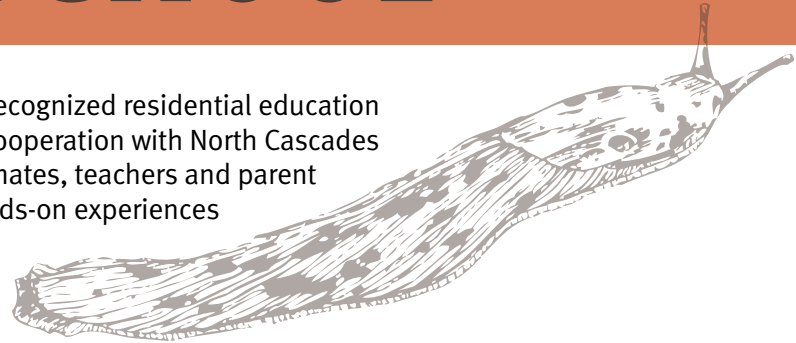


NORTH CASCADES INSTITUTE MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

2016
SUMMARY REPORT

Mountain School is North Cascades Institute's nationally recognized residential education program offered at the Environmental Learning Center in cooperation with North Cascades National Park. Students spend three days with their classmates, teachers and parent chaperones exploring the North Cascades ecosystem. Hands-on experiences in reading, writing, science, math, social studies, art and physical fitness connect students to the natural and cultural history of the mountains.



CONNECTION to nature and fellow classmates through cooperative learning



KNOWLEDGE of the North Cascades ecosystems and the **SCIENTIFIC PROCESS**



INSPIRATION to continue learning and connecting with public lands and the natural world



Application of **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP** principles in students' lives and communities

NEW & NOTABLE



PHOTOS BY COREY ARNOLD, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Record demand and participation. Demand for Mountain School is at an all-time high and growing! We have filled the program to capacity and are exploring ways to expand.

New teacher resources and training. We are developing resources and curriculum for teachers who bring their classes to Mountain School to use throughout the year and build upon their Mountain School experience.

◀ **In the press.** Mountain School was mentioned in a *National Geographic* article as a program that succeeds at engaging diverse young people and connecting them to our national parks. To read an excerpt, visit bit.ly/2kqxtUb.

“Deep in the forested embrace of the upper Skagit River Valley, you can find the next two generations of Americans getting to know a national park. I heard hooting like owls and howling like wolves, coming from a circle of fifth graders and their wilderness instructors.”
— Timothy Egan, *National Geographic*

AT A GLANCE

Tuition: \$325 per student (subsidized on sliding scale based on percentage of students enrolled in Free and Reduced School Lunch program)

Total participants: 2,891

2,407 **YOUTH**
participants

\$124 average subsidized
PRICE/STUDENT

78% **PUBLIC**
SCHOOLS

484 **TEACHER**
& PARENT
chaperones

95% of schools
RECEIVED
FINANCIAL AID

14% **SPECIAL**
EDUCATION
students

43% **TITLE I**
low-income
schools

38% **FREE &**
REDUCED
lunch programs

35% identify as
PEOPLE
OF COLOR

STEWARDSHIP

In partnership with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group and Bellingham Parks & Recreation Department, 722 students contributed 1,431 hours of service work through post-Mountain School stewardship projects. Projects included salmon habitat restoration, removal of non-native plants and planting and mulching around native plants.

These stewardship projects instill a sense of empowerment and show students how to make a positive impact in their communities. Projects are conducted within walking distance of each school to highlight the accessibility of wild places close to students' homes.

