# **21st Century Community Learning Center**

# **Site Evaluations**

# **2016-2017 School Year**



# **MREC/ESP**

# **Missouri River Education Cooperative**

# **Extended School Program**

# **Mandan ND**

# **Conducted July 25-26 and October 19, 2017**

# **Prepared by:**

# **Westwood Research & Statistical Services**

# **Bismarck North Dakota**

# **Introduction**

As part of the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) evaluation process, a standardized set of quality indicators is used to assess, plan, design, and implement strategies for ongoing quality improvement. This process provides CCLC grantee staff and stakeholders a uniform means for identifying challenges, strengths, and opportunities for improvement.

The standardized set of quality indicators used for North Dakota’s CCLC program evaluation process is the Colorado Department of Education’s Monitoring and Quality Improvement Tool (MQIT). The instrument is specifically designed to:

1. Serve as a self-assessment tool to improve the quality of CCLC programs; and
2. Serve as a monitoring tool for the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.

The MQIT is organized into eight categories:

1. Grant Management and Sustainability
2. Program Management
3. Staffing and Professional Development
4. Partnerships
5. Center Operations
6. Programming/Activities
7. Health and Safety
8. Evaluation/Measuring Outcomes

Section A: Addresses the grantees’ performance level with regard to individual grant requirements (accountability). This section includes examples of evidence and performance ratings for each grant expectation.

Sections B – H**:** Addresses program quality in a broader sense. These sections include examples of evidence, performance ratings, and timeframes for improvement for each quality indicator.

During the grantee-specific site visits each of the MQIT’s standardized set of quality indicators is examined by the State CCLC Program Evaluator and the grantee (two to four hours). In addition, visits are made to a minimum of three randomly selected schools to further assess the CCLC’s out-of-school day programs/activities and interactions between student and teacher/staff (approximately one hour).

Subsequently, the State CCLC Program Evaluator, as evidenced by documentation provided by the grantee and school-specific site visits, arrives at a rating (score) for each of the standardized set of quality indicators and an overall rating (score). In addition, the State CCLC Program Evaluator identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement, and if appropriate, recommends plans of action and timeframes for completion of “lower” rated quality indicators. Any questions regarding the results of the evaluation are addressed by the State CCLC Program Evaluator and grantee.

This report summarizes: visit details; MQIT results (narrative); program strengths; and opportunities for improvement and associated timeframes for action. Detailed MQIT results (tabular) are available by contacting the Project Director.

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# **Visit Details**

**MQIT Visit Date, Location and Program Staff Involved**

* October 19, 2017 - Mandan ND

1. Carrie Zeigler, ESP Co-director

**Site Visit Dates, Locations and Program Staff Involved**

* July 25, 2017 – Pioneer Elementary School (Bismarck ND)

1. Jenna Krause, Site Coordinator

* July 25, 2017 – Dorothy Moses Elementary School (Bismarck ND)

1. Michelle Dunn, Site Coordinator

* July 26, 2017 – Roosevelt Elementary School (Mandan ND)

