



History of the 2022 Focus Grant

- A Members' Survey was conducted in 2018, with the following results:
 - 78% supported the idea of multi-year grants
 - 60% supported large-scale grants (more than \$50,000)
 - 80% supported or were open to the idea of making grants to fund a pressing community need
 - 87% supported sustainability grants
- After two years of membership surveys, meetings, and discussions, the WRWF reached consensus around the desire for greater impact; the board voted to award a larger grant of \$100,000 in the grant cycle 2021-2022, for likely renewal in 2023
- A Focus Grant exploratory committee was convened by the President and Grants Co-Chairs in September of 2020
- Possible focus areas were researched, discussed, and identified by the committee between September of 2020 and January of 2021 and voted on by the membership in March of 2021
- "Closing the Opportunity Gap in Education" received the most votes of three recommended areas for potential impact
- Now housed under the Grants Committee, the FG22 committee is charged with reviewing Letters of Inquiry and Grant Applications

Criteria for Applications (Possible Targets for Funding)

- Decreasing chronic achievement gaps between student sub-populations
- Providing "catch up" instruction and support for students who have experienced learning loss due to COVID
- Bolstering early learning programs for students who are lacking school readiness skills, and/or professional training for early childhood providers who can have an impact on student readiness
- Increasing families' ability to support the academic achievement of their children
- Increasing rates of post-secondary continuing education for high school students
- Building knowledge and expertise in the science of learning, especially the science of learning to read, in the community at large

Why These Targets?

- 43-45% of the students in Blaine County are of Hispanic origin and 23% are emergent English speakers
- 30% of students are from low-income families, by federal criteria, and at any given time, 60-90 students are experiencing homelessness

- Blaine County has no Head Start program; there are places in BC preschool classrooms, but needier children may not access them for various reasons
- Over half the students entering kindergarten do not demonstrate “readiness to learn” by state standards; the “gaps” in cognition, language, social skills, and pre-academic learning begin well before kindergarten
- In 2019, 69% of White students were proficient in reading between kindergarten and 3rd grade, but only 33% of Hispanic/Latino children were proficient
- Before the Covid pandemic, 60 to 65% of high school graduates had enrolled in some form of post-secondary education within two years after HS
- Covid put many students at a serious disadvantage because parents or families were not able to help children with technology or supervise their remote learning
- “The Pandemic Widened US Educational Gap to a Gulf” according to a McKinsey report based on NWEA’s recent assessment data; many students have lost up to six months of learning, and some a whole year

What “Greater Impact” Could Mean

- Deepening community awareness of and involvement in ways to help underserved kids benefit from education
- Better utilization of valuable resources – time, funding, expertise
- Closer and longer-term connections between WRWF members and the recipients of grant support
- Creation of a sustainable enterprise with which the WRWF is identified
 - Presently, \$100,000 was granted this year (2021) for education-related projects, under four separate non-profits, three of which are only for a summer or one school year
 - Over 15 years, the WRWF has often funded education-related projects, totaling \$438,000, but effects/outcomes are difficult to pin down

Timeline for 2022 Focus Grant

- September 1, Letters of Inquiry (LOI) open to applicants
- October 1, LOI due
- November 1, Application process begins
- December 1, Applications due from nonprofits
- January – Site visits conducted
- February – FG22 committee presents recommendations for finalists to the Grants Committee and to the Board
- March 2, Grant finalists present to the membership
- March 25, Voting on finalists closes
- Early April, Focus Grant is announced