

The American Indian Math Project Evaluation

Executive summary

Program

The American Indian Math Project is designed to increase math scores, school connectedness, and the capacity of American Indian youth to become productive adults. The program also works to engage parents in supporting students' learning through culturally relevant after-school and family activities. It is a partnership of the Minneapolis Public Schools, Anishinabe Academy, and the Division of Indian Work (DIW) Youth Leadership Development Program (YLDP).

The program, aimed at students in grades 5 through 10, includes three key components: tutoring and homework help four days a week, Family Nights providing academic enrichment every two weeks, and recreational activities every two weeks. In order to attend a recreational activity, youth must attend at least three of four group tutoring sessions the previous two weeks.

Students are recruited and selected for the program based on teacher-identified academic need in mathematics, and on the family's commitment to the activities and responsibilities of the program.

Evaluation

For this evaluation, data was collected on both students and parents or guardians. Teacher and participant surveys, program records, school-reported student grades, and focus groups with both students and parents or guardians were used for the final analysis.

Key findings

- The program surpassed its recruitment and retention goals, recruiting and enrolling 57 students during their first grant year.
- While the program did not reach its goal of 40 students attending 30 or more days, 28 students (56%) did attend 30 to 59 days and 9 students attended 60 to 89 days.
- Over half of the students retained for 30 or more days were in grade 5, and fifth grade students made up 78 percent of the students that attended 60 days or more of program activities.
- Six of the seven students in grades 7 through 9 (88%) attended program activities 60 or more days.

Year 1 recruitment and retention targets and outcomes, 2007-2008

Criterion/objective	Target	Outcome
Recruitment and retention		
Number of youth participants	50	50
Participants recruited	50	57
Participants retained	40	28
Number of adult participants		
Adults recruited	100	43
Adults retained	0	30

Continued

- Students in grade 5 showed the greatest improvement in academic achievement; by the end of semester 2, six students (40%) had improved to the “above standard” level and none remained in need of continuous teacher support, compared to semester 1 when teacher assessments showed none of the students as above standard and seven evaluated as needing continuous teacher support.
- For turning homework in on time, girls showed more improvement than boys.
- The pattern of academic improvement was not as consistent for older students, but by the end of semester 2, 74 percent of these students had a grade of C- or better, in comparison to 69 percent at the end of semester 1.
- Student engagement in school was quite good, with all engaged students reporting that they like being at the American Indian Math Program, they feel welcome at the program, and they have friends at school.
- Forty family members, 75 percent of which were parents or guardians, attended at least one Family Night, averaging three Family Night events each.
- Most of the parents and guardians attending Family Nights (84%) were mothers and grandmothers.
- Program staff is effectively communicating high expectations to students, with at least 97 percent of students agreeing or strongly agreeing that staff expected them to attend school each day and to do well in school.

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For more information

This summary presents highlights of the *The American Indian Math Project Evaluation*. For more information about this report, contact Sandi Pierce at Wilder Research, 651-280-2653.

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