

Tac Titooqan Article February 2015

Lapwai High School and the Lapwai School District Board of Trustees would like to thank the Exxon Mobil Educational Alliance Program for their \$500 financial contribution supporting mathematics and science. Lapwai High School has a renewed focus on school improvement and increasing academic achievement. This grant is greatly appreciated and will benefit current efforts to improve teaching and learning.

What is Impact Aid?

The purpose of Impact Aid is to provide formula grants to school districts burdened by the presence of nontaxable federal land and installations to make up for the lost revenues and additional costs associated with the federal presence. It is one of the few formula programs where Local Educational Agencies receive funds directly from the U.S. Department of Education rather than through their states. Impact Aid was first signed into law by President Harry S. Truman in 1950 and has been amended many times since then.

This program provides a payment in lieu of local taxes otherwise collected for Local Educational Agencies that are burdened by the presence of nontaxable federal land and installations, but are nonetheless responsible for educating children of federal personnel who live and/or work on these properties. Except for money earmarked specifically for children with disabilities, the aid becomes part of the Local Educational Agencies regular budget, and no specific restrictions are placed on the use of the funds.

After reviewing the results of the 2014-2015 Impact Aid Questionnaire three learning needs emerged as the highest priority to the parents and patrons of the Lapwai School District:

- 1) Enhanced whole child educational PreK-12 programs that develop positive human relations, self discipline, good citizenship, self-esteem, and success:
 - a. The Lapwai School District is currently implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (P.B.I.S). P.B.I.S. is a best-practice framework for improving academic and behavioral outcomes for all students. The purpose of this program is to increase academic time-on-task by reducing problem behaviors. The students are explicitly taught how to be respectful, responsible, and safe in all locations on the school grounds. Our goal with PBIS and bully prevention is to create a safe learning environment to maximize learning for all students. The elementary is also implementing the P.A.T.H.S. curriculum (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies), which encourages the development of strong social skills, problem solving, positive character traits, and bullying prevention, all which support academics. These research-based tools for teachers minimize learning interruptions and prevent bullying and other behaviors with strategic procedures and prevention techniques.

- b. Bullying is not accepted in our schools. Our zero tolerance approach to bullying can lead to serious consequences ranging from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension, expulsion, and police involvement. Students are encouraged to prevent bullying by refusing to join in, refusing to watch, standing up for the person being bullied, being a friend to a person being bullied, or getting help from an adult. Elementary students can earn a Bully Prevention Hero trophy by helping to prevent bullying. Middle-high students are also recognized during quarterly award assemblies for good citizenship. Together, we ensure all students will reach their full potential.
 - c. Grant funding has also increased the mental health counseling available in the Lapwai School District.
- 2) More exposure to career awareness and work experience, including better/more preparation for college or professional-technical training (College prep classes); *and*
- 3) More academic challenges and competitions or advanced coursework:
- a. The BPA (Business Professional Association) and FFA (Future Farmers of America) provide career awareness, work experience, and professional-technical opportunities for our students.
 - b. University of Idaho Upward Bound has an office at the High School. Their college preparation services include ACT assistance, dual enrollment opportunities, campus visits, and financial aid assistance.
 - c. Gear Up is a grant awarded to the District serving students in grades 9-10. It provides tutoring, a four-year renewable scholarship opportunity, financial aid and ACT assistance, and campus visits. Career exploration is a central component to Gear Up program offerings.
 - d. There are several academic and professional-technical opportunities for dual credit.
 - e. For those High School students with a 2.8 or higher GPA there is an Introduction to College Studies class available first semester and Advanced College Studies class available second semester through a partnership with Lewis-Clark State College.
 - f. The Middle-High has a College and Career Readiness Professional Learning Community working on a research-based approach to preparing students for graduation and the requirements and challenges after high school.
 - g. Dual enrollment courses and online classes through the Idaho Digital Learning Academy provide opportunities for advanced coursework with our High School students.
 - h. BPA, FFA, and Nez Perce Language students are participating in academic competitions with great success.

In addition to working on these priorities, we have also increased our partnership with the Nez Perce Tribe Education Department. The Nez Perce Tribal Education Partnership (STEP) Project is providing professional development, coaching, and resources related to culturally-relevant instructional strategies and increasing family engagement. The project focuses on improving the academic achievement of tribal students by meeting their unique educational and cultural needs. Through use of the Nez Perce Tribe Education Standards, aligned to the Idaho Common Core State Standards, we are working collaboratively to define what “culturally relevant” education means for today’s tribal students. This partnership has become a critical component to our success.

It is not too late to provide input. You are still welcome to complete and submit a survey which can be accessed on our district website at www.lapwaidistrict.org. I would like to thank the Lapwai School District Board of Trustees, Indian Parent Committee, Nez Perce Tribe Education Department, and our district administrators for their input in creating this year’s survey.