



New Jersey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Year 2 Report 2013-14 Program Year

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Executive Summary

Information summarized in this report is based on data collected and analyzed by American Institutes for Research (AIR) as part of a statewide evaluation of the New Jersey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs, including data from 52 sub-grantees and 120 centers.¹ Results represent findings based on activities delivered during the 2013-14 school year. The purpose of this executive summary is to (1) set the context for the evaluation design with regard to a primary focus on program quality, (2) outline the evaluation questions and methods, and (3) summarize key findings within each of the identified evaluation questions. To set the context for the evaluation design, a brief discussion on program quality, AIR’s framework for understanding afterschool program quality, and the leading indicators of afterschool program quality developed in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) are provided. Following the discussion on program quality, the evaluation questions and methods are outlined and a summary of key findings within each of the identified evaluation questions is presented.

NJDOE Goals and Objectives and Program Quality

From the perspective of NJDOE, programs receiving 21st CCLC funding from the state should “supplement the education of students in Grades 4–12 and...assist students in attaining the skills necessary to meet New Jersey’s Curriculum Content Standards” (State of New Jersey, Department of the Treasury, 2013, p. 1). The staff members at NJDOE responsible for administering the 21st CCLC program have taken steps to further operationalize this goal by specifying a series of objectives that outline what is to be achieved in this regard and by what means. Collectively, the domain of goals and objectives established by NJDOE either directly or indirectly reinforce the primacy of student achievement and behavioral change as the outcomes of greatest interest and suggest that programs can take steps to realize these outcomes as follows:

- Establish and maintain partnerships and collaborative relationships within the community.
- Adopt strategies and practices to support student skill building and mastery, both academically and from a youth development perspective.
- Implement activities that promote parental involvement and provide opportunities to the families of participating students.
- Ensure measures and approaches are in place to assess program quality and effectiveness, and use this information to support quality improvement.

Each of these operational elements and approaches are represented in recent efforts in the field of afterschool education to identify the features of high-quality afterschool programs (Granger, Durlak, Yohalem, & Reisner, 2007; Little, 2007; Wilson-Ahlstrom & Yohalem, 2007; Vandell et al., 2005; Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2009). The measures in this evaluation have been selected in light of these operational elements, and in consideration of the current literature with respect to student outcomes.

¹ Note that the number of sites and centers include those that may not have operated for the full year.

Leading Indicators

A primary goal of the statewide evaluation was to provide 21st CCLC grantees with data to inform program improvement efforts regarding their implementation of research-supported best practices. Building from the quality framework, AIR and NJDOE worked collaboratively to define a series of leading indicators predicated on data collected as part of the statewide evaluation. The leading indicators were meant to enhance existing information/data available to 21st CCLC grantees regarding how they fared in the adoption of program strategies and approaches associated with high-quality afterschool programming. Specifically, the leading indicator system was designed to do the following:

- Summarize data collected as part of the statewide evaluation in terms of how well the grantee and its respective centers² are adopting research-supported best practices.
- Allow grantees to compare their level of performance on leading indicators with similar programs and statewide averages.
- Facilitate internal discussions about areas of program design and delivery that may warrant additional attention from a program improvement perspective.

The leading indicators were first organized into three overarching domains defined by program level:

- *Organizational Processes* relate to practices that are defined for the full program and that provide an infrastructure to support implementation of effective practice in the design, delivery, and evaluation of afterschool programming.
- *Quality at the Point-of-Service* relates to practices that occur at the point-of-service, where staff members and youth directly interact during the provision of an activity or offering. The focus at this level is on the instructional practice of individual staff members.
- *Participation and Engagement* refers to the level of participation by youth and adults in activities provided by 21st CCLC programs. Participants cannot be expected to be positively impacted by the program unless they actually participate in program offerings and activities.

The leading indicators also can be organized into more specific domains of *quality practice*:

- Strategies and practices that support the academic development of participating youth
- Strategies and practices that support the development of participating youth from a youth development perspective
- Strategies and practices that support the engagement and development of parents and adult family members

² Throughout this report, the term *center* is used to refer to the physical location where 21st CCLC programming is delivered. Each grantee operates at least one center, although it is more common for a given grantee to operate multiple centers. Most, but not all, centers are located in public schools. The term *site* also is commonly used to refer to an individual center.

- Strategies and practices that support the utilization and engagement of partners
- Strategies and practices that support program improvement efforts

Evaluation Questions

The information collected and analyzed in relation to the 2013-14 school year was meant to answer four primary evaluation questions related to the implementation of the New Jersey 21st CCLC program and related to the impact of the program on desired student outcomes:

1. What were the primary characteristics of programs funded by 21st CCLC and the students served?
2. How did centers perform on the leading indicators defined for the program, and how is this level of performance relevant to thinking about what additional supports, training, and professional development NJDOE should potentially invest in?
3. How many youth with individual education plans (IEPs) were served by the program, and what outcome levels are associated with their participation in the 21st CCLC program in terms of mathematics and reading assessments, truancy, and retention?
4. To what extent is there evidence that students participating in 21st CCLC program services and activities demonstrate better outcomes compared with students not participating in the program, specifically with respect to:
 - a. Higher academic achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics
 - b. Lower truancy and retention rates

Data Sources

To address the aforementioned evaluation questions, data were collected from the following sources:

- **Program Activity and Review System (PARS21).** PARS21 is a Web-based data collection system developed and maintained by the NJDOE that collects directly from grantees a broad array of program characteristic, student demographic, attendance, and outcome data throughout the program year.
- **Staff Survey.** The purpose of the online staff survey was to obtain information from staff members working directly with youth in programs funded by 21st CCLC about the extent to which they engage in practices suggested by the afterschool research literature as likely to be supportive of both positive academic and youth development outcomes.
- **New Jersey 21st CCLC Evaluation Template and Reporting System.** The 21st CCLC Evaluation Template and Reporting System (ETRS) is a Web-based data collection application designed to obtain center-level information about the characteristics and performance of afterschool programs funded by 21st CCLC, based on information garnered from local evaluation efforts. The system is designed to collect information at two time points: (1) midyear through a given school year and (2) at the end of a given programming cycle.

- **New Jersey Standards Measurement and Resource for Teaching (NJ SMART) Data.** Steps also were taken in fall 2012 and in early 2013 to obtain access to New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) scores in reading and mathematics from the NJ SMART data warehouse maintained by NJDOE for 21st CCLC participants served during the course of the 2013-14 school year for students in Grades 4 to 8. Similar scores also were obtained for 21st CCLC students in Grade 11 that took the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) in spring 2012. Similar data also were obtained for those students attending the same schools as the 21st CCLC participant population that did not participate in the program during these periods.

Analysis

Descriptive analysis of PARS21 data on grantee, center, and student characteristics along with cluster analysis techniques were used to provide an overall description of New Jersey 21st CCLC programs operating in the 2013-14 school year. Both descriptive analysis and Rasch analysis of PARS21, ETRS, and staff survey responses were used to assess the extent to which centers implemented research-supported best practices aligned with the previously described leading indicator system. To assess relationships among student and center characteristics and student outcomes, hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was used to explore direct and indirect associations. Finally, to evaluate the impact of 21st CCLC programming on students' academic outcomes, propensity score matching was used to first identify a viable group on nonparticipating students and propensity scores (the probability of a student to participate in 21st CCLC programming) were used in HLM models comparing NJASK and HSPA reading and mathematics performance for 21st CCLC participants and nonparticipants.

Summary of Key Findings

A summary of key evaluation findings is provided below.

Primary Characteristics of Programs Funded by 21st CCLC and the Students Served

Grantee Characteristics

- A majority of grantees (67 percent) were in their third, fourth, or fifth year of program operation, with most of these in their fifth year (46 percent).
- Grantees were split between the categories of school-based (50 percent) and non-school-based (50 percent) grantee.

Center Characteristics

- Centers were grouped into staffing clusters based on staffing configuration. A plurality of centers, 43 percent, were identified as employing mostly school-day teachers, program staff (not otherwise classified by type), and paraprofessionals; the next highest group of centers employed mostly school-day teachers, without much reliance on other staffing types (27 percent). The third-highest group of centers employed mostly program staff and some teachers (23 percent).
- The average student-to-staff ratio was 12 students for each program staff member.

- Centers mainly served children in elementary and middle schools exclusively (75 percent of centers).
- The majority of centers chose career awareness (39 percent) or science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (35 percent) as their primary activity theme.

Student Characteristics

- A total of 16,071 students attended 21st CCLC programming for at least one day.
- Slightly more than two-thirds of the students (70.9 percent) attended 30 days or more, and slightly more than one third (37.0 percent) participated for 90 days or more.
- A total of 743 students (4.6 percent of all students) were identified as having an individual education plan (IEP). Note, however, that this number may underrepresent the true number of attendees with IEPs, since 21st CCLC grantees may not always know whether a particular attendee has an IEP.
- The typical student attended an average of 21 hours of reading activities and 14 hours of mathematics activities (average of total hours across the reporting period).
- Thirty percent of students attended 21st CCLC programming for two consecutive years or more.
- The most common activity profiles were associated with youth who spent the majority of their time participating in academic enrichment activities (24 percent) or tutoring (26 percent).
- A majority of 21st CCLC participants were Hispanic/Latino (46 percent) or Black (34 percent). Most attendees (76 percent) qualified for free or reduced-price lunch.

Leading Indicator Results

Steps were taken in preparation of the 2013-14 report to summarize center performance relative to each of the leading indicators adopted by NJDOE. Primary findings are summarized by each of the five quality domains underpinning the indicator system. Note: Excepting the scale titles, language in italics indicates survey response categories as provided to respondents.

Quality Domain 1: Leading indicators related to strategies and practices that support the academic development of participating youth. Centers operating 21st CCLC programming during the course of the 2013-14 school year demonstrated the following practices:

- Widespread adoption of specific instructional strategies to support academic skill building among participating students (leading indicator 1), with 99 percent of centers indicating they used strategies to support the academic development of participating youth.
- Access to school-based data on student academic functioning and needs (leading indicators 2 and 3). For leading indicator 2, information on student academic performance was *rarely* or *occasionally used*, linking with the school day was *somewhat of a strategy* or a *major strategy*, and communications with school-day teachers occurred *once per grading period* to *monthly*. For leading indicator 3, 88.9 percent of all centers

obtained at least some data on how well youth are functioning in core academic areas and use that information to inform program design.

- *Frequent* intentionality in designing activity sessions to support youth growth and development in mathematics and reading/language arts (leading indicator 18).

Less common was the offering of academic-related sessions and participation in academic-related activities in accordance with the performance targets specified for leading indicators 5 and 21, with 5.9 and 16.9 percent of centers meeting the thresholds set for these indicators (respectively).³

Quality Domain 2: Leading indicators related to strategies and practices that support the development of participating youth from a youth development perspective. Centers operating 21st CCLC programming during the course of the 2013-14 school year were characterized by the following levels of performance on the indicators associated with this quality domain:

- Almost half (47 percent) of centers were taking steps to assess youth functioning on social and emotional competencies (meeting performance thresholds for both leading indicators 7 and 8). Additionally, 70 percent of centers met the performance threshold related to infusion of components meant to support youth development-related behaviors and social-emotional learning (SEL) functioning of participating youth, and 65 percent of centers met the performance threshold in terms of actual youth participation in SEL activities during the fall semester of 2013 (leading indicators 9 and 20, respectively). Although many questions remain regarding how centers are infusing youth development and SEL components into programming, the leading indicators related to this quality domain seem to suggest a significant portion of the New Jersey 21st CCLC programs are dedicating meaningful effort to the design and delivery of this type of programming.
- In terms of activities provided at the point-of-service meant to support youth development, statewide averages on the *Staff Capacity to Create Interactive and Engaging Environment* scale (leading indicator 16) and the *Practices Supportive of Positive Youth Development and Opportunities for Youth Ownership* scales of the staff survey (with both scales' items composing leading indicator 17) suggest staff adoption of such practices are more common than not: for leading indicator 16, the mean statewide scale score was in the *agree* portion of the scale, indicating staff members believe their peers largely are providing interactive and engaging settings for youth; for leading indicator 17, the mean statewide scale score indicated that select opportunities for youth development were available *occasionally* and that staff largely *agree* that youth ownership opportunities are provided. However, for each of these indicators, 12 percent and 20 percent of centers (respectively) had an average scale score which indicated these practices were only occurring *occasionally* to largely *not at all*.

³ For indicator 5 to be met, fifty percent or more of a given program's activity sessions had to have been intended to support student growth and development in either mathematics and/or reading/language arts. For indicator 21 to be met, 75 percent of participants attending 15 days or more during the first semester had to have participated in activities that intentionally support growth in mathematics and/or reading/language arts for at least 50 percent of their total time in the program.

Quality Domain 3: Leading indicators related to strategies and practices that support the engagement and development of parents and adult family members. Centers operating 21st CCLC programming during the course of the 2013-14 school year were characterized by the following levels of performance on the indicators associated with this quality domain:

- In terms of engaging in practices to support and cultivate parent involvement and engagement (leading indicator 14), most centers were found to do so just *sometimes* (71 percent of centers fell within this range of the scale), as opposed to *never* (6 percent of centers) or *frequently* (21 percent).
- Seventy-one percent of centers indicated they had adopted measures to assess the program's impact on parent education and involvement (leading indicator 15).
- Only a small percentage of programs (5 percent) were able to engage parents or other adult family members in activities for at least 15 percent of the students served in the program during the fall semester of 2013 (leading indicator 22).

Many of these findings are consistent with previous leading indicator results and demonstrate the ongoing challenges of reaching out to and engaging parents and adult family members of participating 21st CCLC students.

Quality Domain 4: Leading indicators related to strategies and practices that support the utilization and engagement of partners. Centers operating 21st CCLC programming during the course of the 2013-14 school year were characterized by the following levels of performance on the indicators associated with this quality domain:

- In terms of engaging partners in collaborative efforts to promote a shared vision and understanding of the work (leading indicator 12), the mean statewide scale score indicated that most centers engaged in such practices *formally* (as opposed to doing such things with partners on a *informal* basis or *not at all*), and that partner staff members were *moderately* involved in the provision of select activities.
- About 21 percent of activity sessions delivered during the fall semester of 2013 included at least one staff member employed directly by a partner (leading indicator 13).

It is our sense that a clearer articulation of what effective partnerships may look like in relation to the design and delivery of 21st CCLC programming may be warranted, particularly in terms of using partners strategically to expand the domain and diversity of activities that can be offered to participating youth.

Quality Domain 5: Leading indicators related to strategies and practices that support program improvement efforts. Centers operating 21st CCLC programming during the course of the 2013-14 school year were characterized by the following levels of performance on the indicators associated with this quality domain:

- Eighty-three percent of centers reported engaging in some form of self-assessment process employing a specific tool or instrument during the 2013-14 school year (leading indicator 10).
- The average statewide scale score for internal communication (leading indicator 11) indicated collaborative efforts were undertaken *once a month*. Scale response options

included *never, a couple of times per year, about once a month, and nearly every week*. This suggests that collaborative efforts were somewhat frequently implemented during the 2013-14 programming period. (Note that this shows an increase in internal communication compared to 2012-13.)

Within the afterschool field, self-assessment processes have become one of the primary mechanisms of supporting quality improvement efforts. There are new opportunities to capitalize on this approach in New Jersey with the recent development of a self-assessment tool by the New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition aligned with the state's newly created state afterschool quality standards. Finding ways to make use of this tool to support 21st CCLC implementation efforts will be an important task to undertake in the future.

