

The Impact of Education in the Siuslaw Region

April 2019

Executive Summary

Siuslaw Vision convened a team of community members in the spring of 2018 to evaluate the Vision's impact on education in the Siuslaw Region. Working with consultants from Dialogues in Action, the volunteer group learned evaluation techniques and designed and implemented an evaluation of the Educated People element of the Siuslaw Vision. The purpose was to identify gaps in education offerings and reveal themes, opportunities, and needs.

Research Methods: Qualitative & Quantitative Analysis

For the qualitative evaluation, an in-depth interview protocol was designed to compile data about the structural changes resulting from the Vision's program. A stratified sampling technique was implemented to select a representative sample and 37 interviews were completed; data was analyzed inductively using a modified version of thematic analysis. The most significant themes were brought forward as findings in this report. For the quantitative evaluation, a survey was designed and distributed to collect data. The survey was completed by 116 respondents.

Report Findings At-a-Glance

1. Education is the Key!, 2. Choose Your Own Learning Adventure, 3. RSVP to Learn!, 4. Everybody Needs a Learning Buddy, 5. The Early Bird Gets the Learn, 6. It's Not Just the Money, 7. We're All in This Together, 8. You, As a Teacher!, 9. You Don't Know What You Don't Know, 10. The Awareness-Engagement Feedback Loop, 11. Connecting the Dots.

Intended Impacts & Findings

The Vision's intended impacts were learning desire, learning ability, learning connectivity, and community capacity to support learning. The interview and survey questions were designed to elicit responses to evaluate whether and to what extent those impacts occurred. The findings naturally grouped into three general categories: personal interest, motivation, and welcome; obstacles to engaging in learning opportunities; and, engagement now and into the future.

Data indicated Siuslaw Residents derived joy and personal satisfaction from learning. Education was seen as a way to achieve goals and enrich the community. For many Residents, lack of time, family obligations, lack of reliable transportation, lack of internet access, and cost, were barriers to education. Data also pointed to a perceived community split between working-age and retired people, and between long-time Residents and newer transplants. Lack of a community center was identified as an impediment to learning; many in the Region envisioned a community center model as a hub for learning, teaching, and sharing information. Data showed that increased awareness leads to higher participation; personal invitations pay off and can even overcome perceived learning barriers.



How can we use this info to build community through learning?

Findings revealed the Vision could maximize education participation by supporting events that minimize barriers; there was a distinct need for child/family-friendly events, and for learning among peer groups. By making an effort to be inclusive, groups would help bridge community divides. Bringing people together in shared experience could improve understanding and acceptance through recognition of shared interests, values, and aspirations while learning in peer groups can facilitate entrance to education for the less engaged. Communication about upcoming events was not yet effective. Organizers should use multiple avenues to reach the broadest possible audience.



Learning together strengthens our sense of community

The evaluation identified a strong belief in the Siuslaw Region that learning together could bring the community together. Once people took part in learning events and began to feel they were a part of the community they were more likely to seek out and participate in future learning opportunities.

Read the full report online at:
www.RiverCal.org/EducationReport

About Siuslaw Vision – Putting People at the Center

The Siuslaw Vision is the result of a two-year community visioning process that included more than 1,200 Residents from all of the Siuslaw Region communities from Dunes City to Deadwood. From survey results and community conversations, the Vision identified six elements to focus on:

- Working people (jobs/economy),
- Happy people (health and human services),
- Educated people (lifelong learning),
- Connected people (infrastructure/public services),
- Creative people (arts and culture), and
- Active people (recreation/environment).

The Vision Keepers steering committee and contractors work to support projects that are important to the people in our community and to connect people with each other and with resources to help them accomplish their goals.

For more information about Siuslaw Vision or to
get involved, contact
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