1. Kellen Tibor, Site Coordinator

# **MQIT Results (Narrative)**

# **Grant Management and Sustainability**

1. MREC/ESP continues to identify and serve eligible students and their families consistent with the grant application. Students/families benefit from an experienced and dedicated staff, involved day schools, and partners, among others. Staff and programs are committed to provide a safe and caring environment for participants while further advancing their educational growth and success. The grantee strives to improve students’ skill levels in reading, mathematics, science, and computer/technology, as well as providing social and recreational opportunities to support them in becoming better-rounded individuals.
2. The grantee conducts outreach via school newsletters; district newsletters; open houses; Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) presentations; MREC/ESP brochures describing the program, educational opportunities, program cost, goals/objectives, and school-specific contact names and telephone numbers; invitations to programs/activities; Facebook; and the MREC website; among others.
3. As part of the outreach process, the grantee also disseminates a “Family Handbook” describing: program mission; program goals and objectives; program information (hours of operation, academic learning, attendance policies, etc.); program fees; sign in/out; nutrition; holidays and snow days; field trips; visitor policies; accident/illness policies; medication policies; responsible behavior; dress code; parent concerns; transportation policies; discrimination statements; necessary registration forms; authorized/unauthorized student pick-up; emergency contact and medical information for the child; scholarship applications; a mutual exchange of information form; and a personal liability waiver.
4. Of the region’s ten sites, only one, did not meet the requirement that all centers offer services at least seven hours per week on average.
5. MREC/ESP houses programs in safe and accessible facilities/environments. In past years, various concerns related to individual(s) potentially entering schools “unrecorded/ unchecked” by any day school or afterschool staff, making it relatively easy for this/these individual(s) to potentially cause turmoil at the site. Further details can be found in the “Health and Safety” section of this evaluation.
6. Before school programs generally run from 7:00am to 8:00am at each site and include activities to assist students with homework, math, and reading. Afterschool programs typically begin when day school dismisses until 5:30pm at each site. Program activities include but not limited to reading, science, math, homework help, and indoor/outdoor play, furthermore, a nutritious snack is provided. Summer programs normally operate from 8:00am to noon for “Camp Ed” and noon to 5:30pm for afternoon programming (Bismarck); and 7:30am to 5:30pm (Mandan).
7. MREC/ESP meets with families at the beginning of each school year to enroll students. The grantee recognizes the continuing difficulties in engaging families to participate with parent/family programming/activities, however the grantee makes every attempt to involve them.
8. Parents/families receive bi-monthly newsletters from sites informing them of the detailed programming/activities, upcoming events (Mark your Calendars), and ESP news.
9. Regarding transportation needs of MREC/ESP students, in general, Cannonball students are provided transportation, while others are not; however, Bismarck and Mandan students can be bussed by the district(s), but not paid by 21st CCLC grant funds.
10. The grantee continues to advance toward meeting goals and objectives as set out in the grant application. Overall objectives are to assist students in becoming proficient readers and mathematicians, in a safe environment, by means of qualified staff. These are typically met by: improving student achievement/behavior; reaching targeted participation levels in core educational services/enrichment and support activities; retaining participating students; meeting planned hours of operation/activities/services; community collaboration/social development; and providing a safe and secure environment.
11. MREC/ESP has completed a sustainability plan by way of an advisory committee. The plan, one which addresses issues should federal funding be discontinued, includes a fee based program for the school year and summer programs in the Mandan and Bismarck ESP schools along with expanding and strengthening partnerships. The plan however does not address sustainability in schools outside of Bismarck/Mandan.
12. The grantee maintains appropriate documentation for employees/inventory as evidenced by detailed employee timesheets, background checks, detailed inventory lists, etc.

# **Program Management**

1. The grantee’s organizational structure is well defined and provides for Program Co-directors along with site coordinators (most full-time)

and teachers/paraprofessionals at each at each site to supervise staff and oversee daily programming. Housing, Industry, Training (H.I.T.) Inc., remains the employer of record for MREC/ESP employees (subcontractor). Major responsibilities include handling applications for MREC/ESP employment, requests for criminal history record information, and tracking staff hours. The fiscal agent for the Bismarck and Mandan area sties (via a “Fiscal Agent Services Agreement”) continue to be the Bismarck School District; while Cannonball acts as their own fiscal agents.

1. Staff are provided a “Employee Handbook” which includes: philosophical goals, outcomes, eligibility, registration, class enrollment, drop off and pick up policies, necessary materials, parent role/visitation, emergency procedures, incident/accident processes, evaluations, professionalism, supervision of participants, evening check-out, dress code, abuse (child), drug/alcohol policies, student discipline, sign-in policy, warnings and dismissal policies, and youth leader/volunteer/adult staff responsibilities. The handbook is updated as needed.

1. Student/staff ratios for MREC/ESP schools are satisfactory for program activities and meet student needs.
2. As in past years, the grantee holds monthly meetings with site coordinators/staff and periodic meetings with school principals and partners. Generally, meetings with principals include overviews of current programming, student enrollment, student attendance, budget, community projects, summer programming, and future outlook of the program. School principals continue to provide input into the sustainability plan.
3. MREC/ESP promotes their programs through numerous means including: the “Family Handbook”; open houses; brochures for students/families/partners which provide information relating to program overviews, educational opportunities, program cost, program goals/objectives, and contact information; monthly newsletters; monthly updates to afterschool parents/family detailing the months programs/activities; the MREC website; Facebook; and "Lights On After School", an annual event designed to promote afterschool programs.
4. During the 2016-17 school-year most of the grantees’ site coordinators were full-time employees (40 hours) paid from 21st CCLC funds. One site coordinator however splits hours between Bismarck Public Schools and 21st CCLC, resulting in full-time status with benefits.