Program Impact Estimates

The evaluation team employed a quasi-experimental research design to examine the impact of 21st CCLC program participation on reading and mathematics achievement as measured by the NJ ASK assessment. Additionally, using similar models the evaluation team analyzed the impact of 21st CCLC program participation on retention and truancy rates. Key findings from these analyses follow. Note that the results of these analyses are sufficiently robust to warrant attribution of the 21st CCLC program, though the design of the impact study is not as robust as a pure random assignment.

For assessment results, there is a positive impact of 21st CCLC programming on mathematics achievement for 30+ day and 70+ day treatments for all students (pooled across grades and proficiency levels), and a positive impact on mathematics achievement for both 30+ day and 70+ day treatment for a sub-set of students who were classified as below proficient. For reading achievement, there were no significant effects observed for either the 30+ day or 70+ day treatments, but there were positive, significant effects for both attendance treatment groups when looking only at participants below proficient in either mathematics or reading.

When investigating the effect of 21st CCLC programming on all participants' mathematics assessment scores across grades, the effect sizes were fairly small. For results related to mathematics, the 30+ day treatment group achieved a statistically significant positive impact of .021 standard deviation units, while the 70+ day treatment group achieved a statistically significant positive impact of .031 standard deviation units. For assessment results related to reading, neither the 30+ day treatment group nor the 70+ day treatment groups witnessed statistically significant results. For students below proficient in mathematics, however, the effect sizes on mathematics assessment improvement were larger, and of significance; the 30+ day treatment group achieved a statistically significant positive impact of .095 standard deviation units, while the 70+ day treatment group achieved a .100 standard deviation unit positive impact compared to non-participants. When analyzing students below proficient in terms of reading assessment results, there were also statistically positive effects, albeit more modest effects: The 30+ day treatment group achieved an impact of .044 standard deviation units, while the 70+ day treatment group achieved an improvement of .034 standard deviation units. For contextual reference, note that Hill, Bloom, Black, and Lipsey (2008) found that, on average, the effect of a *whole year* of learning on assessment results (counting time both in and out of school) averaged .31 standard deviation units for reading and .42 standard deviation units for mathematics. Seen in

this light, the effect of the program on mathematics improvement among below-proficient students was substantial.

The effect of the 21st CCLC program on grade retention is somewhat unclear, and in some cases seemed to run counter to the theorized outcome. That is, in some cases higher participation in the program showed higher probabilities of grade retention. However, this may simply be a reflection of the students likely to participate at higher levels, because these students may have greater academic need and be more likely to be retained. Additionally, there is some question about the quality of the retention variable within the data. Staff at NJDOE familiar with the data indicate that the retention variable is only populated if a school staff member changes a student's grade at a particular point in time (near the end of the school year); if the grade level is corrected in September, the retained flag does not get set, and the student is consequently not marked as retained. The findings pertaining to retention, therefore, must be treated as preliminary and, potentially, flawed. Results are only as good as the data, and in this particular instance the quality of the data element is not clear. This variable needs to be explored in more depth and the findings replicated with data known to be reliable before the findings related to retention should be given much weight.

More pronounced, and much more certain, are the results observed in terms of 21st CCLC impact on truancy levels. For every 21st CCLC group and sub-group analyzed as part of the impact evaluation, including grade level analyses, participation in 21st CCLC reduced truancy levels with observed statistical significance. This effect was generally, if not uniformly, larger at higher grade levels, notably Grade 8. Overall, for the 30+ day group, participants on average had a truancy rate .868 times that of non-participants, while the 70+ day group had an average truancy rate .760 times that of non-participants. Similar results were observed for students below proficient, and for every grade level. For reference, 21st CCLC participants had an average of 4.6 days of truancy during 2013-14, while non-participants as a group had about 4.7 days of truancy on average over the same time-frame.

Recommendations

Of particular note in this report is the finding that participation in 21st CCLC programming showed consistent impact on truancy rates. While previous reports have identified statistically significant impacts associated with the 21st CCLC program in terms of mathematics and, to a more limited extent, reading assessment results, analyses concerning school-related outcomes have not been possible in the past given the data available, making this a new finding in the context of New Jersey. Given this finding, and the fact that assessment data will not be usable for the next few years (given New Jersey's transition to new assessment tests), it makes sense to explore this relationship further and to add other school-related outcome analyses that may better reveal the impact of the 21st CCLC program. The evaluation team will discuss this with NJDOE and the evaluation advisory group (EAG), identifying relevant outcome areas for inclusion in future impact reports.

Additionally, given a transition away from the teacher survey historically used in New Jersey, over the course of 2015-16 the evaluation team will implement a youth survey measure. A youth survey will enable a direct youth voice to be included in the evaluation, while simultaneously assisting individual programs with specific feedback from the youth they serve. Further, a youth survey will

provide outcome data theoretically more likely to be affected by 21st CCLC programming such as youth perceptions of school, academic mindsets, academic behaviors, etc.—that is, areas that may be affected by 21st CCLC programming *prior* to test results, and consequently present a more complete picture of how 21st CCLC is having an impact across New Jersey. Discussions with the EAG and NJDOE regarding construction of this survey will take place during fall and spring of 2015-16.

Chapter 1. Introduction

For almost a decade, 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) operating across the state of New Jersey have provided students in high-poverty communities the opportunity to participate in academic enrichment programs and other youth development and support activities. These activities, varying extensively in character from one program to the next, are generally designed to enhance the academic well-being of participating youth. The primary purpose of this report is to highlight how well 21st CCLC afterschool programs across New Jersey funded have fared relative to the goals and objectives specified for the program by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). The information contained in this report is the result of data collected and analyzed as part of a statewide evaluation of the 21st CCLC program in New Jersey, conducted by American Institutes for Research (AIR).

The majority of the results outlined in this report are associated with 21st CCLC-funded activities and services delivered during the course of the 2013–14 school year. In particular, this report seeks to explore how academic and school-related outcomes of students who participated in the 21st CCLC program compare with the results of similar students not participating in the programs. For instance, do students attending 21st CCLC programming have better outcomes in terms of reading or mathematics assessment scores, truancy rates, or retention? Additionally, the report investigates whether any observed effects are greater at higher levels of attendance.

This report also outlines how well New Jersey 21st CCLC grantees performed in relation to a set of leading indicators. These indicators are meant to assess how well grantees are implementing programming theorized to support the achievement of goals and objectives specified by NJDOE for the 21st CCLC program. It is intended that this information will provide additional guidance and insight to NJDOE and grantees currently providing programming about the steps they should take to further support and undertake meaningful program improvement efforts.

It should also be noted that this report is one in a series of evaluation reports created by AIR over the past several years, and is the first of three planned impact reports to be provided under the current evaluation contract. Further, this report can be loosely understood as a transition report, for four reasons. First, this report differs from previous impact report versions in that truancy and grade retention have been added as outcome areas of interest. In previous reports, these data were not available. Second, this report is the last impact report for which assessment data will be analyzed as an outcome area in the impact analyses, as New Jersey has been in the process of changing their assessment tests (meaning no stabilized benchmark data will be available for some time following those data used in this report). Third, the leading indicators are currently undergoing substantial revision (based on indicator utility in practice as well as lessons learned since the indicators' creation several years ago). Finally, at the time of this report writing, fall 2015, steps are being taken to collect youth outcome data via youth survey, which will be included in future analyses. For all these reasons, this report is modestly different from prior versions, and will be considerably different from planned future reports.

The report has been organized around a series of chapters each addressing a major topic or theme. In Chapter 2, a summary of the evaluation questions is provided and an explanation of why these questions are important to the field. In addition, a description of the methods used to carry out the evaluation is also provided in Chapter 2, including data sources and analytic

techniques to address the primary evaluation questions. Following an overview of the evaluation methods, key grantee, center, and student characteristics are summarized in Chapter 3, with a particular emphasis on characteristics that have been shown to be related to improving student academic achievement and attaining desired program outcomes. In Chapter 4, the leading indicator system is then summarized and explained with regard to how information relates to future evaluation and technical assistance efforts. Chapters 5 and 6, respectively, present analyses for evaluating the impact of 21st CCLC participation on student-level outcomes and challenges grantees report they are experiencing relative to sustainability. Chapter 7 concludes with summary notes and recommendations.

Chapter 2. Evaluation Questions and Methods

The information collected and analyzed in relation to the 2013–14 school year was meant to answer four primary evaluation questions related to implementation of the New Jersey 21st CCLC program and the impact of the program on desired student outcomes:

1. What were the primary characteristics of programs funded by 21st CCLC and the students served?
2. How did centers perform on the leading indicators defined for the program, and how is this level of performance relevant to thinking about what additional supports, training, and professional development NJDOE should potentially invest in?
3. How many youth with individual education plans (IEPs) were served by the program, and what outcome levels are associated with their participation in the 21st CCLC program in terms of mathematics and reading assessments, truancy, and retention?
4. To what extent is there evidence that students participating in 21st CCLC program services and activities demonstrate better outcomes compared with students not participating in the program, specifically with respect to:
 - a. Higher academic achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics
 - b. Lower truancy and retention rates

Collectively, this domain of evaluation questions is representative of both the goals and objectives NJDOE has specified for the 21st CCLC program and of some of the more pressing questions currently before the afterschool field nationally. From the perspective of NJDOE, programs receiving 21st CCLC funding from the state should “supplement the education of students in Grades 4–12 and...assist students in attaining the skills necessary to meet New Jersey’s Core Curriculum Content Standards” (State of New Jersey Department of the Treasury, 2013, p. 1). The staff members at NJDOE responsible for administering the 21st CCLC program have taken steps to further operationalize this goal by specifying a series of objectives that outline what is to be achieved in this regard and by what means:

- Goal 1: To provide high-quality educational and enrichment programs that will enable students to improve academic achievement and promote positive behavior and appropriate social interaction with peers and adults.
 - Objective 1.1: The grantee will establish and maintain partnerships and collaborative relationships with schools, families, youth, and the community to enhance students’ access to a variety of learning opportunities.
 - Objective 1.2: The grantee will adopt intentional strategies and research-based practices designed to support student skill building and mastery, both academically and from a youth development perspective.
 - Objective 1.3: The grantee will adopt practices to support the orientation, training, and development of afterschool staff members in the adoption and use of intentional strategies and research-based practices to ensure program quality.

- Objective 1.4: Students regularly participating in the program will be positively impacted in terms of performance on state assessments in reading and mathematics.
- Objective 1.5: Students regularly participating in the program will demonstrate improved school-day attendance, decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors, improved social emotional functioning, and the development of 21st century skills.

The five objectives can be further broken down into two primary types. Objectives 1.1 (establishing and maintaining partnerships), 1.2 (intentional adoption of strategies and practices), and 1.3 (supports to ensure program quality) represent one type and detail operational elements that are seen by the state as being supportive of the academic achievement and behavioral outcomes central to the 21st CCLC program. Objectives 1.4 and 1.5 are more summative in nature, providing more detail about what constitutes improvement in academic achievement and behavior outcomes.

Additional insight into how staff members responsible for the administration of 21st CCLC at NJDOE see programmatic characteristics and attributes leading to the achievement of desired youth outcomes can be gleaned from the other two goals, and their associated objectives, which are formally identified by NJDOE for the program:

- Goal 2: To implement activities that promote parental involvement and provide opportunities for literacy and related educational development to the families of participating students.
 - Objective 2.1: The agency will establish collaborative relationships that offer opportunities for literacy and related educational activities to the families of participating students.
 - Objective 2.2: Parents participating in grant-funded activities will increase their involvement in the education of children under their care.
 - Objective 2.3: Grantees will adopt intentional strategies to communicate to parents and adult family members about program goals and objectives, activities, and their child's experience in the program.
- Goal 3: To measure participants' progress and program effectiveness through monitoring and evaluating.
 - Objective 3.1: Throughout the grant period, the grantee will continually assess program quality and effectiveness and use this information to support quality improvement.
 - Objective 3.2: The grantee will work to obtain data on students' in-school progress in the areas of academic achievement, behavior, and social development and use this information to inform the design and delivery of programming.
 - Objective 3.3: Throughout the grant period, the grantee will adopt measures as needed within the program when data are not available from other sources to assess (a) youth engagement in program activities, (b) the academic or social emotional needs of participating youth, and (c) program impact.

- Objective 3.4: The grantee will measure the impact of the program on family members of participating students.

The objectives associated with Goals 2 and 3 pertain to (a) engaging parents and other adult family members of 21st CCLC students in programming directly and keeping them apprised of how the program is serving their children or to (b) ensuring measures and practices are in place to assess the quality of program implementation and impact to inform program improvement efforts.

Collectively, then, the domain of goals and objectives established by NJDOE appear to directly or indirectly reinforce the primacy of student achievement and behavioral change as the outcomes of greatest interest and suggest that programs can take steps to realize these outcomes as follows:

- Establish and maintain partnerships and collaborative relationships within the community.
- Adopt strategies and practices that support student skill building and mastery, both academically and from a youth development perspective.
- Implement activities that promote parental involvement and provide opportunities for the families of participating students.
- Ensure measures and approaches are in place to assess program quality and effectiveness and use this information to support quality improvement.

These operational elements and approaches are represented in recent efforts in the field of afterschool education to identify the features of high-quality afterschool program (Granger et al., 2007; Little, 2007; Wilson-Ahlstrom & Yohalem, 2007; Vandell et al., 2005; Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2009). Generally, many of the measures developed and adapted for use in carrying out this evaluation are meant to assess how 21st CCLC grantees are performing across the operational elements and attributes embedded both in NJDOE's goals and objectives for the program and in those characteristics that the current best-practices literature suggests are associated with program features likely to positively affect student achievement and related outcomes.

Methods, Data Sources, and Analysis

Data collected and analyzed to carry out the 2013–14 evaluation effort was obtained from four primary sources, which included administrative data systems, surveys, and a data collection application designed to collect more standardized local evaluation data. Each source and how it contributed to the project is outlined in greater detail in the following section.

Program Activity and Review System (PARS21)

PARS21 is a Web-based data collection system developed and maintained by the NJDOE that collects directly from grantees a broad array of program characteristic, student demographic, attendance, and outcome data throughout the program year. Data extracted from PARS21 were used to construct variables summarizing the activity and staffing models employed by sites,

program maturity and organization type, levels of program attendance, and teacher survey-based outcome data in relation to the 2013–14 school year. Data extracted from PARS21 used to carry out analyses summarized in this report were obtained during fall of 2014 and spring of 2015.

Staff Survey

The purpose of the online staff survey was to obtain information from staff members working directly with youth in programs funded by 21st CCLC about the extent to which they engage in practices suggested by the afterschool research literature as likely to be supportive of both positive academic and youth development outcomes. Scales appearing on the survey included the following:

- Collective staff efficacy in creating interactive and engaging settings for youth.
- Intentionality in activity and session design.
- Practices supportive of academic skill building, including linkages to the school day and using data about student academic achievement to inform programming.
- Practices supportive of positive youth development.
- Opportunities for youth ownership.
- Staff collaboration and communication to support continuous program improvement.
- Practices supportive of parent involvement and engagement.

Staff members were selected as part of the survey sample if they were actively providing services at the site that directly served students participating in the program. 21st CCLC project directors were directed to select those staff members that worked most frequently in their program and delivered activities that were most aligned with their center’s objectives for student growth and development. The goal was to have project directors identify a minimum of 12 staff members per center to take the survey. In cases in which centers had fewer than 12 active staff members, all staff members working with students at the center were directed to take the survey. Survey data collection took place between December 2013 and February 2014. In all, 996 complete surveys were obtained from 118 centers⁴ active during the 2013–14 school year, an average of approximately eight completed surveys per site. Questions asked on the staff survey can be found in Appendix A.

