Tigers and Grizzlies offer new tutoring opportunity to students with CEI partnership

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Skyline and Idaho Falls high school students are flocking to a new tutoring program being offered on-site at their schools in collaboration with College of Eastern Idaho.

“I started going to the tutoring because I have loss-of-credit absences, so just missing school,” Idaho Falls junior Maria Villasez said. “Not going to lie, I thought it was going to be boring, and I was just going to sit there. But I was behind on my math, so I was able to catch up on my math, and I brought my grade up to a B.”
The Tiger Tutoring program provides after-school assistance from 4 to 6 p.m. every Tuesday at the Idaho Falls High School Media Center, though it’s proven so popular that administrators are planning to move the location to the IFHS cafeteria for additional space. “It’s a really good place to get stuff done in because it’s so quiet and there’s so many ways to get help there,” freshman Claire Belnap said.

On Tuesday, 60 students came to work on assignments and receive help from three CEI math tutors in geometry, algebra and algebra II along with writing and science/English language learner tutors.

“It’s a great program that Idaho Falls High School has put together through this partnership with CEI providing tutoring for students in specific subject areas — lots of math and then also some writing and science,” District 91 Communications and Public Information Officer Margaret Wimborne said. “We’ve just had great participation from students who are eager to close those gaps, get ready for finals and do well for the year.”

About 60% of students attend to make up for loss-of-credit absences while they complete homework and the remaining 40% participate to receive help with homework or to ask questions.

The opportunity is the brainchild of new Idaho Falls High School Dean of Students Matt Houser, who previously taught physics, chemistry and science at the high school. “I taught here for 12 years,” Houser said. “I always had kids and parents asking me, ‘Do we offer after school tutoring?’ And we didn’t.”

In meeting with CEI Interim Director of Academic Support Connor Sorenson, Houser learned that CEI already provides tutoring to the community.
“He mentioned that actually CEI has free tutoring for everybody, and that’s even high school students,” Houser said. Houser asked CEI Tutoring Center Senior Coordinator Dale Mommer if their tutors would be willing to come once a week on Tuesday evenings to assist students.

Since the program launched on Oct. 10, attendance has risen dramatically.

At Skyline High School, graduation advocates have been connecting students to CEI’s existing tutoring services for several years. Skyline also expanded to on-site tutoring this week with 108 students participating in the initial session. “It was a really positive experience, and it was really, really cool to see so many students who wanted to learn, and wanted to get extra help,” Skyline Principal Josh Newell said.

Skyline officials plan to offer weekly tutoring next semester and will announce the day of the week when the Grizzlies’ tutoring will be offered after students return from Thanksgiving break.

School administrators are excited to see how the program will help students boost their grades, improve attendance, connect them with resources and engage them in learning.