

Raising Leaders for Tomorrow Through Project-based Learning

This is Afterschool



Photo taken by PLC student

Program Profile

Parma Learning Center

The Parma Learning Center (PLC) in Parma, Idaho, is an afterschool program that serves 143 students in kindergarten through 8th grade across two sites. 73% of students receive free or reduced lunch each day. The median household income in Parma is \$33,508.

PLC believes in raising leaders for tomorrow through a program that includes enrichment activities focused on science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM), project- and skills-based learning, literacy support, and homework help.

PLC's mission is based on the motto: "show respect, make a good decision, and be a problem solver." And staff work diligently to build a clear, transparent culture and expectations and model them for students. Staff also teach empathy and bullying prevention and drug and alcohol use prevention through a partnership with the Idaho Office of Drug Policy. They emphasize building the desire in students to be contributors to their community.

A typical day for students

Parma Learning Center begins each afterschool day at their elementary site's cafeteria, where the PLC site director and staff welcome them. There, they can catch up with peers and faculty and enjoy an afternoon meal. Kindergartners through 4th graders then finish their homework and play outside. In the meantime, middle school students arrive in the cafeteria where they too are greeted by the staff, eat their meals, and spend time outdoors. The two groups will often interact, with older students leading sports games, reading, or STEAM activities. Both sites have a rotation of activities tailored to their educational emphasis: homework, physical education, STEAM, literacy, and enrichment, as well as community guest speakers.

Parma community partners regularly visit PLC to share their resources. For example, the 4-H University of Idaho, Canyon County Extension office, provides STEAM activities for middle school students, as does the Girl Scouts, which also supports "parent STEAM nights" and provides arts and craft activities. Eat Smart Idaho provides nutrition and cooking lessons to both parents and students, while Future

Farmers of America allows students to work in its community garden. The Parma Fire Department provides a week of fire safety lessons, including a realistic fire simulation exercise. Lifeways Behavioral Health provides outreach to parents on counseling services available for kids and families, while Second Steps provides preventative education and social and emotional learning development. Middle school participants also get to learn practical skills such as photography, digital citizenship and babysitting, and STEAM skills through 4-H, such as coding and engineering. Finally, staff work with the Idaho Consortium's Thinking Maps "Trainer of Trainers" curriculum for their learning and development. The teacher implements education according to the brain's patterns and teaches students about this learning pattern to apply it to their learning process in school.

Students have also had the opportunity to go on field trips to local farms, businesses, and the YMCA.

Parma Learning Center Parma School District, Idaho

Kindergarten-8th grade

Grades served

73%

Percent of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch

Percent of students who identify as Hispanic:

51%

Maxine Johnson Elementary School

43%

Parma Middle School

Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers

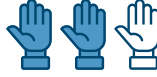
In Idaho, Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC)—local afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs that serve students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools—provide services for 5,824 kids and 94 communities.

In a nationwide study of students who regularly attend a Community Learning Center, teachers report that:



1 in 2

improved their math
and Language Arts grades



More than 2 in 3

improved their homework
completion and class participation



More than 3 in 5

improved their
behavior in class

Community Learning Centers bring together diverse partners to meet community needs. A typical program receives \$67,000 from partners to supplement its federal funding. Nationwide, partner contributions totaled more than \$1 billion between 2006 and 2010.

About the program

Staff at PLC work with students to harness the power of “not yet!” when they get frustrated along their learning journey. PLC staff remind them that learning is hard work and requires persistence. Staff members ask students, “What is a learner?” “How do you know you have learned that?” “What will we do next?”

“The language of learning” plays out during STEAM activities, where staff emphasize the design process of learning. PLC staff ask students to think about the problem, research how to solve it, imagine and plan out which materials they need, and create a plan. Then, they work to

implement the selected plan, test it, and then, if required, think about what could be done differently. PLC strives to teach students to be team players, adapt to new situations, and be problem solvers.

Parma High School students also have the opportunity to build their leadership skills, explore educational career paths, and reinforce their academics by being hired as afterschool staff. As a result of this experience, several have said they wanted to pursue careers in teaching.



**Idaho
Out-of-School
Network**

connecting youth & communities

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