New Jersey 21st CCLC Evaluation Template and Reporting System

Developed by AIR as part of the statewide evaluation, the 21st CCLC Evaluation Template and Reporting System (ETRS) is a Web-based data collection application designed to obtain center-level information about the characteristics and performance of afterschool programs funded by 21st CCLC, based on information garnered from local evaluation efforts. The system is designed to collect information at two time points: (1) midyear through a given school year and (2) at the end of given contract year. The system is composed of the following sections:

- Program operations

⁴ Centers operating during summer 2013 only were not included in this data collection activity.

- Enrollment and recruitment
- Policies and procedures
- School-day links
- Program staff members
- Monitoring tools
- Summer programs
- Goals
 - Goal A: Improve student academic achievement
 - Goal B: Improve student behavior and attitudes.
 - Goal C: Improve parent education and involvement
 - Goal D: Improve community partnerships
- Conclusions and Recommendations, including questions on Sustainability

Completion of both the midyear (December 2013 to February 2014) and end-of-year (August to November 2014) reports was undertaken by project directors, oftentimes in conjunction with their local evaluators.

New Jersey Standards Measurement and Resource for Teaching (NJ SMART) Data Warehouse

Steps also were taken in early 2015 to obtain access to New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) scores in reading and mathematics for 21st CCLC participants served during the course of the 2013–14 school year from the NJ SMART data warehouse maintained by NJDOE for students in Grades 4–8. Similar data also were obtained for those students attending the same schools as the 21st CCLC participant population who did not participate in the program during these periods. These data were used to conduct an analysis of the impact of the program on truancy rates, retention, and achievement (mathematics and reading), predicated on comparing program participants with nonparticipants.

Analytic Approach and Methods

Although previous reports prepared by the AIR evaluation team as part of this project have included findings predicated on both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the findings outlined in this report are purely quantitative. This approach was largely driven by both the evaluation questions being answered and the fact that this report falls at the mid-point of a five-year evaluation plan. Analyses highlighted in this report fall within four general categories:

1. *Descriptive Analyses.* Information related to grantee, center, and student characteristics obtained from PARS, NJ SMART, the staff survey, and the ETRS reports were analyzed descriptively to explore the range of variation on a given characteristic. Some of the leading indicators also were calculated employing descriptive analysis techniques.

2. *Analyses to Create Scale Scores.* Many questions appearing on the staff surveys and that were represented in the ETRS reports were part of a series of questions designed to assess an underlying construct/concept, resulting in a single scale score summarizing performance on a given area of practice or facet of afterschool implementation (e.g., practices that support linkages to the school day). An example is shown Figure 1, which outlines the questions making up the *Intentionality Program Design* scale that appeared on the staff survey.

Figure 1. An Example of a Survey Scale Calibrated Using Rasch Techniques

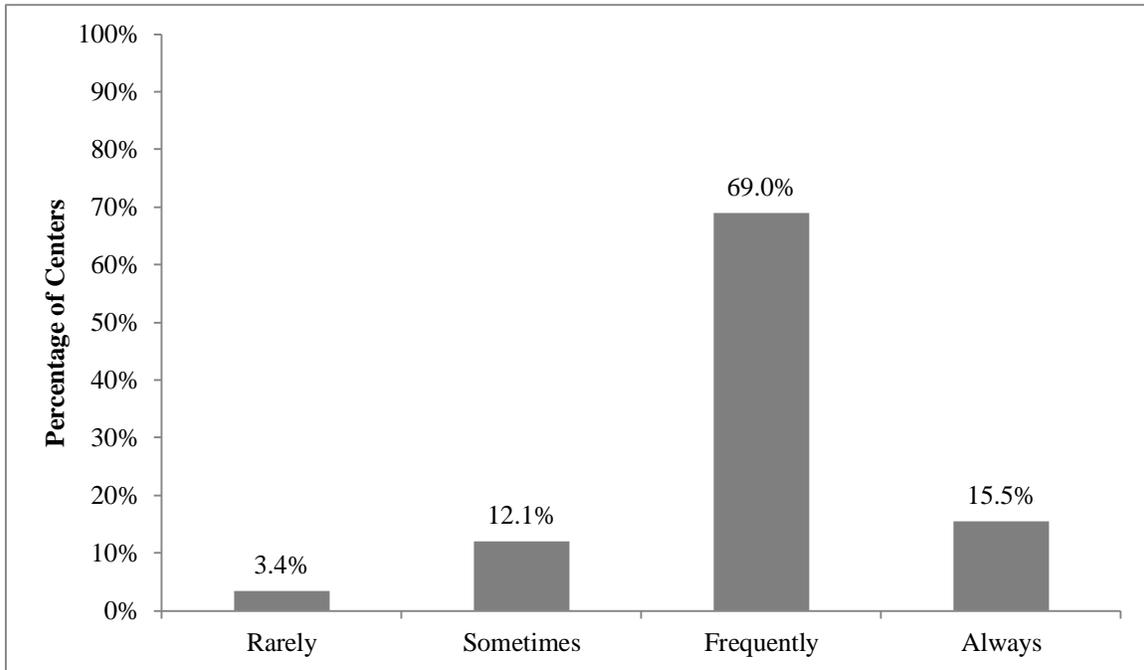
How often do you lead or participate in program activities that are...	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
a. Based on written plans for the session, assignments, and projects?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Well planned in advance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Tied to specific learning goals?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Meant to build upon skills cultivated in a prior activity or session?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Explicitly meant to promote skill building and mastery in relation to one or more state standard?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Explicitly meant to address a specific developmental domain (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional, civic, physical, etc.)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Structured to respond to youth feedback on what the content or format of the activity should be?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Informed by the expressed interests, preferences, and/or satisfaction of participating youth?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For scales like this, Rasch scale scores were created using staff member and project director responses to a series of questions to create one overall score. These scale scores ranged from 0 to 100, where higher scores were indicative of a higher level or more frequent adoption of a specific quality practice or set of practices. Center-level scale scores derived from the ETRS reports represented responses from one respondent, most likely the project director, while scale score based on staff survey data represented the average of scale scores for all staff respondents who took the survey associated with a given center.

Scale scores resulting from the application of Rasch approaches also can be used to classify what portion of the rating scale the average scale score fell within. For example, the statewide mean value for the *Intentionality in Program Design* scale highlighted in Figure 1 was 63.11, which put the statewide average in the *frequently* range of the scale, indicating the typical staff member responding to the survey reported engaging in these practices on a frequent basis. As shown in Figure 2, this approach also allowed the evaluation team to explore the distribution of centers in light of what response option

their average scale score put them in. As shown in Figure 2, 69 percent of centers had an average scale score that put them in the *frequently* range of the scale.

Figure 2. Distribution of Average Center Scale Score on the Intentionality in Program Design Scale by Response Option



Source: Data from 981 staff survey responses associated with 116 centers were used.

The primary benefit of this approach is the capacity to distill responses from several questions down into one overall score for the center, simplifying the process of interpreting how a center did on a given element of quality, particularly in relation to other programs in the state.

3. *Correlational Multilevel Modeling Techniques.* As an exploratory set of analyses based on NJDOE interest, a multilevel model was run to explore the relationship between participation level (in terms of days) and student outcomes where students were identified as having an individual education plan (IEP). Outcomes analyzed included performance on state assessments in reading and mathematics, truancy, and retention rates. Although these analyses afford the capacity to identify correlations between participation level and the outcomes assessed, the method is not sufficient to indicate cause.
4. *Propensity Score Matching.* In contrast to the multilevel modeling techniques just described, propensity score matching approaches were employed to estimate the causal impact of 21st CCLC program participation on student performance in terms of truancy rates, retention, and achievement (reading and mathematics) using NJ ASK scores obtained from NJDOE. Given that 21st CCLC program participants were not randomly assigned to participate in the program, the problem of selection bias was an issue that needed to be addressed before program impact could be explored from a causal perspective. It is likely that students who participated in 21st CCLC programming were

different from those students attending the same schools who do not enroll in 21st CCLC. These differences can bias estimates of program effectiveness because they make it difficult to disentangle preexisting differences between participants and nonparticipants from program impact. Propensity score matching was used to mitigate that existing selection bias in program effect.

In Table 1, a summary is provided of what methods were employed to answer a given evaluation question.

Table 1. Summary of Methods by Evaluation Question

	Descriptive Analysis	Rasch Analysis	Correlational Multilevel Modeling	Propensity Score Matching
What were the primary characteristics of programs funded by 21st CCLC and the students served?	✓			
How did centers perform on the leading indicators defined for the program, and how is this level of performance relevant to thinking about what additional supports, training, and professional development NJDOE should potentially invest in?	✓	✓		
How many youth with individual education plans (IEPs) were served by the program, and what outcome levels are associated with their participation in the 21st CCLC program in terms of mathematics and reading assessments, truancy, and retention?	✓		✓	
To what extent is there evidence that students participating in 21 st CCLC services and activities demonstrate better outcomes compared with students not participating in the program, specifically with respect to (a) higher academic achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics and (b) lower truancy and retention rates?				✓

Limitations and Challenges

It is important to note that there are a number of limitations associated with the methods employed to support the evaluation. The primary limitation of the results highlighted in this report relate to the fact that most of the data sources employed to answer the first three evaluation questions outlined in Table 1 are predicated to some extent on self-reported data provided by 21st CCLC grantee staff members. This characteristic of most of the data analyzed likely led to the introduction of some level of error into the process predicated on the following:

- **Imperfect Recall and Motivation.** The staff survey, ETRS reports, and even PARS21 contained items that required respondents to mentally review events, conversations, practices, and experiences that took place during the 2013–14 school year and then decide which rating scale option best summarized their perceptions. It is likely that some respondents were more adept at this than others and that some responses were better than others. Similarly, some respondents were likely more motivated than others were to be diligent as they selected a response—investing time and making more efforts to recall events.
- **Social Desirability.** Anyone reading the items appearing on each of the measures employed as part of the evaluation could quite easily select a response that would indicate a high level of functioning on the program implementation element under consideration. Respondents motivated to put their program’s best foot forward may have been apt to choose a favorable response—one that reported a higher level of functioning than was actually the case—thereby biasing the estimate of 21st CCLC program implementation derived from their responses.

For both the correlational multilevel and propensity score-based impact models described in this report, the primary limitation is the likely existence of other non-observed variables that have an important impact on the relationship between student participation in 21st CCLC and youth outcomes. Our approach to addressing this limitation is based on theory, with the evaluation team taking steps based on the set of resources available to measure those characteristics of programs and students that are theoretically likely to have an impact on the student outcomes under consideration.

Chapter 3. Grantee, Center, and Student Characteristics

Programs funded by 21st CCLC grants are often characterized by a wide diversity of approaches, student populations, and types of organizations involved in providing 21st CCLC programming. This chapter summarizes the characteristics of grantees, centers, and students associated with 21st CCLC programs active during the 2013-14 school year. Overall, there were 52 grantees operating 120 centers serving 16,071 youth.⁵

Grantee Characteristics

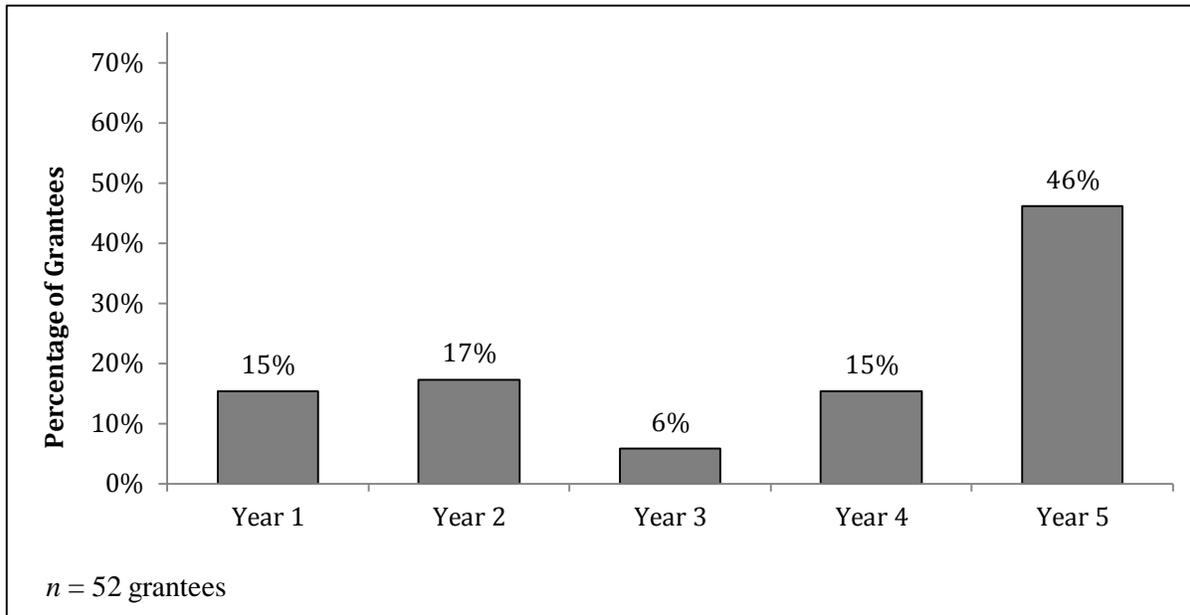
This section contains information on key grantee characteristics. As used here, the term *grantee* refers to the organization that serves as the fiduciary agent on the grant in question, whether it is a school district, community-based organization, or other entities and whether it is ultimately responsible for administering grant funds at the program level.

Grantee Maturity

With respect to program quality, how programs evolve during the grant period is increasingly receiving attention. For example, grantees may find themselves needing to emphasize some elements of their programs and reducing or eliminating others in response to changes in the students served or the changes in funding levels. In addition, the hope is that grantees over time would learn how to (1) provide more effective and engaging programming for youth and (2) more meaningfully embed academic content into their program offerings in ways that address the needs of the students they are serving. As shown in Figure 3, the majority of the grants active during the 2013-14 school year were in Year 5 of funding. Given that 21st CCLC grants can be made for a maximum of five years, many of the programs active during this period could be considered sustaining, focusing their efforts on building capacity to continue programming without 21st CCLC funds, or reapplying for a new cycle of 21st CCLC dollars.

⁵ Note that the number of sites and centers include those that may not have operated the full year.

Figure 3. Number of Grantees by Year of Operation

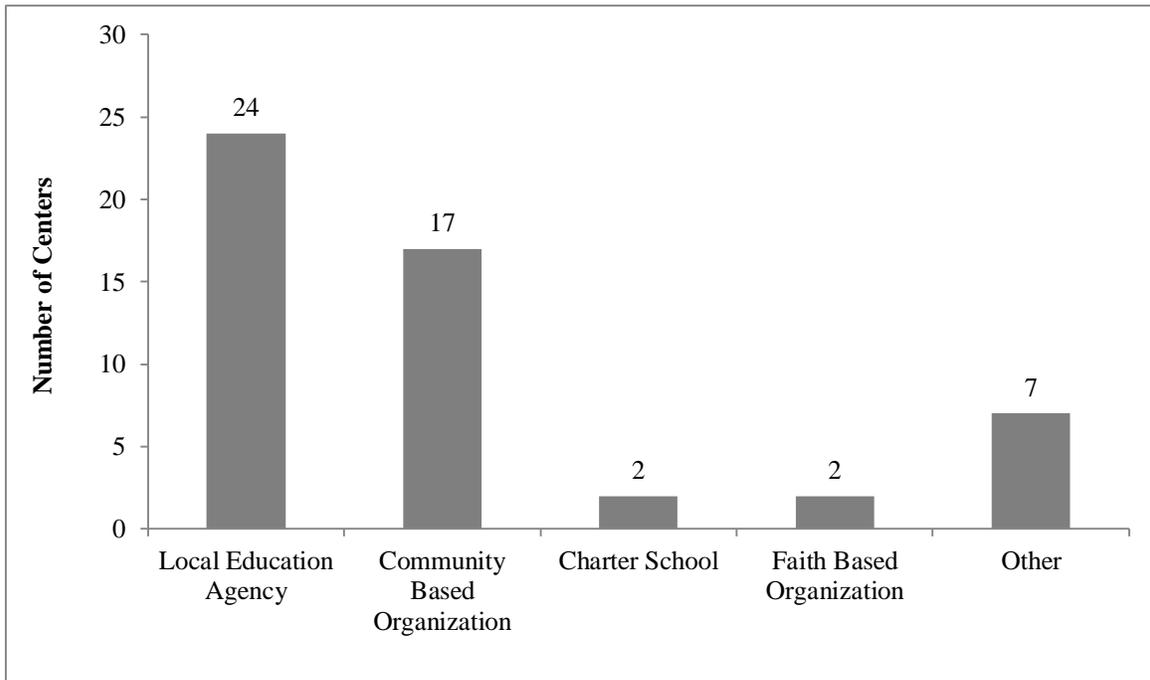


Source: PARS21.

