family celebration nights recognized the work of the students and supported parents with ideas for how they can nurture reading at home.

Student attendance and participation in the AIM program has been impressive throughout the year. We have seen a real build in confidence in reading out loud and in discussing books read. For some students some of the fun and games approaches to math have enabled them to explore numbers more and challenged some of their assumptions around their ability. There are still math challenges on a daily basis, but we see more willingness to try for longer and for more clarity from students about exactly where they need support when they ask for help.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County (*Centennial Elementary, 78 percent FRPL*)

The BGCSC program ran from September through the end of May, with all kids in grades K–5 participating two times each week. New programming focused on increasing social and emotional development in addition to existing interventions aimed at supporting learning progress and reading growth. The site implemented the Positive Action program Club wide to provide participants with the emotional support and skills needed to be successful academically.

At the beginning of the year, the site met with a Mount Vernon School District Reading Specialist who provided access to the Lexia Core 5 program. AIM participants were able to log on to their accounts during the Power Hour Homework program and work on their reading and comprehension. This strategy allowed the teachers and specialists to see what students worked on and where they need additional support. In addition, the site continued to increase its focus on providing STEM, Reading, and Project Learn opportunities.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Spokane County (Garry & Shaw Middle Schools, 83 percent and 87 percent FRPL)

The Northtown Club serves students with a combination of programs and activities that help Club members develop social skills and good character, and support their academic progress in school. The site uses regular engagement with mentors, evidence-based programs, case management and annual “prep checks” of each member’s academic standing. Programs and activities implemented include: Power Hour/Project Learn, SMART Girls, Triple Play, Passport to Manhood, Stride Academy, Positive Actions, Keystone Club, Gonzaga University Mentoring Programs, Lego League, a Pacific Teen club and a pilot summer transition program called Level Up for incoming 7th graders co-facilitated with Hillyard Youth Collaborative.

Information thus far available from Spokane Public Schools indicates overall student progress in meeting or maintaining positive behavior goals, meeting or maintaining academic/course completion goals, and meeting or maintaining student attendance.

Boys & Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound (Manitou Park Elementary and Thompson Elementary, 83 percent and 70 percent FRPL)

Trail Blazers is a 5-week environmental education program for 3rd graders that included a variety of experiential learning activities that introduced participants to the natural world by combining outdoor education and social and emotional learning. Participants explored the Pacific Northwest backyard through units related to animals, plants, trees, marine life, and ecosystems. All students in the program joined a project-based learning group experience that provided them with opportunities for scientific exploration, attainment of basic concepts, and opportunities for social emotional growth. Students presented culminating projects and participated in several field trips.

K. enjoyed the program and had 100% attendance. Her mother volunteered to go on both field trips and the two of them would help clean up after the programs were complete. We gave the members chances to practice public speaking and K. would stand up and report her research confidently with great effort.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Washington (Washington Elementary School, 85 percent FRPL)

BGCSWWA’s targeted tutoring and mentoring program consists of STEM and literacy academic enrichment, daily homework assistance, and small group tutoring at its school-based Washington Elementary Club. During the past school year, 61 Club members in grades 1–5 grades were selected to participate in the program based on past participation and

recommendations from the school principal and teachers. On average, youth participants attended Club three days per week and had the opportunity to engage in eight hours of homework help and STEM and literacy programming throughout the week.

Members took part in inquiry and solution-based learning through one of the more popular programs, "BGC-MIT." Participants engaged in engineering challenges that included building planes out of recycled materials, constructing nature rafts to learn how much weight a raft can carry, and designing and constructing simple towers. Through Mad Science, Club members learned about chemical reactions, scientific processes, light refraction and "cranberry chemistry" (acid-based reactions).

Since teachers at Washington Elementary rarely give homework, our education lead developed creative ways to encourage Club members to attend Power Hour. Each week Club members studied a topic in one of the following areas: history, geography, business and communication. The knowledge they gained throughout the week was measured using a pre-and post-test. Another Power Hour activity included a books and building program where youth read for 30 minutes and then participated in a 30 minute Lego challenge. Power Hour points are awarded for active participation and attendance and youth are recognized quarterly for their achievements.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Thurston County (Lacey Elementary, 65 percent FRPL)

BGCTC's AIM program takes place at the Lacey Boys & Girls Club. Tutoring is offered on a daily basis for participants. At the beginning of the school year, the program retrieved grade reports for each member, and determined in which area(s) they needed support. Based on this information, students were assigned to specific tutors and other groups with similar academic needs. Each month the Lacey Club offered a Family night, where participants and their families were invited to eat and join in activities offered at the Club.

Staff reported 97% (28) members enrolled and attending at least 30 times had an improvement in their attitude toward academics, while 83% (24) of members attending at least 30 times exhibited a positive change in Emotional/Student Skills behaviors. 79% of participants (23) had a positive change in both areas.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue (Highland Middle School, 43 percent FRPL)

BE GREAT: Graduate (BGG) was implemented as a drop-out prevention and academic success program for middle and high school students. The program was designed to enhance youth engagement by providing consistent educational support from caring and trusted adult mentors, allowing students to develop the skills necessary to be successful in school and in life. The three critical components of the BE Great: Graduate program include:

1. A **mentor-youth relationship** in which a youth who exhibits warning signs of withdrawal from school is paired with an adult mentor with the goal of building the youth's belief they can and want to be successful in school;
2. An **intentional tracking** of participants which involves the consistent monitoring of warning signs (developed in conjunction with the school district) and developing timely interventions that focus on addressing obstacles and celebrating successes; and
3. An effort to **enhance communication and collaboration** between families and school staff as well as families and Club staff to support academic success for participants.



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