



THE SUMMIT

ELEVATING EDUCATION AT BLAINE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT - SummerBridge Program



Photo courtesy of Pam Benham/Blaine County Education Foundation

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SummerBridge Director Kiley Hoefer

SummerBridge 2025: A Powerful Partnership for Student Success

This summer, approximately 280 elementary students participated in the [SummerBridge](#) program at [Alturas Elementary School](#), held from June 23 to July 25. SummerBridge is powered by a dynamic coalition that includes the Blaine County School District, Wood River YMCA, College of Idaho, Sun Valley Community School, Lee Pesky Learning Center, and Far + Wise, along with a wide network of generous community supporters.

The program strikes a unique balance between academic enrichment and the energy of a summer camp. Each week blends reading and math instruction with hands-on learning in science, technology, engineering, art, and a nationally recognized social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. Students explored everything from a planetarium to local lakes and ice caves. Every



Friday was devoted to experiential learning throughout the Wood River Valley, sparking curiosity and building confidence through outdoor adventure.

“When students felt successful in SummerBridge, it increased their self-esteem and their positive attitude toward school,” said Kiley Hoefer, co-principal of Blaine County School District. “We had parents share that they usually struggle to get their child out of bed for school—but that wasn’t the case this summer.”

Students were nominated by their teachers based on academic need and invited to attend free of charge. Families met with educators ahead of time to reinforce the importance of attendance and engagement, ensuring that students most at risk received full support.



Photo courtesy of Pam Benham/Blaine County Education Foundation

The results speak for themselves. Last year, SummerBridge participants posted an average gain of +12.7 points in literacy and +27.6 points in math between spring and fall assessments. While this year’s data won’t be released until the fall, early feedback indicates another year of meaningful academic progress.

Yet the impact of SummerBridge goes far beyond test scores. By helping more students start the school year on track, the District can better target school-year interventions, making smarter use of limited resources. The program has also become a pipeline for future educators: interns and visiting staff from the College of Idaho and Teach For America often fall in love with the Wood River Valley, opening the door for future recruitment.



At its core, SummerBridge is about student success, opportunity, and community.

“We believe every child deserves the chance to succeed,” said Anna Nielsen, Associate Executive Director of Education at the YMCA. “SummerBridge is how we make that belief real—together.”

None of this would be possible without the generosity of donors and a community deeply invested in its children. Funding comes through donations



Photo courtesy of Pam Benham/Blaine County Education Foundation

to participating nonprofit organizations and support from the Blaine County School District’s supplemental levy. The community has consistently shown its willingness to invest in a brighter future for all students.

A key component of the program’s success is its 4:1 student-to-staff ratio, which allows for highly

individualized support. This summer’s staffing included:

- 40 classroom staff and interns from the [Wood River YMCA](#)
- 10 classroom staff from [Far + Wise](#)
- 18 certified educators from Blaine County School District
- 10 reading specialists from the [Lee Pesky Learning Center](#)

The District also provided essential support services, including food service, janitorial staff, and student transportation, ensuring smooth operations and equitable access.

As Blaine County looks to the future, SummerBridge continues to be a shining example of what’s possible when a community invests in its children—not just for the summer, but for a lifetime.





Photo courtesy of Wood River YMCA