Grantee Organization Type

One of the interesting elements of the 21st CCLC program is that all types of organizations are eligible to apply for and receive 21st CCLC grants. As shown in Figure 4, just less than half of grants active during the 2013-14 school year were held by school districts, and community-based organizations accounted for slightly less than one-third of the grants active during this period (about the same as observed for 2012-13). All told, slightly more than 21 percent of the grants were held by faith-based organizations, charter schools, and other entities, including colleges and universities.

Figure 4. Number of Grantees by Organization Type



Source: PARS21.

Key Center Characteristics

This section presents key center characteristic data. It is important to note that in this report, the term *center* is used to refer to the physical location where 21st CCLC–funded services and activities take place. Centers are characterized by defined hours of operation, have dedicated staff members, and have a site coordinator to manage operations at the center. Each 21st CCLC grantee in New Jersey has at least one center; many grantees have more than one center.

In addition, center characteristics can be described either as indicative of research-supported best practices or as innate attributes of the center in question without a strong connection to the afterschool quality practice literature. Center characteristics indicative of the latter might include the grade level served, program maturity, and organizational type. For example, identifying a program as one that serves only elementary students says nothing about the quality of that program.

Other characteristics at a site, such as the staffing model, are still somewhat ambiguous when viewed from a quality practice standpoint, with the literature less clear on the superiority of certain staffing approaches. From a policy standpoint, NJDOE considers certain approaches to staffing for certain types of activities to be appropriate from a quality standpoint—namely, that certified teachers should staff academic programming provided in the afterschool program.

Staffing Clusters and Ratios

Like their counterparts nationally, programs funded by 21st CCLC in New Jersey employ a variety of staff members, including academic teachers, nonacademic teachers, college and high school students, counselors, paraprofessionals from the school day, and other program staff members with a wide spectrum of backgrounds and training. To more effectively summarize the different staffing models employed by centers during the 2013-14 school year, an effort was made to classify centers into groups or clusters using cluster analysis techniques, based on the extent to which they relied upon different categories of staff to deliver programming during the school year in question. In this instance, the variables used to create the clusters represented the percentage of total paid staff members who were academic teachers, nonacademic teachers, counselors, and other staff members working at a center during the school year. Data used to construct these variables were obtained from PARS21.⁶ As shown in Figure 5, four primary staffing models were identified:

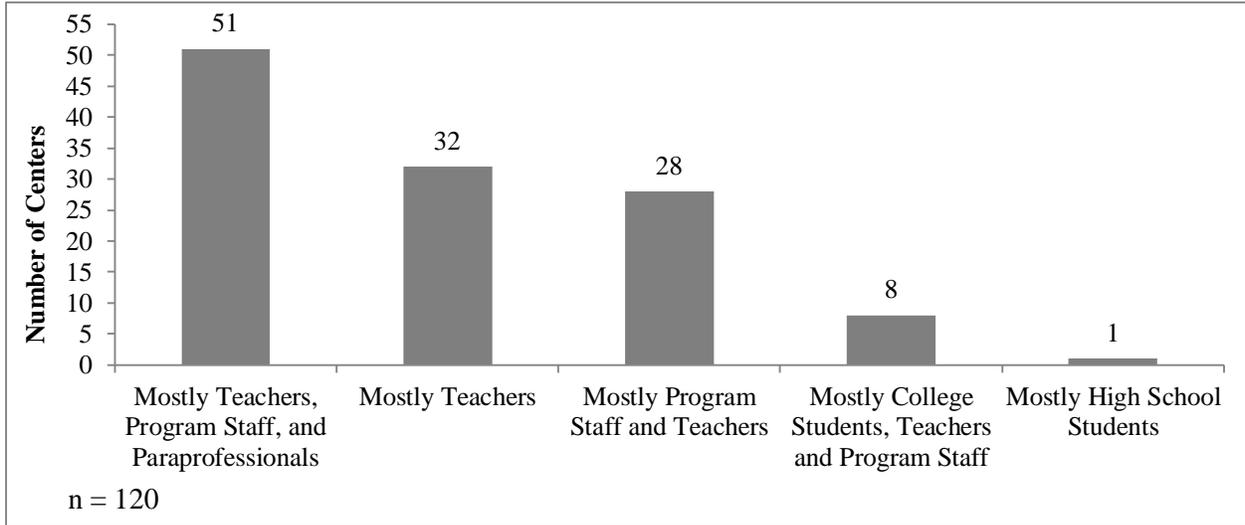
- *Centers staffed mostly by program staff members⁷ and teachers.* On average, 54 percent of the staff members associated with centers in this cluster were classified as program staff members and 17 percent were teachers.
- *Centers staffed mostly by teachers.* On average, 81 percent of the staff members associated with centers in this cluster were academic teachers.
- *Centers staffed mostly teachers, program staff members, and paraprofessionals.* On average, 39 percent of the staff members associated with centers in this cluster were teachers, 14 percent program staff, and 12 percent were paraprofessionals.
- *Centers staffed by college students, teachers, and program staff.* On average, college students represented 58 percent of staff in this cluster, with 20 percent represented by teachers, and 13 percent represented by program staff.
- *Centers staffed by high school students.* This cluster, consisting of one center only, reported having 100 percent high school students as staff.

Overall, centers were most apt to be classified in either the Mostly Teachers or Mostly Teachers and Program Staff.

⁶ Only staff records associated with each center's offered activity sessions were used in this analysis.

⁷ *Program Staff* is one of the options that can be selected in PARS21 when selecting the *Staff Type*.

Figure 5. Number of Centers by Staffing Cluster Type



Source: PARS21.

In addition to exploring the various approaches to staffing employed by centers during the 2013-14 school year, an effort was made to calculate the average student-to-staff ratio associated with activity sessions provided during the span of the school year in question. As shown in Table 2, the average student-to-staff ratio was found to be approximately one staff member for every 12 youth participating in specific activities, although across centers the span of ratios was quite broad, ranging from just over 1 to approximately 68.

Table 2. Average Student-Teacher Ratio per Center, 2013-14

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
2013-14 Student-staff ratio	120	1.20	67.8	12.43	8.02

Source: PARS21.

Participation in Reading and Mathematics Activities

Another approach to examining students’ participation in 21st CCLC programming offered during the span of the 2013-14 reporting period is to explore the extent to which students participated in activities that were meant to support skill building in mathematics and reading, regardless of activity type (e.g., enrichment, tutoring). As mentioned earlier, one of the central goals of the 21st CCLC program is to support student growth and development in reading and mathematics. As outlined in Table 3, students on average participated in approximately 21 hours of reading/literacy programming during the 2013-14 reporting period and 14 hours of mathematics programming.

Table 3. Average Number of Hours in Reading and Mathematics per Student, 2013-14

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
2013-14 reading/literacy education activities	16,071	0.00	327	21.06	38.65
2013-14 mathematics education activities	16,071	0.00	338	14.23	33.42

Source: PARS21.

Grade Levels Served

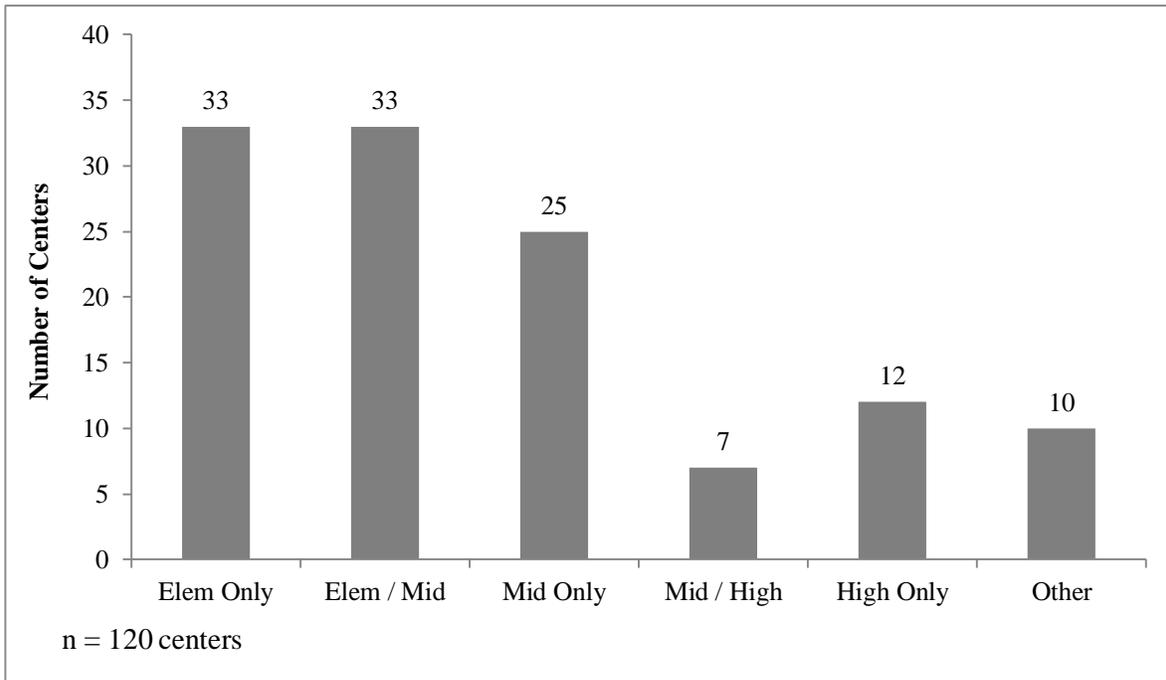
A topic garnering increasing attention on the federal stage relates to the role grade level plays in terms of (1) how 21st CCLC programs should structure their operations and program offerings and (2) the domain of outcomes they should be accountable for through performance indicator systems. Using student-level data about the grade levels of students attending centers, centers active during the 2013-14 school year were classified as follows:

- *Elementary Only*, defined as those centers serving students up to Grade 6.
- *Elementary/Middle*, defined as those centers serving students up to Grade 8.
- *Middle Only*, defined as centers serving students in Grades 5–8.
- *High Only*, defined as centers serving students in Grades 9–12.

A fifth category, called *other*, includes centers that did not fit one of the five categories and includes centers that served students across all three grade levels or some other combination of grade levels.

The High Only category is especially important to analyze because afterschool programming for older students often looks considerably different from programming for elementary or middle school students (Naftzger et al., 2007). In addition, high school students have different needs from younger students, and they often have other afternoon obligations, such as jobs or extracurricular activities. As shown in Figure 6, the bulk of the centers active during the 2013-14 school year served elementary or middle school students in some capacity.

Figure 6. Number of Centers by Grade Level Served



Source: PARS21.

Student Characteristics

During the course of the 2013-14 school year, 16,071 students participated at some level (i.e., attended programming for at least one day during the school year) in 21st CCLC programming at 120 centers active during this period.⁸ This population was diverse, as shown in Table 4. Generally, the population of students served during the 2013-14 school year was black and Hispanic/Latino; was enrolled in elementary or middle school, especially in Grades 4–6; and was eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch programs.

⁸ One hundred twenty centers active during the 2013–14 school year were found to have student-level attendance records in PARS21, confirming participation in actual activity sessions during the span of the school year.

Table 4. Summary of Demographic Information for Students, 2013-14

	Demographic Category	2013-14	
		Number of Students	Percentage
Race/Ethnicity	White	2,365	14.7%
	Black	5,412	33.7%
	Hispanic/Latino	7,365	45.8%
	Asian	371	2.3%
	Native American	32	0.2%
	Pacific Islander	40	0.2%
	Unknown	485	3.0%
Gender	Male	8,108	50.5%
	Female	7,963	49.5%
Grade Level	4	2,581	16.1%
	5	3,136	19.5%
	6	2,987	18.6%
	7	2,481	15.4%
	8	2,074	12.9%
	9	881	5.5%
	10	641	4.0%
	11	489	3.0%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	Reduced	1,759	10.9%
	Free	10,438	64.9%
	Not available	3,874	24.1%

Source: PARS21.

Student Attendance Levels

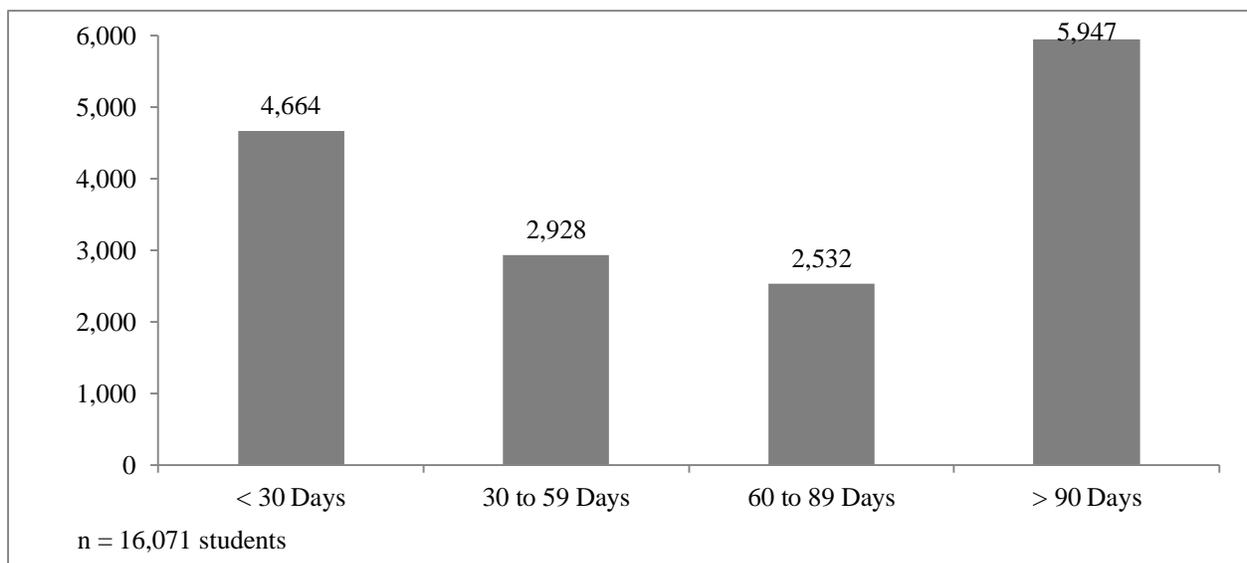
Attendance is an intermediate outcome indicator that reflects the potential breadth and depth of exposure to afterschool programming. In this regard, attendance can be considered in terms of the (1) total number of students who participated in the center’s programming throughout the course of the year, and (2) frequency and intensity with which students attended programming when it was offered. The former number can be used as a measure of the breadth of a center’s reach, whereas the latter can be construed as a measure of how successful the center was in retaining students in center-provided services and activities.