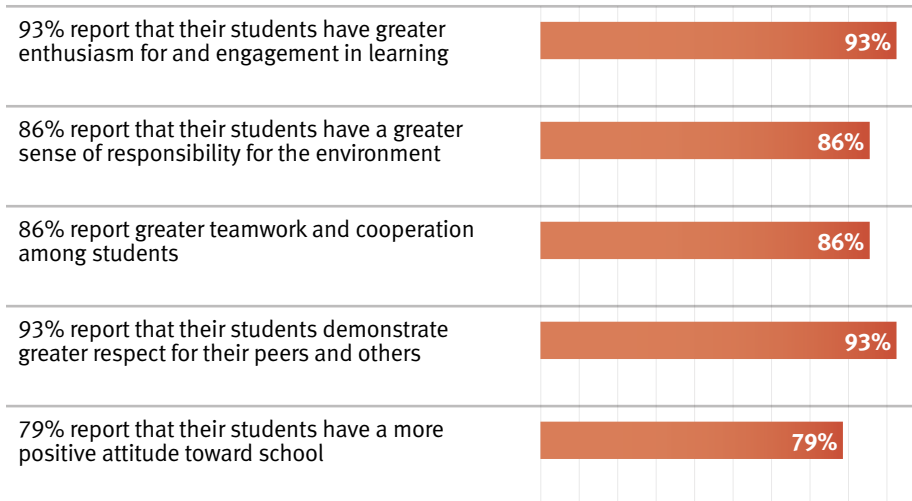


PHOTOS BY INSTITUTE STAFF

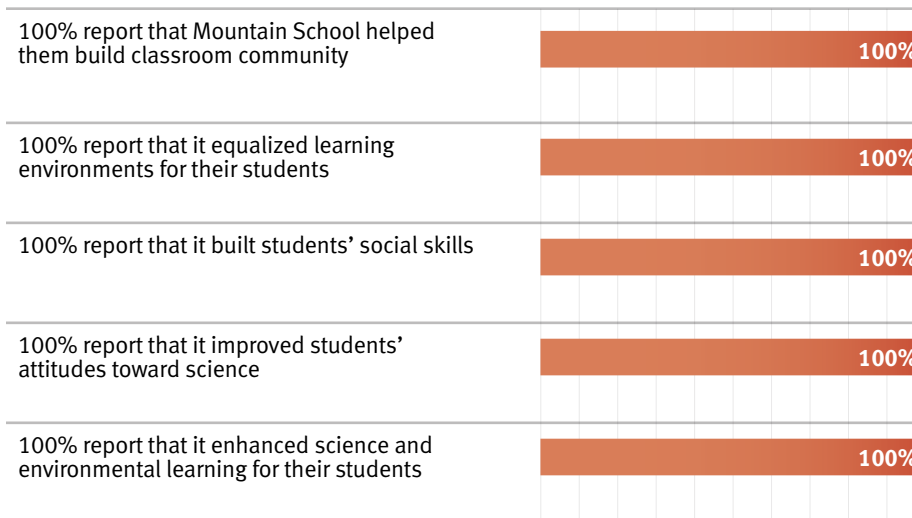
OUTCOMES & EVALUATION

We conduct teacher surveys that assess students' short- and long-term development. Teachers consistently report emotional and physical transformations as a result of student participation.

TEACHERS REPORT LASTING IMPACTS ON THEIR STUDENTS AND CLASSROOM COMMUNITIES



TEACHERS REPORT THAT MOUNTAIN SCHOOL HELPS THEM AS TEACHERS



“My favorite part was the solo hike because it felt so calming and I could feel the breeze and smell the fresh air. It felt like a magical moment.”



PHOTOS BY PATTY DIRENZO

“I learned the names of trees and plants and hiked all the way up a mountain to see a waterfall.”



“My overall favorite thing about Mountain School is that I got to know my friends better.”

“The most valuable part was equalizing the status of all students. So many students shine here who really struggle in the classroom setting.” - Teacher



“The most valuable aspect was seeing the kids realize how interconnected all the systems are and the importance of their role in protecting and enhancing our environment.” - Chaperone



PATHWAYS FOR YOUTH: EMMA'S STORY

Over 15 years ago, Emma Ewert came to Mountain School as a 5th grader from Lopez Island for three rainy days in the North Cascades. In 2016 she came back, this time as an instructor and graduate student in North Cascades Institute's Graduate M.Ed. Residency Program.

“Teaching Mountain School was what got me to apply to the North Cascades Institute graduate program in the first place,” she says. “When thinking about the kind of education I wanted to be a part of, I kept remembering how fun Mountain School was for me.”

Memories of Mountain School have informed much of Emma's teaching and lesson planning. She remembers activities that impacted her as a 5th grader and tries to highlight those for her students. Emma inspired Mountain School students with her story throughout the year.

“Having the awareness of what this program had done for me and could do for my students was a constant reminder of the power this short, three day program has.”

2016 PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

Mountain School is made possible with the generous support from hundreds of individuals and organizations.



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Discuren Charitable Foundation
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Ginny Darvill
The Glascoe Family

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Schiff Foundation
The Sharing Foundation
Skagit Community Foundation

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Stillaguamish Tribe
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Whatcom Community Foundation -
Bellingham Youth Philanthropy Fund for
the Environment

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INSPIRE AND EMPOWER ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP FOR ALL THROUGH EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN NATURE



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