

Bryan Williams
News staff writer

Local school district 321's After School program is now receiving additional help from a new BYU-Idaho practicum program.

After-school programs are organized classes provided free to students K-12. Students stay after school and participate in a variety of activities including sports, crafts, help with homework, as well as take time to develop specific skills.

Students involved with this new practicum begin by first assisting after-school program teachers in their classes; later in the semester, students will be expected to lead their own classes.

“I’m excited. It will be a really good experience. I’ve never done anything like this before,” said Ashley Abegglen, a senior majoring in child development, participating in the program.

Both the community and volunteers can benefit from this type of a program. Volunteers receive experience to facilitate their learning while the school districts benefit from the additional help.

Like any new program, it has its difficulties. BYU-I does not have the same academic schedule as local school districts. That affects the schools mostly at the end of semesters and near breaks where some students may not be available to work.

Despite some of the difficulties students and employees are hopeful and still see the benefit that such a practicum could offer. Lisa Jackson, site coordinator of Kennedy Elementary School's After School program said regarding the practicum, “It can be very beneficial for ensuring stability.”

According to a 2002-2003 school year survey conducted by the After School Alliance, 23 percent of Idaho's K-12 students are responsible for taking care of themselves after school. After-school programs aim to provide these students with uplifting activities, keeping them active and safe.