Among students participating in activities during the 2013-14 school year, the average number of days attending 21st CCLC programming was 70. In Figure 7, the student population served during the 2013-14 school year is broken down into four attendance gradations—the percentage of students attending fewer than 30 days, those students attending 30 to 59 days, those students

attending 60 to 89 days, and those students attending 90 days or more. As shown in Figure 7, one third of the students (33.2 percent) attended fewer than 30 days, a level consistent with previous years, and slightly less than one half participated for 90 days or more (42.3 percent), which is higher than what has been witnessed in prior years, which were closer to 40 percent.

To demonstrate program impact, one would hope that there would be a positive relationship between higher levels of attendance in the program and the likelihood that students witnessed gains in student achievement and behavioral outcomes. We certainly have seen evidence of this fact through data collected nationally through the Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS), especially for elementary students (Naftzger, Vinson, & Swanlund, 2011). For the 30+ day group, participants on average had a truancy rate .868 times that of non-participants, while the 70+ day group had an average truancy rate .760 times that of non-participants.

Figure 7. Number of Students Served in 21st CCLC by Attendance Gradation



Source: PARS21.

In addition to levels of program attendance during the course of the 2013-14 school year, we were interested in exploring the extent to which students participating during this period had been attending the program at a given center for more than the school year in question. Hypothetically, it would be expected that a higher number of years of continuous participation in the program would be associated with a greater degree of improvement on the outcomes of interest in this report. However, as shown in Table 5, for the vast majority of students, the 2013-14 school year represented the first year they participated in 21st CCLC programming at the center in question; approximately seven percent were in their second year of participation during the 2013-14 school year. Three or more years of continuous participation was found to be relatively rare.

Table 5. Continuous Years of Student Participation, 2013-14

	2013-14	
	Number of Students	Percentage
1 year	11,229	69.9%
2 years	3,598	22.4%
3 years	914	5.7%
4 years	263	1.6%
5 years	64	0.4%
6 years	2	0.0%
7 years	1	0.0%

Note: Prior year records were matched to 16,071 students using SSIDs. One year of continuous participation, for example, indicates that a given student is either in his or her first year of programming during the 2013-14 school year or that there was an interruption in participation prior to the 2013-14 school year.

Source: PARS21.

Student Attendance Profiles

An effort was made to determine the extent to which students participated in different types of activities during the school year. To achieve this outcome, we again employed *k*-means clustering to identify the most dominant student activity profile types within the population of students served during the school year in question.

The first step in this process was to identify for each student what percentage of his or her time in 21st CCLC was spent in each of the following types of activities:

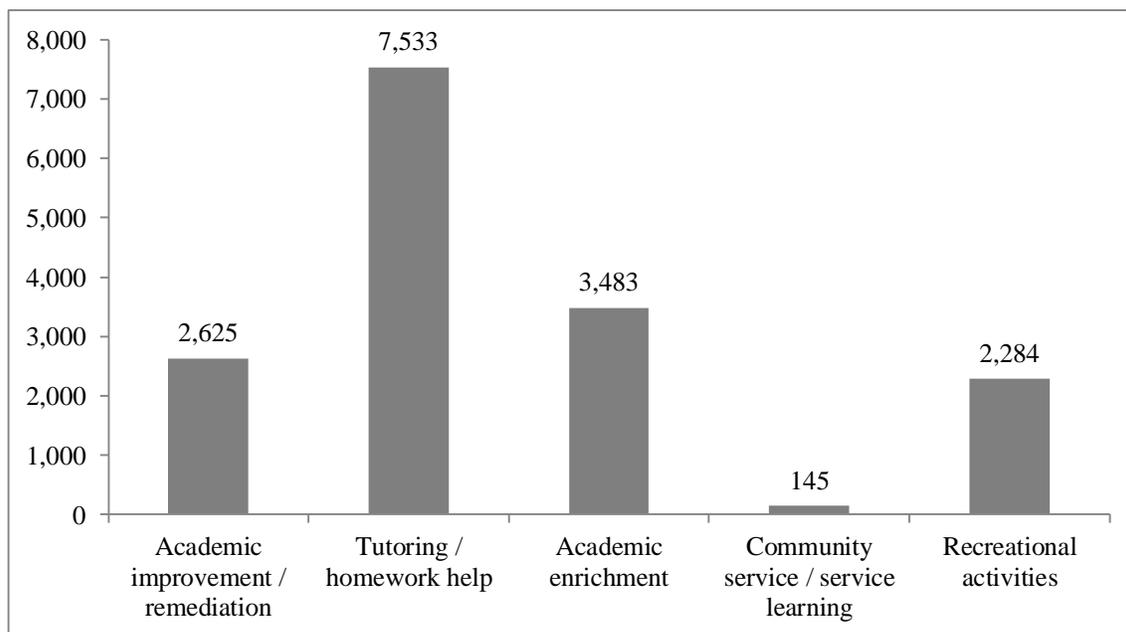
1. Academic improvement/remediation
2. Academic enrichment
3. Tutoring/homework help
4. Mentoring
5. Drug and violence prevention counseling
6. Expanded library service hours
7. Recreational activities
8. Career/job training
9. Supplemental educational services
10. Community service learning programs
11. Character education
12. Youth development/learning activities

Using these activities, five clusters were identified, each characterized by a dominance of one activity type:

- *Mostly Academic Improvement / Remediation*, characterized by an average of 69 percent of time spent in academic improvement/remediation.
- *Mostly Tutoring*, characterized by an average of 35 percent of time spent in tutoring/homework help.
- *Mostly Academic Enrichment*, characterized by an average of 54 percent of time spent in enrichment activities.
- *Mostly Community Service / Service Learning*, characterized by an average of 69 percent time spent in community service activities.
- *Mostly Recreation*, characterized by an average of 57 percent of time spent in recreational activities.

The number of students in each cluster is presented in Figure 8. The largest cluster, roughly twice as large as any of the others, is the *Mostly Tutoring* cluster. Note, however, that the average percent of time spent on tutoring activities within this cluster was somewhat modest, at 35 percent. This is a lower average for this cluster than observed in previous years; for example, it was 48 percent in 2011-12, and 40 percent in 2012-13.

Figure 8. Students by Activity Cluster



Source: PARS21.

Activity Themes

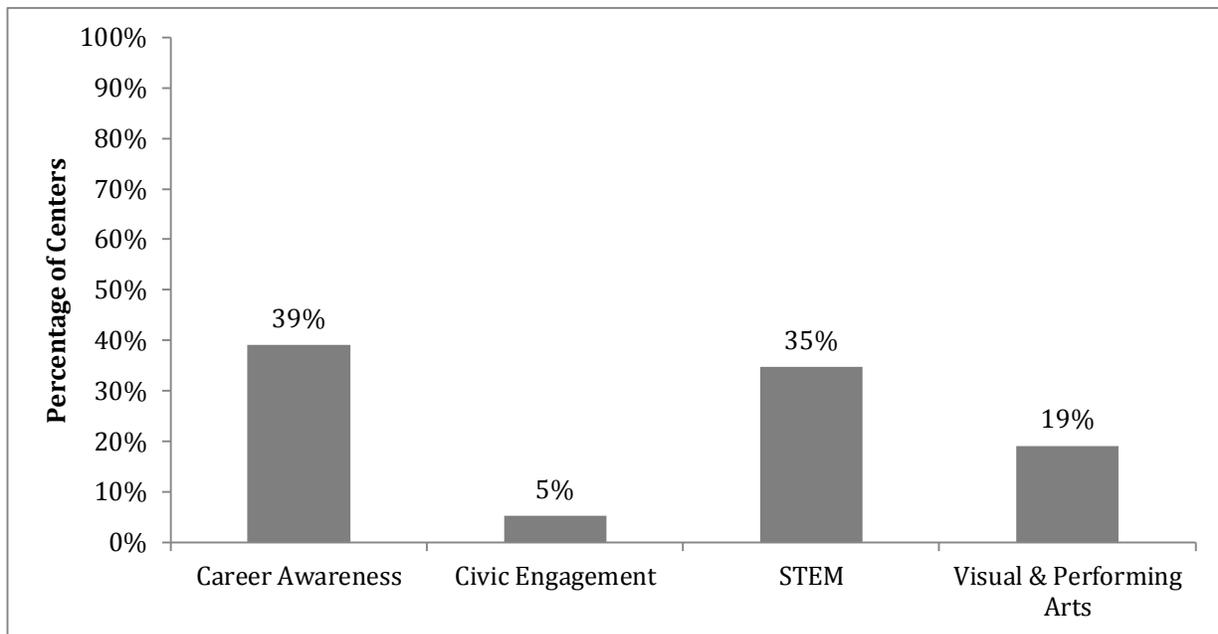
During the course of the 2013-14 school year, NJDOE also required grantees in cohort seven to adopt one or more of the following themes when providing activities, while grantees funded in

previous cohorts were afforded the option of selecting a theme but were not required to do so. Themes were to be selected based on the students’ needs, interests and developmental age and were meant to further support targeted skill building and development through the provision of activities youth would especially find engaging.

- Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)
- Career awareness and exploration
- Civic engagement
- Visual and performing arts

Ninety-five percent of centers active during the 2013-14 school year were found to have provided activity sessions associated with one or more of the aforementioned themes based on data reported in PARS21. As shown in Figure 9, 39 percent of centers adopted a career exploration theme, 35 percentage a STEM theme, 19 percent an arts theme, and 5 percent focused on civic engagement.

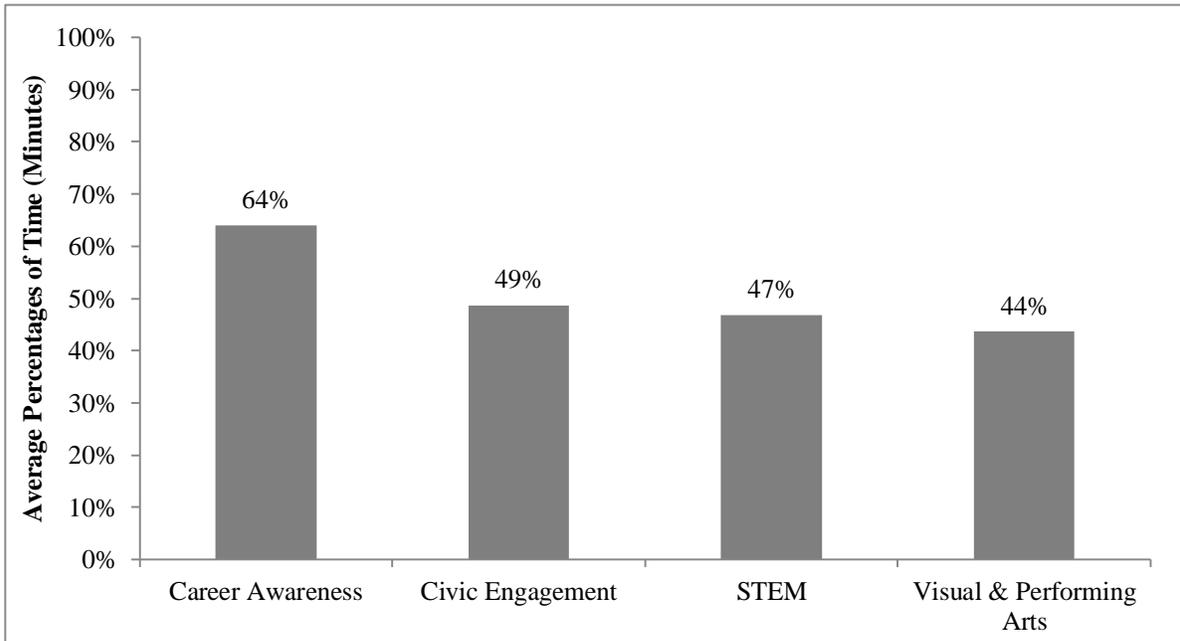
Figure 9. Percentage of Centers by Primary Theme



Source: PARS21.

As shown in Figure 10, centers on average spend anywhere from between 46 percent and 65 percent of their total activity minutes for the 2013-14 school year providing activities consistent with their selected theme.

Figure 10. Percentage of Total Activity Minutes Dedicated to Selected Theme by Theme Type



Source: PARS21.

Chapter 4. Leading Indicators

A primary goal of the statewide evaluation was to provide 21st CCLC grantees with data to inform program improvement efforts regarding their implementation of research-supported best practices. AIR and NJDOE worked collaboratively to define a series of leading indicators predicated on data collected as part of the statewide evaluation. The leading indicators were meant to enhance existing information and data available to 21st CCLC grantees regarding how they fared in the adoption of program strategies and approaches associated with high-quality afterschool programming. Specifically, the leading indicator system was designed to:

- Summarize data collected as part of the statewide evaluation in terms of how well the grantee and its respective sites are adopting research-supported best practices
- Allow grantees to compare their level of performance on leading indicators with similar programs and statewide averages
- Facilitate internal discussions about areas of program design and delivery that might warrant additional attention from a program improvement perspective

Predicated on the data collected from the staff surveys, the ETRS midyear report, and PARS21, the leading indicator system is focused on *quality program implementation* as opposed to youth or program outcomes. The midyear report is designed to consolidate and report on the data collected as part of the basic operation of the program (like PARS21 data for example). The report is also designed to report on the data describing program evaluation efforts regarding the adoption of research-supported practices so that programs can identify strengths and weaknesses and reflect on areas of program design and delivery in need of further growth and development. More consistent implementation of research-supported best practices will theoretically support the attainment of desired youth and program outcomes.

It should be noted that the presentation of the leading indicators here will be the second to last presentation in their current form. The leading indicator system was developed to be useful to both grantees and NJDOE staff, and based on feedback from both grantees and NJDOE, not all leading indicators have proven equally valuable. For this reason, the leading indicators are currently being revised. The final presentation of the leading indicators in their present form will be in next year's report, covering 2014-15 data, after which a new set of implementation indicators will take their place. More information about these changes will be included in future reports.

How the Leading Indicators Were Organized

The 22 leading indicators can be organized using two different frameworks:

1. By program level (organizational processes, quality at the point-of-service, and participation and engagement)
2. By domain of quality practice

The leading indicators were first organized into three overarching domains:

1. *Organizational processes* relate to practices that are defined for the program and that provide an infrastructure to support implementation of effective practice in the design, delivery, and evaluation of afterschool programming. Quality afterschool programs start with sound organizational processes. At the organizational level, programwide strategies and approaches are developed and implemented to deliver program activities that promote participants' academic success and positive development. This can be represented by the adoption of a specific curriculum for 21st CCLC activities, placing an emphasis on a particular instructional strategy like project-based learning, or focusing on a given content area like STEM. Ideally, steps are taken by programs to strengthen their activities and offerings by forging meaningful partnerships with the families and the community both (a) to broaden their scope of program offerings and (b) by including important constituents in program design and delivery. Finally, programs can take steps to ensure their strategies are relevant by engaging in a process of continuous quality assessment and improvement. What characterizes each of these processes is that they are adopted at the organizational level and have ramifications and relevance for the full domain of staff who work in the program and the youth who participate.
2. *Quality at the point of service* relates to practices that occur at the point of service, where staff and youth interact directly during the provision of an activity or offering. The focus at this level is on the instructional practice of individual staff. Are steps taken to plan activities with intentionality? Do staff have access to and make use of data on youth academic performance? Are staff adopting practices that are likely to result in the creation of a supportive, interactive, and engaging environment for participating youth? Quality at the point of service refers to the program climate experienced by participating youth, the quality of interactions among participants and staff, and the degree to which supports and opportunities for interaction and engagement are afforded to youth. Quality at the point of service is the result of these components (climate, positive interactions, and opportunities for engagement) and is promoted by intentionally designed activities offered by afterschool program staff that seek to cultivate these types of experiences for participating youth.
3. *Participation and engagement* refers to the level of participation by youth and adults in activities provided by 21st CCLC programs. Youth cannot be expected to experience a positive impact by the program unless they actually participate in program offerings and activities.