# **Staffing and Professional Development**

1. The grantee’s ESP Program Co-directors along with program staff are highly qualified, being hired based on experience, qualifications, and education/training. Job descriptions are available for each position. Furthermore, all employees and volunteers must pass appropriate background checks.
2. MREC/ESP staff evaluations are conducted annually by one of the ESP Program Co-directors in April to provide the grantee with clear feedback to enhance the quality of instruction, identify and develop the instructional strengths of the individual, promote individual growth through self-evaluation, improve communication and cooperation within the program, and identify and develop improvement of overall educational environment. Job related responsibilities assessed include: professional attitude, program management, communication skills, program policy/staff handbook compliance, student empathy, organizational skills, technology skills, staff relations/instructional collaboration, and staff initiative. The ESP Program Co-director are evaluated annually by the MREC Operations Manager.
3. Employees continue to be offered various professional development opportunities such as: first aid/CPR training; Abuse and Neglect training; Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) training, which typically relates to strategies for preventing and resolving situations when confronted by anxious, hostile, or violent behavior; and in and out of state meetings/conferences, among others. In addition, during the 2016-17 school year, one staff attended the annual North Dakota CCLC conference in Fargo.

1. The grantee continues to conduct new employee orientation for site coordinators, teachers, and youth leaders. Training for site coordinators includes: office training (reviewing handbooks and completing paperwork, two hours of YouthServices training, and one to two hours of ESP procedural training); onsite training (two days of shadowing other site coordinators, and two to three days of shadowing the current site coordinator they are replacing); and ongoing training (CPI, first aid/CPR, leadership training sessions, and the summer conference). Teachers/youth leader training includes: office training (reviewing handbooks and completing paperwork); onsite training (shadowing a colleague for two days); and ongoing training (CPI, first aid/CPR, staff meetings and “rotational” summer conference attendance).

1. During site visits, staff were observed to be extremely sensitive to culture and language disparities. A “cultural/language empathy” statement is included on the staff evaluation document.

# **Partnerships**

1. MREC/ESP retains and recruits new partners to address unmet needs. Partnerships include a variety of public, private, and governmental sector agencies, including: HIT Inc., North Dakota State University Extension Agency, Bismarck and Mandan Public Schools, Bismarck State College, University of Mary, Solen/Cannonball Public Schools, American Red Cross, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts of America, Sanford Health, and Mandan and Bismarck Public Libraries. In addition, the grantee continues to work closely and has been successful with Bismarck State College and the University of Mary in hopes of attracting/adding students for employment.
2. Partners are aware of the grantee’s program goals and objectives and how their activities support program goals. MREC/ESP provide partners with a “Program Brochure/Handbook.” The brochure/handbook includes a program overview, program costs, program goals/objectives, and contact information.
3. MREC/ESP collaborates/communicates/utilizes input from its partners. Partners such as the Mandan and Bismarck Libraries provide bookmobile services, while Bismarck State College and the University of Mary provide work opportunities for their students to aid MREC/ESP staff. Furthermore, the North Dakota State University Extension Agency and Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts of America provide a variety of additional program support.
4. The grantee continues to maintain ongoing documentation of contributions by partners as evidenced by YouthServices.