The leading indicators can also be organized into more specific quality domains:

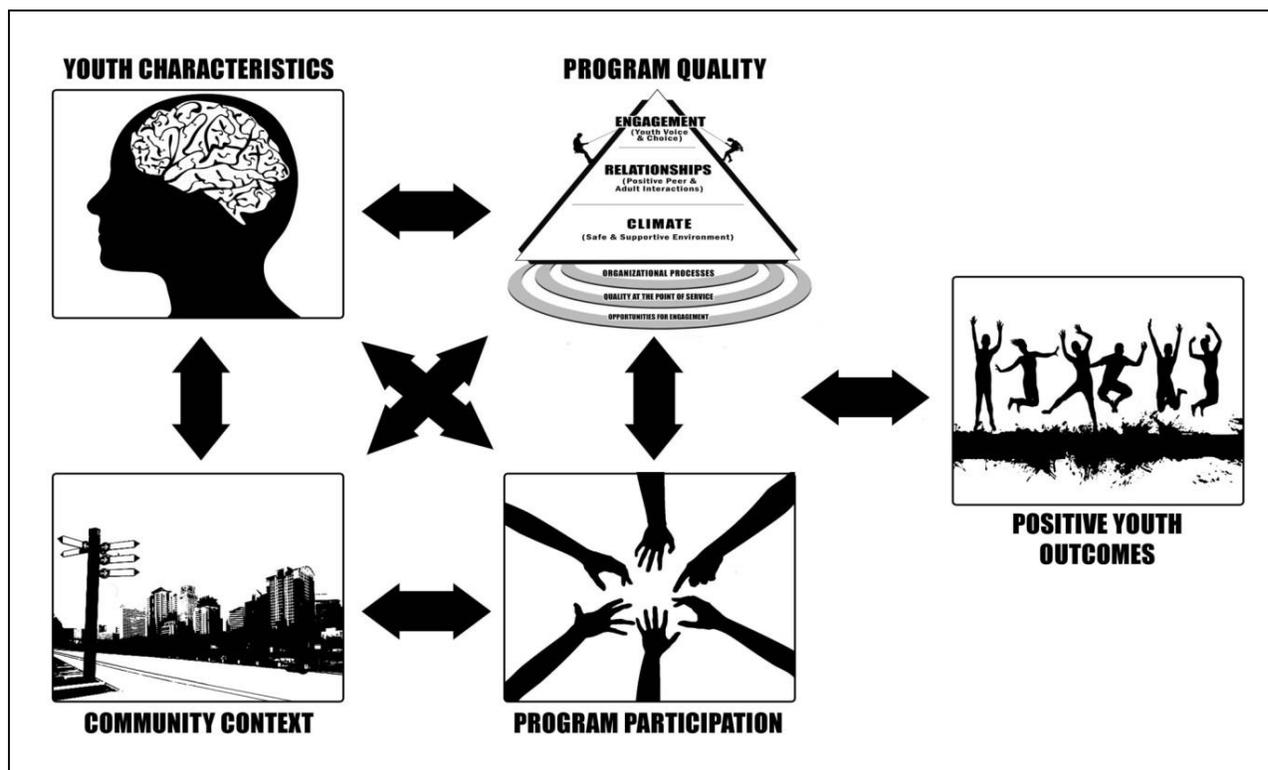
- Strategies and practices that support the academic development of participating youth
- Strategies and practices that support the development of participating youth from a youth-development perspective
- Strategies and practices that support the engagement and development of parents and adult family members
- Strategies and practices that support the use and engagement of partners
- Strategies and practices that support program improvement efforts.

Each of the *level* and *quality* domains used to organize the indicators are representative of both the goals and objectives specified for the 21st CCLC program by NJDOE and AIR’s larger framework for understanding the path to quality in afterschool programs. As shown in Figure 11, the achievement of desired youth outcomes is considered to be a function of a complex set of interactions between several program elements, including:

- *Youth characteristics:* The characteristics and contributions youth bring to the afterschool setting that influence how they engage with and benefit from afterschool programs.
- *Community context:* The resources and characteristics of the local and school community context that serve to support meaningful partnerships to develop program goals, program design, and provide program guidance. For instance, community context will be very different for rural, suburban, and urban communities.
- *Program participation:* Youth are more likely to benefit from afterschool program participation if they attend consistently over a period of time and participate in a variety of activity types.
- *Program quality:* Program quality is a series of practices and strategies that support the provision of developmentally appropriate, high-quality settings and activities at the point-of-service. This includes practices and approaches adopted by (a) activity leaders working directly with youth (such practices are represented in the “quality at the point of service” domain in the leading indicator system) and (b) the organization as a whole, which provides an infrastructure to support implementation of effective practice in the design, delivery, and evaluation of afterschool programming (represented in the “organizational processes” domains in the leading indicator system).

The current iteration of the leading indicator system addresses only a portion of the quality framework depicted in Figure 11.

Figure 11. AIR’s Quality Framework for Afterschool Programs



In the sections that follow, statewide levels of leading indicator performance are summarized by each of the five *quality* domains outlined previously, highlighting which indicators in that *quality* domain are aligned with different *levels* within the program.

Strategies and Practices that Support the Academic Development of Participating Youth

Each of the programs funded by a 21st CCLC grant has the express goal of improving youth achievement outcomes. Although a research base suggests that this goal can be met by simply paying attention to *how* programming is delivered (Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, & Mielke, 2005; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007), program sites will be more apt to accomplish this goal if practices ensure that (a) school-day instructional strategies and content are integrated into the planning and delivery of afterschool activities; (b) staff working directly with youth are intentional in applying these strategies at the point of service; and (c) youth actually attend such activities on a consistent and ongoing basis. NJDOE also expects that grantees will engage in measurement and evaluation activities that will allow the program to understand its impact on academic-related outcomes and to inform the program on what steps can be taken to improve program quality in a manner likely to facilitate attainment of such outcomes. That is, the grantees are expected to refine their programming continually, to adapt their logic model in light of new data or evaluation results, and to do so in a manner consistent with their program goals.

As shown in Table 6, sites operating 21st CCLC programs during the course of the 2013–14 school year demonstrated the following:

- Widespread adoption of specific instructional strategies to support academic skill building among participating youth (leading indicator 1)
- At least some access to school-based data on youth academic functioning and needs (leading indicators 2 and 3)
- Frequent intentionality in the design of activity sessions in terms of the skills and knowledge they were trying to impart to participating youth (leading indicator 18)

Less common was the offering of academic-related sessions and participation in these activities in accordance with the performance targets specified in the indicator descriptions (leading indicators 5 and 21). These results are very similar to results observed in previous years.

Two points are important to keep in mind when interpreting these findings:

1. When calculating leading indicators 5 and 21, only PARS21 offering and participation data from the fall semester of 2013 were used. The goal was to provide leading indicator reports to grantees midyear to allow them the capacity to make adjustments to programming during the latter part of the school year. In this sense, these indicators do not represent the full dosage of academic-related programming received by these youth.
2. The performance thresholds were set arbitrarily to create a metric against which to assess performance. As noted in Table 6, an average of 18 percent of activity sessions offered during the fall semester of 2013 were intentionally meant to support youth growth and development in either mathematics or reading and language arts and were led by a certified teacher, whereas an average of 30 percent of youth participating in programming during the fall semester for more than 15 days spent 50 percent or more of their time in such activities. As has been asked in previous years, however, it is unclear whether these levels of program offerings and attendance in academically oriented activities are sufficient to support youth academic growth and development in the manner required by the program. This remains a possible area for future investigation.

Table 6. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on Indicators Related to Strategies and Practices that Support the Academic Development of Participating Youth

Leading Indicator	Description and Calculation	Source	Indicator Value, 2013–14
Organizational Processes			
<p>Leading Indicator 1: Academic Development— Strategies are adopted to support the academic development of participating youth.</p>	<p>Each site received a score on a 0 to 100 scale, based on responses provided to questions related to the degree to which strategies were adopted to support the academic development of participating youth that appeared on the midyear version of the evaluation template.</p>	<p>Responses to the following question, which appeared in the <i>Improve Student Academic Achievement</i> section of the ETRS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which strategies were used to improve achievement in reading/English and mathematics (check all that apply)? 	<p>Ninety-nine percent of program sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator.</p>
<p>Leading Indicator 2: Link to School Day— Program staff take steps to establish effective linkages to the school day that inform the design and delivery of program activities meant to support youth academic growth and development.</p>	<p>Each site received a score on a 0 to 100 scale, based on responses provided to questions related to the degree to which strategies were adopted to support the academic development of participating youth that appeared on the midyear version of the evaluation template.</p>	<p>Responses to the following questions, which appeared in the <i>Improve Student Academic Achievement</i> section of the ETRS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How did the program obtain student information? How accessible was this information, and how often was it used? ▪ What strategies did you use to link the program to the regular school day? ▪ What strategies were your staff members using to communicate with classroom teachers, and how frequently were they being used? 	<p>The statewide mean scale score was 44.3, which meant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on student academic performance was <i>rarely or occasionally used</i>. ▪ Linking with the school day was <i>somewhat of a strategy</i> to a <i>major strategy</i>. ▪ Communication with school-day teachers occurred <i>once per grading period to monthly</i>.

Leading Indicator	Description and Calculation	Source	Indicator Value, 2013–14
<p>Leading Indicator 3: Common Core Assessment—Staff obtain data on how well youth are functioning in core academic areas and use that information to inform program design and delivery.</p>	<p>Each site received a designation of <i>having met</i> or <i>did not meet</i> the indicator in question, depending on whether they reported obtaining data on youth academic functioning at some point during the school year when completing the midyear evaluation template. The data yielded from these measures should ultimately be used to (a) inform how programming meant to support student academic growth and development is developed and implemented and (b) serve as a baseline against which to measure student growth across the school year in question.</p>	<p>Responses to the following question, which appeared in the <i>Improve Student Academic Achievement</i> section of the evaluation template:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please indicate if you have been able to measure the academic functioning of participating youth using one or more of the following data sources. 	<p>In all, 88.9% of program sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator.</p>
<p>Leading Indicator 4: Within-Program Assessment—Staff at the center implement <i>within-program</i> measures to gauge youth academic performance and growth.</p>	<p>Each site received a designation of <i>having met</i> or <i>did not meet</i> the indicator in question, depending upon whether or not they reported implementing within-program measures when completing the midyear evaluation template related to program impact on improving student academic achievement.</p>	<p>Responses to the following questions, which appear in the <i>Goal A: Improve student academic achievement</i> section of the evaluation template, respectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please indicate if you have been able to measure the academic functioning of participating youth using one or more of the following data sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve student assessment scores—program-level pretests or posttests • Improve student homework completion 	<p>In all, 17.9% of program sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator.</p>

Leading Indicator	Description and Calculation	Source	Indicator Value, 2013–14
<p>Leading Indicator 5: 21st Century Skills—A meaningful level of activity sessions delivered during the first semester of the school year are intentionally meant to support youth growth and development in either mathematics or reading/English and are led by a certified teacher.</p>	<p>Using data collected in PARS21 in relation to student attendance in activities with either a mathematics or reading/English focus, 50 percent of activity sessions delivered during the first semester of the school year were intentionally meant to support student growth and development in either mathematics or reading/English and are led by a certified teacher.</p>	<p>Activity detail and attendance pages in PARS21.</p>	<p>In all, 5.9% of program sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator. Statewide, an average of 18.3% of activity sessions offered during the fall semester of 2013 met these criteria.</p>
Point of Service Quality			
<p>Leading Indicator 18: Common Core—Staff design and deliver intentional and relevant activities designed to support youth growth and development in mathematics and reading/language arts.</p>	<p>Each site received a score on a 0 to 100 scale, based on mean responses provided to questions related to the degree of intentionality in activity and session design that appeared on the staff survey.</p>	<p>Responses to questions, which appeared in the <i>Intentionality in Activity and Session Design</i> scale of the staff survey.</p>	<p>The statewide mean scale score was 63.1, which was in the <i>Frequently</i> portion of the scale indicating the adoption of these practices by staff is common.</p>

Leading Indicator	Description and Calculation	Source	Indicator Value, 2013–14
<p>Leading Indicator 19: Collaboration with school partners— Program staff collaborate with school personnel to adopt practices that are supportive of academic skill building, including linkages to the school day and using data on youth academic achievement to inform programming.</p>	<p>Each site will received a score on a 0 to 100 scale, based on mean responses provided to questions related to linkages to the school day and using data on student academic achievement to inform programming that appeared on the staff survey.</p>	<p>Responses to questions, which appear in the <i>Linkages to the School Day</i> and <i>Using Data on Student Academic Achievement</i> to inform programming scales of the staff survey.</p>	<p>The statewide mean scale score was 64.5, which meant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff <i>agree</i> that linkages to the school-day exist. ▪ Staff typically use data on students’ academic needs <i>occasionally/often</i>.
Participation and Engagement			
<p>Leading Indicator 21: Common Core Skills— Youth enrolled in the program participate in a meaningful level of activities designed to support youth growth in reading and mathematics achievement.</p>	<p>Using data collected in PARS21 in relation to student attendance in activities with either a mathematics or reading/language arts focus, 75 percent of students participating in 21st CCLC programming for more than 15 days during the first semester of the school year will have participated in activities that were intentionally meant to support student growth and development in mathematics and reading/language arts for at least 50 percent of their total time in the program.</p>	<p>Activity detail and attendance pages in PARS21.</p>	<p>In all, 16.9% of program sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator.</p> <p>Statewide, an average of 29.6% of students participating in programming during the fall semester of 2013 for more than 15 days met these criteria.</p>

Strategies and Practices that Support the Development of Participating Youth from a Youth Development Perspective

Youth development is a multifaceted construct consisting of a series of positive developmental experiences youth have when key supports and opportunities are afforded throughout their participation in youth-serving programs. In high-quality programs, environments are supportive and interactive, and they provide youth with opportunities to experience engagement and ownership of the setting (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Smith & Hohmann, 2005).

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is also an integral component of youth growth and achievement that has been shown to be positively impacted in afterschool settings that promote the development of these skills through the creation of specific conditions for learning (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). Afterschool programs that have been shown to be successful in supporting the development of SEL skills integrate opportunities for participants to build on their social and emotional competencies through sequenced activities that are actively engaging and focused on the development of social skills. Ideally, these strategies are based on an understanding of participants' assets and needs garnered through ongoing formal and informal assessment.

As shown in Table 7, the sites operating 21st CCLC programs during the course of the 2013–14 school year were characterized by the following levels of performance on the indicators associated with this quality domain:

- Approximately 47 percent of program sites (a) were taking steps to assess youth functioning on social and emotional competencies (leading indicators 7 and 8) and (b) had met goals for the infusion of components meant to support youth-development-related behaviors and SEL functioning of participating youth and actual youth participation targets for the fall semester of 2013 (leading indicators 9 and 20). In the case of the latter set of findings, a question should be raised around the meaningfulness of the performance thresholds associated with leading indicators 9 and 20. Little is known regarding what is an appropriate dosage for youth participation and how best to assess implementation outside direct observation. Although many questions remain regarding how program sites are infusing youth development and SEL components into programming, the leading indicators related to this quality domain seem to suggest a significant portion of New Jersey 21st CCLC's community are dedicating meaningful efforts to the design and delivery of this type of programming.
- In terms of activities provided at the point of service meant to support youth development, statewide averages on the *Staff Capacity to Create Interactive and Engaging Environment* scale (the source for leading indicator 16) and the *Practices Supportive of Positive Youth Development* and *Opportunities for Youth Ownership* scales of the staff survey (the sources for leading indicator 17) suggest that staff adoption of such practices is more common than not. However, for each of these indicators, 12 percent and 20 percent of sites, respectively, had an average scale score that indicated these practices were only occurring *occasionally to largely not at all*. This set of programs could likely benefit from additional support on how best to implement these types of supports and opportunities for participating youth.

Table 7. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on Indicators Related to Strategies and Practices that Support the Development of Participating Youth From a Youth Development Perspective

Leading Indicator	Description and Calculation	Source	Indicator Value, 2013–14
Organizational Processes			
<p>Leading Indicator 6: Youth Engagement—Staff implement strategies to support the social and emotional development of participating youth in the program.</p>	<p>Each site received a designation of <i>met</i> or <i>did not meet</i> based on responses provided to questions related to the degree to which strategies are adopted to support the social-emotional development of participating youth that appeared on the midyear version of the evaluation template.</p>	<p>Responses to the following question, which appeared in the <i>Improve Student Behavior and Attitudes</i> section of the evaluation template:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What strategies were used to support the social-emotional development of participating youth? (Check all that apply.) 	<p>Ninety-nine percent of sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator, indicating the program used at least one strategy to support social-emotional development of participating youth.</p>
<p>Leading Indicator 7: Youth Assessment—Site staff take steps to implement measures to assess social and emotional competencies and use that information to inform program design and delivery.</p>	<p>Each site received a designation of <i>having met</i> or <i>did not meet</i> the indicator in question, depending on whether they reported implementing one or more measures at some point during the school year to assess youth functioning on one or more youth-development-related behavior or social-emotional construct. Ideally, programs used the data yielded from these measures to (a) inform how programming meant to support youth development and social-emotional constructs is developed and implemented and (b) serve as a baseline against which to measure student growth across the school year.</p>	<p>Responses to the following question, which appeared in the <i>Improve Student Behaviors and Attitudes</i> section of the evaluation template:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please indicate if you have been able to measure youth-development-related behaviors and social-emotional functioning of participating youth in each of the following areas. 	<p>Eighty-two percent of sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator.</p>

Leading Indicator	Description and Calculation	Source	Indicator Value, 2013–14
<p>Leading Indicator 8: Within Program Assessment—Staff at the site implement <i>within-program</i> measures to assess youth social and emotional functioning and gauge program impact.</p>	<p>Each site received a designation of <i>having met</i> or <i>did not meet</i> the indicator in question, depending on whether they reported implementing within-program measures when completing the midyear evaluation template related to program impact on improving student behavior and attitudes.</p>	<p>Responses to the following questions, which appeared in the <i>Goal B: Improve student behavior and attitudes</i> section of the evaluation template, respectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please indicate if you have been able to measure youth-development-related behaviors and social-emotional functioning of participating youth in each of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve youth-development-related behaviors and social-emotional functioning of participating youth. 	<p>Seventy-one percent of sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator.</p>
<p>Leading Indicator 9: Social and Emotional Learning—Staff infuse components that are meant to support the social and emotional development of participating youth.</p>	<p>Fields exist in PARS21 that allow users to specify whether an activity is characterized by an infusion of components that are meant to support youth-development-related behaviors and SEL functioning. Users specify what areas of youth and development and SEL functioning are being targeted, if any. The goal is to have 20% of activity sessions delivered during the first semester of the school year be characterized by an infusion of components that are meant to support youth-development-related behaviors and SEL.</p>	<p>Responses to the following fields in PARS21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is this activity intentionally designed to support the improvement of youth-development-related behaviors and social-emotional functioning in any of the following areas (check all that apply)? 	<p>Seventy percent of sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator.</p> <p>Statewide, an average of 57.6% of activity sessions offered during the fall semester of 2013 met these criteria.</p>

Leading Indicator	Description and Calculation	Source	Indicator Value, 2013–14
Point-of-Service Quality			
Leading Indicator 16: Quality at Point of Service—Staff are committed to creating interactive and engaging settings for youth.	Each site received a score on a 0 to 100 scale, based on responses provided to questions related to the degree of <i>Staff Capacity to Create Interactive and Engaging</i> settings for youth.	Responses to questions, which appear in the <i>Staff Capacity to Create Interactive and Engaging Environment</i> scale of the staff survey.	The statewide mean scale score was 62.5, which was within the <i>Agree</i> portion of the scale indicating staff believe their peers largely provide these opportunities to participating youth.
Leading Indicator 17: Youth Development—Staff develop activities that are meant to support youth ownership and other opportunities for positive youth development.	Each site received a score on a 0 to 100 scale, based on responses provided to questions related to the degree to which staff reported adopting practices designed to support youth development and ownership.	Responses to questions, which appear in the <i>Practices Supportive of Positive Youth Development</i> and <i>Opportunities for Youth Ownership</i> scales of the staff survey.	The statewide mean scale score was 63.0, which meant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select opportunities for youth development were made available occasionally. ▪ Staff largely agree that youth ownership opportunities are provided.

Leading Indicator	Description and Calculation	Source	Indicator Value, 2013–14
Participation and Engagement			
<p>Leading Indicator 20: 21st Century Skills— Youth enrolled in the program participate in a meaningful level of activities designed to support youth development and social and emotional competencies.</p>	<p>Using data collected in PARS21 in relation to student attendance in activities which infused youth-development-related and social-emotional components, 50% of students participating in 21st CCLC programming for more than 15 days will have participated in activities infused with components that are meant to support youth-development-related behaviors and social-emotional functioning for at least 20% of their total time in the program.</p>	<p>Responses to the following fields in PARS21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is this activity intentionally designed to support the improvement of youth-development-related behaviors and social-emotional functioning in any of the following areas (check all that apply)? 	<p>Sixty-five percent of sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator. Statewide, an average of 66.1% of students participating in programming during the fall semester of 2013 for more than 15 days met these criteria.</p>

Strategies and Practices that Support the Engagement and Development of Parents and Adult Family Members

Engaging families in programming and providing family learning events is an important component of the 21st CCLC program. Programs can engage families by communicating with them about site programming and events, collaborating to enhance their child’s educational success, and providing intentional activities meant to both support family involvement and the cultivation of family literacy and related skills. Historically, 21st CCLCs have witnessed some of their greatest challenges in terms of getting parents and adult family members meaningfully engaged in program offerings and events (Naftzger et al., 2011).

As shown in Table 8, sites operating 21st CCLC programs during the course of the 2013–14 school year were characterized by the following levels of performance on the indicators associated with this quality domain:

- In terms of engaging in practices to support and cultivate parent involvement and engagement (leading indicator 14), most sites were found to do so just *sometimes* (71 percent of sites fell within this range of the scale), as opposed to *never* (6 percent of sites) or *frequently* (21 percent).
- Seventy-one percent of centers indicated adopting measures to assess the program’s impact on parent education and involvement (leading indicator 15).
- Only a very small percentage of programs (5 percent) were able to engage parents or other adult family members in activities for at least 15 percent of the youth served in the program during the fall semester of 2013 (leading indicator 22).

Many of these findings are consistent with previous leading indicator results and demonstrate the ongoing challenges of reaching out to and engaging parents and adult family members of participating 21st CCLC youth.

Table 8. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on Indicators Related to Strategies and Practices that Support the Engagement and Development of Parents and Adult Family Members

Leading Indicator	Description and Calculation	Source	Indicator Value, 2013–14
Organizational Processes			
Leading Indicator 14: Staff and Family Connections—Staff actively engage in practices supportive of parent involvement and engagement meant to support youth growth and academic development.	Each site received a score on a 0 to 100 scale, based on mean responses provided to questions related to the extent to which staff engage in practices supportive of parent involvement and engagement.	Responses to questions, which appear in the <i>Practices Supportive of Parent Involvement and Engagement</i> scale of the staff survey.	The statewide mean scale score was 62.3, which was within the <i>did sometimes</i> portion of the scale.
Leading Indicator 15: Family Impact Assessment—Staff at the site implement measures to assess program impact on the parents and family members of participating students.	Each site received a designation of having met or did not meet the indicator in question depending on whether they reported implementing within-program measures in the <i>Goal C: Improve parent education and involvement</i> section of the midyear evaluation template.	Responses to the following question, which appears in the <i>Goal C: Improve parent education and involvement</i> section of the evaluation template: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please indicate if you have been able to measure progress on the objectives you specified, and what types of measures were used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent surveys • Student surveys • Teacher surveys 	Seventy percent of program sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator.

Leading Indicator	Description and Calculation	Source	Indicator Value, 2013–14
Participation and Engagement			
Leading Indicator 22: Family Involvement— Parents and family members of enrolled youth participate in activities designed to support family engagement and skill building.	Using data collected in PARS21 in relation to parent and adult family member attendance in activities, 15% of youth attending programming during the school year had at least one parent or adult family member participate in at least one activity meant to support parental or adult family member involvement or skill building.	Activity detail and attendance pages in PARS21.	Five percent of program sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator.

Strategies and Practices that Support the Use and Engagement of Partners

Encouraging partnerships between schools and community organizations is an important component of the national 21st CCLC programs. Partners are defined as any organization other than the grantee that actively contributes to a 21st CCLC-funded program to help programs meet their goals and objectives. Partners play a variety of roles in supporting a 21st CCLC-funded program. For example, partners provide programming and staff, provide physical space and facilities, and facilitate fundraising efforts. In many instances, partners can play a critical role in providing activities and services, especially in such cases when the grantee lacks expertise or training in that area, so as to enhance the variety of learning opportunities available to youth.

From a quality perspective, mutually beneficial partnerships are most effective when staff from the partner organization work directly with youth and are involved in regular program processes related to staff orientation, training, evaluation, feedback, and professional development.

The leading indicator for community context is meant to capture the degree to which partners associated with the site are actively involved in planning, decision making, evaluating, and supporting program operations.

As shown in Table 9, sites operating 21st CCLC programs during the course of the 2013–14 school year were characterized by the following levels of performance on the indicators associated with this quality domain:

- In terms of engaging a partner in collaborative efforts to promote a shared vision and understanding of the work (leading indicator 12),⁹ most sites were found to engage in such practices (approximately 90 percent). However, partner staff were largely described as only being *moderately* involved in the provision of select activities such as recruiting other potential partners, participating in site events like family night, serving on an advisory board, participating program planning, assessing programming, or helping build toward sustainability.
- Approximately 21 percent of activity sessions delivered during the fall semester of 2013 included staff employed directly by the partner (leading indicator 13).

These values are in line with observations from 2012-13, reflecting a modest increase in terms of leading indicator 13.

⁹ Leading indicator 12 references partner involvement in activities such as helping establish goals and objectives for the program, orienting new staff to the program, providing professional development opportunities, reviewing evaluation results and targeting areas for improvement, developing and evaluating the effectiveness of operational procedures, and planning for program sustainability or expansion.

Table 9. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on Indicators Related to Strategies and Practices that Support the Utilization and Engagement of Partners

Leading Indicator	Description and Calculation	Source	Indicator Value, 2013–14
Organizational Processes			
<p>Leading Indicator 12: Community Partner Engagement—Partners associated with the site are actively involved in planning, decision making, evaluating, and supporting the operations of the afterschool program. As a result, participants are provided access to a variety of opportunities.</p>	<p>Each site received a score on a 0 to 100 scale, based on responses provided to questions related to the degree of partner engagement that appear on the midyear version of the evaluation template.</p>	<p>Responses to the following questions, which appear in the <i>Improve Community Partnerships</i> section of the evaluation template:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent do you and those among your partners who were involved in programming, work together to do the following? ▪ Indicate whether staff from partner agencies were involved in the following types of activities or events. 	<p>The statewide mean scale score was 50.4, which meant that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grantees largely collaborated <i>formally</i> with partners. ▪ Partners were involved <i>to a moderate extent</i> in supporting the typical program.
<p>Leading Indicator 13: Activity sessions delivered by staff employed directly by partners—Staff from partner organizations are meaningfully involved in the provision of activities at the center.</p>	<p>The indicator is predicated on the proportion of total activity sessions delivered during the first semester of the school year by staff employed directly by a partner or collaborating agency.</p>	<p>Use staff information page in PARS21 to determine connection to a partner agency.</p>	<p>Twenty-one percent of activity sessions provided in the fall of 2013 were delivered by partner staff.</p>

Strategies and Practices that Support Program Improvement Efforts

Leading indicators within this domain examine both self-assessment strategies and internal communication and collaboration among program staff. As noted by Smith (2007), Glisson (2007), and Birmingham et al. (2005), an organizational climate that supports staff in reflecting on and continually improving program quality is a key aspect of effective youth-development programs. Programs characterized by a supportive and collaborative climate permit staff to engage in self-reflective practice to improve overall program quality. Self-reflective practice is more likely to lead to high-quality program sessions that provide youth with positive and meaningful experiences (Smith et al., 2012).

As shown in Table 10, the sites operating 21st CCLC programs during the course of the 2013–14 school year were characterized by the following levels of performance on the indicators associated with this quality domain:

- Eighty-three percent of sites reported engaging in some form of self-assessment process employing a specific tool or instrument during the 2013–14 school year (leading indicator 10).
- The average statewide scale score for internal communication fell within the *once a month* response category (scale response options included *never*, *a couple of times per year*, *about once a month*, and *nearly every week*), suggesting the assessed collaborative efforts were frequently implemented during the 2013–14 programming period (leading indicator 11).

Within the field of afterschool programming, self-assessment processes have been one of the primary mechanisms of supporting quality improvement efforts. Efforts are now underway to capitalize on this approach in New Jersey, given the development the self-assessment tool by the New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition aligned with the state’s newly adopted state afterschool standards.

Table 10. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on Indicators Related to Strategies and Practices that Support Program Improvement Efforts

Leading Indicator	Description and Calculation	Source	Indicator Value, 2013–14
Organizational Processes			
<p>Leading Indicator 10: Program Self-Assessment—Program staff periodically reflect on program practices through one or more self-assessments to inform program improvement.</p>	<p>Each site received a designation of <i>having met</i> or <i>did not meet</i> the indicator in question, depending on whether they reported completing one or more self-assessments at some point during the school year.</p>	<p>Responses to the following question, which appears in the <i>Program Operations</i> section of the evaluation template:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were any of the following self-assessment tools completed at this site during the program period? (Select all that apply.) 	<p>Eighty-three percent of sites met the performance threshold associated with this indicator.</p>
<p>Leading Indicator 11: Internal Communication—Staff communicate with other program staff to enhance internal collaboration toward continuous program improvement.</p>	<p>Each site received a score on a 0 to 100 scale, based on mean responses provided to questions related to the degree of communication and collaboration reported in relation to questions on the staff survey.</p>	<p>Responses to questions, which appear in the <i>Internal Communication and Collaboration</i> scale of the staff survey.</p>	<p>The statewide mean scale score was 61.4, which was within the <i>once a month</i> portion of the scale.</p>

Determining Program Improvement Priorities from the Leading Indicators

One goal of the leading indicator system is to help NJDOE make a determination regarding where efforts should be invested to support programs in the adoption of quality afterschool practices. For indicators represented in the leading indicator system, Table 11 presents those indicators where quality practices were largely absent, where a majority (50 percent or more) of programs fell in the lowest response rating or largely *did not meet* the defined indicator threshold, as defined by the specific indicator. That is, Table 11 highlights areas where grantees may be in most need of help. When reading Table 11, note, therefore, that high numbers and high percentages show areas of general *weakness* across programs.

As shown in Table 11, there are two general types of indicators where 50 percent or more of sites fell within a range indicating that the quality practice was largely absent:

1. Indicator 4, which relates to assessment practices oriented as assessing youth academic functioning and how youth have improved since the onset of participation in the program. Note that, in previous years, leading indicator 8 was also included here; there has been improvement in this area, however, with *less* than 50 percent of sites *not* meeting the requirements of leading indicator 8 (i.e., more sites this year than last year reported implementing *within-program* measures to assess youth social and emotional functioning and to gauge program impact).
2. Indicators related to offering certain types of activities and participant attendance levels in these activities based on PARS21 data (leading indicators 5, 21, and 22). This has been true for several years, and bears further investigation.