# **Center Operations**

1. MREC/ESP program hours, schedules, locations, activities, services, etc. are available and promoted through various methods, including school newsletters, district newsletters, brochures, Facebook; and the MREC website, among others.
2. The grantee also continues to furnish afterschool staff lesson plans which identify the grade, lesson topic, supplies needed, and topic standards/benchmarks (such as language arts standards for example); daily/hourly/grade-specific programming/activity schedules; and school-specific “School day Faculty – ESP Collaboration Forms”, which specify tutoring needs of the ESP students with respect to math, reading, and science subject areas.
3. The grantee’s standards of behavior for participants continue to be communicated clearly via the “Family Handbook” and “Employee Handbook.” Students are expected to conduct themselves in a positive manner emphasizing the six pillars of Character Counts: Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Citizenship, Trustworthiness, and Fairness. Students that exhibit unacceptable behavior that distracts from the program may be suspended. Departures from these standards are documented and reported to the site coordinator and program director. Accident/illness policies and procedures are also communicated clearly in the Family and Employee Handbooks.
4. MREC/ESP encourages parental involvement in decision making and stresses communications with parents, teachers, students, and other program staff (site coordinators and program director) with respect to program operations, conflicts, concerns, and difficulties. These parental concerns are addressed in the “Family Handbook.”
5. During the 2014-15 school year, the grantee re-established an advisory board generally comprised of parents, principals, and afterschool staff. The advisory board continues to be active in 2016-17.
6. As indicated previously, the grantee acknowledges continued difficulty in engaging families to participate with parent/family programming/activities.

# **Programming/Activities**

1. MREC/ESP continues to provide various evidence-based academic and enrichment programs/activities. Sites offer tutoring, reading/literacy, math, science, and technology/computer skills, along with various recreational activities. Program activities are based on student need/interest and are commensurate with the age and skill level of the participants. The grantee also offers a variety of additional programs/activities such as Lego Robotic Kits, Readers Theatre, MindWorks, STEM kits, GEM kits, and a variety of new skills/physical activities.

1. MRES/ESP makes available lesson plans which specify grade, lesson topic, supplies needed, and state standards/benchmarks (such as language arts standards for example) for each topic. School-specific school day “Faculty – ESP Collaboration Forms” which identify tutoring needs of the ESP students with respect to math, reading, and science subject areas are provided ESP teachers to guide them in targeting the academic needs of individual students.

1. All programs/activities continue to have an excellent detailed schedule, flow, and duration, and are based on student needs/interests and the mission and vision of the grantee.

1. During the 2016-17 school year, all MREC/ESP sites met the mandated objective requiring more than 65.0% of daily programming at each site be of high quality in the core academic areas of reading/literacy, math, science, technology/computer, and art/music. As mentioned previously, only one of the region’s sites did not meet the requirement that each site offer services at least seven hours per week on average.

# **Health and Safety**

1. MREC/ESP area school essential health and safety issues were generally attended to as required; including: safe spaces/areas for program activities, daily nutritional snacks, addressing unique health issues (such as allergies, etc.), clearly defined procedures for participant pick-ups, emergency contact information and readiness plans, internet access (firewall, etc.), and first aid/CPR trained staff. These critical issues are addressed in the Family and Employee Handbooks, registration forms, food audit reports, staff training “logs”, and brochures, among others.

1. As mentioned previously, the grantee houses programs in safe and accessible facilities/environments (in schools). Past concerns related to individual(s) entering a school “unrecorded/unchecked” by any day school or afterschool staff. To address the safe and accessible facility/environment issue MREC/ESP family members/visitors of the afterschool program have access to the school by only a single entrance, one which is typically staffed by an individual who “checks in” persons entering the school or has a controlled access feature where family members/visitors are “buzzed-in.” Individuals entering the school who are “not recognized” by the site coordinator are asked for their picture ID (personal experience).
2. Although required fire/safety drills are typically conducted periodically at all schools, in most instances supplies for emergencies, including epi-pens, are not accessible after the day school classes are dismissed. This non-accessibility issue has been and continues to be problematic for the grantee, and more important, for students sustaining injuries or those with “treatable” emergency medical conditions. This inaccessibility issue is currently being addressed by the ESP Program Co-directors and specific sites/school administration.

# **Evaluation/Measuring Outcomes**

1. MREC/ESP generally applies evaluation processes using both qualitative and quantitative information, by means of YouthServices-based teacher survey and via teacher, parent, student, and partner surveys (Survey Monkey). Although all SurveyMonkey-based surveys were conducted, unfortunately, only two sites conducted the YouthServices-based teacher survey. Results, including written comments will be fed back to the MRES/ESP staff. In addition to providing feedback to grantee staff, survey results should also be provided to other ESP stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and partners. Conducting, measuring and communicating such outcomes provides useful feedback for individuals and organizations involved in providing fundamental CCLC programs and services. These stakeholders have an investment in programs and services and greatly influence what can and will be accomplished; consequently, their input and providing feedback to them is critical in achieving successful outcomes. Effective feedback also encourages stakeholders to buy-into the program while lack or ineffective methods of feedback most often lead to program indifference.
2. All the grantee’s sites have completed entering State Assessment math and reading proficiencies for the 2016-17 school year.
3. MREC/ESP continues to collect stories/parent comments and photos regarding the afterschool program’s impact on the students/families. These are typically shared by way of school-specific monthly newsletters, brochures, Facebook, and letters to families/parents. In addition, the grantee shares and requests promising practices internally and among the remaining regions within the state.

# **Strengths**

1. The grantee’s organizational structure is well defined and provides for Program Co-directors, along with site coordinators (most full-time), and teachers/paraprofessionals at each at each site to supervise staff and oversee daily programming. Program personnel are highly qualified, with staff being hired based on experience, qualifications, and education/training.
2. MREC/ESP staff evaluations are conducted annually to provide the grantee with clear feedback to enhance the quality of instruction, identify and develop the instructional strengths of the individual, promote individual growth through self-evaluation, improve communication and cooperation within the program, and identify and develop improvement of overall educational environment.
3. MREC/ESP conducts new employee orientation for site coordinators, teachers, and youth leaders. Training includes office training, onsite training, and ongoing training.

1. MREC/ESP continues to provide various evidence-based academic and enrichment programs/activities. Sites offer tutoring, reading/literacy, math, science, and technology/computer skills, along with various recreational activities. Program activities are based on student need/interest and are commensurate with the age and skill level of the participants. The grantee also offers a variety of additional programs/activities such as Lego Robotic Kits, MindWorks, Readers Theatre, STEM kits, and GEM kits, among others.
2. MREC/ESP program hours, schedules, locations, activities, services, etc. are available and promoted through various methods, including school newsletters, district newsletters, brochures, Facebook; and the MREC website, among others. The grantee also furnishes afterschool staff lesson plans which identify the grade, lesson topic, supplies needed, and topic standards/benchmarks (such as language arts standards for example); daily/hourly/grade-specific programming/activity schedules; and school-specific “School day Faculty – ESP Collaboration Forms” which specify tutoring needs of the ESP students with respect to math, reading, and science subject areas.
3. As in past years, the grantee holds monthly meetings with site coordinators/staff and periodic meetings with school principals and partners. Generally, meetings with principals include overviews of current programming, student enrollment, student attendance, budget, community projects, summer programming, and future outlooks of the program.
4. MREC/ESP disseminates a “Family Handbook” describing the program mission, program goals and objectives, and various detailed program information. Furthermore, staff is provided a “Employee Handbook” which includes: philosophical goals, outcomes, eligibility, registration, class enrollment, drop off and pick up policies, necessary materials, parent role/visitation, emergency procedures, incident/accident processes, evaluations, professionalism, supervision of participants, evening check-out, dress code, abuse (child), drug/alcohol policies, student discipline, sign-in policy, warnings and dismissal policies, and youth leader/volunteer/adult staff responsibilities.

# **Opportunities for Improvement and Timeframes for Action**

The following recommendations are based on the information/observations/discussions provided/made during the MQIT completion and site visit phases of the MREC/ESP visit. A vast majority of these recommendations are based on 21st CCLC grant award requirements. The following should be addressed and completed during the 2017-18 regular school year.

1. In general, there are a few areas which MREC/ESP needs to address to further strengthen their quality afterschool program. The challenge is to deal with these issues while preserving the numerous positive program attributes currently in place, those qualities which focus on the needs of its students, families, staff, and other stakeholders.
2. Specifically, MREC/ESP must:
3. Finalize the inaccessibility issue regarding emergency supplies, epi-pens, etc., as soon as possible, assuring that they are available to afterschool participants.
4. Include schools outside the cities of Bismarck/Mandan in the sustainability plan.
5. Communicate SurveyMonkey-related survey results not only to staff but also to parents, teachers and/or other related stakeholders. In addition, make every attempt to conduct the YouthServices-based teacher survey in 2017-18.