In terms of assessing youth functioning on key academic outcomes, it is recommended that NJDOE work with AIR evaluation staff, staff from the New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition, and grantee representatives to develop a more formal set of guidelines and expectations for the implementation and use of measures meant to assess youth functioning in these areas. The goal should be to identify the least burdensome approaches that still yield useful information and capitalize effectively on measures used during the school day.

Also, there is a need for clarification regarding an acceptable level of programming (and participation in said programming) to support academic and SEL development of participating youth; the question remains, what amount of programming—intentionally meant to support youth growth in academic or SEL development—is necessary to meet growth goals related to these areas? Currently, there is no clear-cut threshold. During the course of 2015-16, given that the leading indicators are currently being revised, the question of appropriate thresholds should be considered. It might be appropriate to abandon concrete thresholds in this regard and simply monitor how offering and participation levels change over time in response to NJDOE guidance, evaluation, or technical assistance. It may also be worth removing these indicators entirely if no consensus on their value can be reached.

Table 11. Leading Indicator Scales by Number and Percentage of Program Sites where Quality Practices were Largely Absent: Indicators Showing Need for Improvement

Domain or Indicator	Rating	N Sites with Rating	Percentage of Sites with Rating
Strategies and Practices That Support the Academic Development of Participating Youth			
Leading Indicator 4: Within-Program Assessment—Staff at the site implement <i>within-program</i> measures to gauge youth academic performance and growth.	Did not implement	96	81%
Leading Indicator 5: 21st Century Skills—A meaningful level of activity sessions delivered during the first semester of the school year are intentionally meant to support youth growth and development in either mathematics or reading/language arts and are led by a certified teacher.	Did not meet	99	84%
Strategies and Practices That Support the Development of Participating Youth From a Youth Development Perspective			
Leading Indicator 21: Common Core Skills—Youth enrolled in the program participate in a meaningful level of activities designed to support youth growth in reading and mathematics achievement.	Did not meet	83	70%
Strategies and Practices That Support the Engagement and Development of Parents and Adult Family Members			
Leading Indicator 22: Family Involvement—Parents and family members of enrolled youth participate in activities designed to support family engagement and skill building.	Did not meet	98	83%

Chapter 5. Assessing 21st CCLC Program Outcomes

Another primary objective of the statewide evaluation was to understand the relationship between participation in 21st CCLC–funded programs and student outcomes. Employing program participation and outcome data associated with the 2013–14 programming period, a series of analyses were undertaken to assess the extent of program impact on state assessment results, truancy rates, and retention. These analyses were based on a rigorous quasi-experimental design that compared academic outcomes of 21st CCLC program participants with matched nonparticipating students using a propensity score matching (PSM) approach. The method used and the results obtained are described in this section.

Impact of 21st CCLC Participation on Student Achievement, Truancy Rates, and Retention: All 21st CCLC Participants

The evaluation team employed a quasi-experimental research design to examine the effect of participating in 21st CCLC programming on students' reading and mathematics achievement measured by NJ ASK for students in Grades 4–8. The analysis was conducted for two sets of students: students across all proficiency levels in the two subjects and students classified as “below proficient” in the previous year (2012-13). The goal of this analysis was to assess the extent to which there is evidence that students participating in services and activities funded by 21st CCLC demonstrate better outcomes compared to students not participating in the program, specifically with respect to:

- Higher academic achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics
- Lower truancy and retention rates

The study compared the outcomes of students who participated in 21st CCLC programs to similar students who did not participate using a propensity score stratification approach. Participation was defined two different ways for the purpose of the analysis. First, students who attended at least 30 days were compared with students who attended 0 days. Second, students who attended at least 70 days were compared with students who attended 0 days. These definitions of “treatment” were determined to ensure that the comparison of program effect was based on students who received a significant dose of 21st CCLC programming.

Accounting for Selection Bias

In any evaluation of a program where participants are not randomly assigned to participate in the program or not, the problem of selection is paramount. We know that it is likely that students who participate in 21st CCLC programming are different from those who do not attend. These differences can bias estimates of program effectiveness because they make it difficult to disentangle pre-existing differences between students who attended the program and those who did not from the effect of attending the program. In general, we found that students who attended the program tended to be higher achieving students than those who did not prior to the start of the current academic year. The quasi-experimental approach outlined here, PSM, is a method for mitigating that existing bias in program effect (i.e., if one were to simply compare the students who attended and those who did not).

PSM is a two-stage process designed to address this problem. In the first stage, the probability that each student participates in the 21st CCLC program was modeled on available observable characteristics. By modeling selection into the program, this approach allowed us to compare participating and nonparticipating students who would have had a similar propensity to select into the program based on observable characteristics that were available in the data received from New Jersey. In the second stage, the predicted probability of participation was used to model student outcomes while accounting for selection bias. We balanced pretreatment group differences in observed covariates using a propensity score stratification and marginal mean weighting approach (Hong & Hong, 2009).

Stage 1: Creation of the Control Group. The outcome of interest in modeling propensity scores is treatment status (1 for students participating in the program, 0 for the control group). To account for this binary outcome, logistic regression was used to model the logit (or log-odds) of student group assignment status. Examples of student-level variables used to fit the propensity score models included the following:

- Prior achievement in reading and mathematics
- Prior truancy and retention
- Student demographic information, including gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, special education status, and limited English proficiency status

In addition to the student-level variables, the propensity score model also included school variables that added information about the school a student attended (to account for school-based contextual differences which may account for differences in the propensity for a student to participate). A total of 51 variables were considered for the propensity score model. Data were not available for each of these covariates for all students. To account for this, indicator variables were used to model the relationship between the pattern of missing data and propensity to participate in the program (Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1984). The propensity score model was fit separately for each grade (Grades 4–8), and separately for each definition of treatment (30+ day; 70+ day). The final propensity score models for each grade were checked to ensure that the analysis sample was balanced across relevant covariates. The propensity score models all produced control samples, which were balanced with the treatment across the 51 variables examined for balance. This result indicates that the treatment and control groups had no significant differences from one another (prior to treatment) as measured by these 51 variables.

Results

The evaluation team followed the same procedure to examine the effect of participating in 21st CCLC programming on reading and mathematics achievement for (a) students across all proficiency levels and (b) below-proficient students. The results are presented in the next sections, respectively.

Impact for Students Across All Proficiency Levels

Table 12 shows the effect of 21st CCLC programming on student reading and mathematics achievement, pooled across grade levels (for both the 30+ day and 70+ day treatment definitions) for students across proficiency levels in Grades 4–8. It is important to note that the control group for the 30+ day and 70+ day treatment definitions will differ. Separate propensity score models

were fit for each, and it is reasonable to think that students who attend 70 or more days are different from those who only attend 30 or more days.

No significant effect of 21st CCLC programming was found for reading achievement at the 0.10 significance level for either the 30+ day or the 70+ day treatment. Reading achievement in the treatment group was lower for the 30+ day treatment and higher for the 70+ day treatment than that in the control group, but not significantly so. The results are different for mathematics. For both the 30+ and the 70+ day treatments, there was a statistically significant, positive impact of 21st CCLC programming on mathematics achievement, with students achieving .021 standard deviation units higher than the control group in the 30+ day group and .031 standardized deviation units higher than the control group in the 70+ day group. The effect sizes for both reading and mathematics achievement are all small (Cohen, 1988), however, with the significant positive result for mathematics representing about 1/50th (30+ days) and 1/32nd (70+ days) of a standard deviation difference in test performance between the treatment and control groups. These results are very close to results from previous impact analyses for New Jersey.

Table 12. Impact of 21st CCLC on Achievement Pooled Across Grades 4–8

Subject	Treatment	Effect Size	S.E. of Effect Size	<i>p</i>
Math	30+ day	0.021	0.008	0.015**
	70+ day	0.031	0.010	0.001***
Reading	30+ day	-0.005	0.009	0.551
	70+ day	-0.001	0.011	0.918

Note: SE = standard error; ***significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

Table 13 shows the impact on achievement broken down by grade for the 30+ day treatment definition. There were no significant effects on reading for any grade. For mathematics, there were significant, positive effects observed for both 5th and 7th grades, but the effect sizes in both cases were again very small.

Table 13. Impact of 21st CCLC on Achievement—30+ Day Treatment, Grades 4–8

Grade	Math				Reading			
	Effect	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Effect Size	Effect	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Effect Size
4	-0.360	0.893	0.687	-0.008	-0.839	0.522	0.108	-0.038
5	1.263	0.716	0.078*	0.034	0.557	0.480	0.246	0.023
6	-0.043	0.643	0.947	-0.001	0.042	0.448	0.926	0.002
7	1.768	0.730	0.015**	0.046	-0.438	0.569	0.442	-0.015
8	1.531	0.860	0.075*	0.035	-0.247	0.483	0.608	-0.011

Note: SE = standard error; ***significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

Table 14 is similar to Table 13 but shows the results for the 70+ day treatment. We see a significant positive impact of treatment on mathematics achievement for Grades 5, 7, and 8. All effect sizes are small, however. There were no significant effects for reading.

Table 14. Impact of 21st CCLC on Achievement—70+ Day Treatment, Grades 4–8

Grade	Math				Reading			
	Effect	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Effect Size	Effect	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Effect Size
4	0.026	0.972	0.979	0.001	-0.552	0.564	0.327	-0.025
5	2.207	0.777	0.005***	0.058	0.616	0.531	0.246	0.025
6	0.350	0.730	0.632	0.009	-0.212	0.509	0.677	-0.009
7	1.841	0.923	0.046**	0.048	0.413	0.717	0.564	0.014
8	2.157	1.113	0.053*	0.048	-0.514	0.631	0.415	-0.023

Note: SE = standard error; *** significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

Truancy and Retention Outcomes

Similar impact models were run for truancy and retention outcomes, looking again at treatment levels of 30+ and 70+ days. As shown in Table 15, significant, *negative*¹⁰ effects were found for both the 30+ day group and 70+ day group in comparison to non-participants, meaning 21st CCLC programming was linked to reduction in truancy rates. For the 30+ day group, participants on average had a truancy rate .868 times that of non-participants, while the 70+ day group had an average truancy rate .760 times that of non-participants. In terms of retention, a significant, negative effect was observed for the 30+ day group, but not for the 70+ day group. In terms of odds, the 21st CCLC participants in the 30+ day group were .84 times as likely to be retained as non-participants.

Table 15. Impact of 21st CCLC on Truancy and Retention, Pooled Across Grades

	Days Truancy				Retention			
	Effect Size	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Rate Ratio	Effect Size	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Odds Ratio
30+ days	-0.142	0.009	< 0.001***	0.868 ¹	-0.169	0.020	< 0.001***	0.845 ²
70+ days	-0.274	0.000	< 0.001***	0.760	-0.039	0.028	0.156	0.962

Notes: (1) The rate ratio of 0.868 for days truancy indicates the mean of days of truancy for treatment students is 0.868 times that of comparison students. (2) The odds ratio of 0.845 for retention indicates the odds of treatment students being retained is 0.845 times that for comparison students. (3) SE = standard error; *** significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

Tables 16 and 17 present the same outcome analyses, but for separate grade levels and treatment groups. Interestingly, with respect to truancy rates, a highly significant, negative effect was observed for all grades, with the greatest reduction in truancy rates observed for 7th grade (with participants having an average truancy rate .813 times that of non-participants). In terms of retention, a significant effect (negative) was observed only for 5th grade. Almost identical results were observed for the 70+ day group, though of particular interest is the fact that the effect for the higher-attending group was larger (for each grade) in terms of truancy rate reduction.

¹⁰ In this case, a “negative” effect is the desired effect. That is, truancy rates are *lower* for participants than for non-participants at both attendance levels.

Table 16. Impact of 21st CCLC on Non-Test Performance – 30+ Day Treatment

Grade	Days Truancy				Retention			
	Effect Size	S.E	<i>P</i>	Rate Ratio	Effect Size	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Odds Ratio
4	-0.078	0.022	< 0.001***	0.925	0.440	0.323	0.173	1.553
5	-0.141	0.020	< 0.001***	0.868	-0.563	0.316	0.075*	0.570
6	-0.090	0.017	< 0.001***	0.914	-0.325	0.248	0.190	0.723
7	-0.207	0.018	< 0.001***	0.813	-0.044	0.299	0.882	0.957
8	-0.195	0.021	< 0.001***	0.823	-0.589	0.746	0.430	0.555

Note: SE = standard error; *** significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

Table 17. Impact of 21st CCLC on Non-Test Performance – 70+ Day Treatment

Grade	Days Truancy				Retention			
	Effect Size	S.E	<i>p</i>	Rate Ratio	Effect Size	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Odds Ratio
4	-0.102	0.023	0.000***	0.903	0.515	0.358	0.150	1.674
5	-0.204	0.023	0.000***	0.815	-0.790	0.413	0.056*	0.454
6	-0.192	0.022	0.000***	0.825	-0.133	0.267	0.618	0.875
7	-0.274	0.000	0.000***	0.760	0.157	0.377	0.677	1.170
8	-0.321	0.033	0.000***	0.725	-0.032	0.804	0.968	0.969

Note: SE = standard error; *** significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

Impact of 21st CCLC Participation on Student Achievement, Truancy Rates, and Retention: 21st CCLC Participants Classified as Below Proficient

This section presents analyses very similar to those in the preceding section, but focuses on the sub-population of 21st CCLC participants who were classified as below proficient in reading or mathematics in the previous year (2012-13). Table 18 shows the effect of 21st CCLC programming on student reading and mathematics achievement pooled across grade levels (for both the 30+ day and 70+ day treatment definitions) for students who are below proficient. Note that both the treatment and control groups will be different from the previous analysis, given this analysis focuses on a subset of students from the overall sample. The methodology, however, is the same, with propensity score models fit by treatment definition and by subject.

Significant, positive effects of 21st CCLC were found for reading achievement for both the 30+ day and the 70+ day groups, though effect sizes were again very small. In comparison with non-participants, students in the 30+ day treatment group achieved .044 standard deviation units higher, while the 70+ day treatment group achieved .034 standard deviation units higher. For mathematics the effect sizes were larger, with the 30+ day treatment group achieving .095 standard deviation units higher than non-participants and the 70+ day treatment group achieving .100 standard deviation units higher than non-participants. Given the amount of time that students spend in 21st CCLC programming, these effects are substantive. For context, Hill, Bloom, Black, and Lipsey (2008) found that, on average, the effect of a whole year of learning on assessment results (counting time both in and out of school) averaged .31 standard deviation units for reading and .42 standard deviation units for mathematics.

Table 18. Impact of 21st CCLC on Achievement Pooled Across Grades (Below-Proficient Students)

Subject	Treatment	Effect Size	S.E. of Effect Size	<i>p</i>
Math	30+ day	0.095	0.020	<0.001***
	70+ day	0.100	0.023	<0.001***
Reading	30+ day	0.044	0.016	0.005***
	70+ day	0.034	0.018	0.061*

Note: SE = standard error; *** significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

Table 19 shows the impact on achievement broken down by grade for the 30+ day treatment group. Table 19 shows that there is significant impact of treatment on reading achievement only for Grade 5, with participants achieving .088 standard deviation units higher than non-participants. The models found a statistically significant, positive impact of treatment on mathematics achievement for Grades 4 through 7 (though only moderately significant for Grade 4 and 5), but no significant impact for Grade 8. The effect size for Grade 7 mathematics is particularly notable, with a remarkable effect size of .149 standard deviation units.

Table 19. Impact of 21st CCLC on Achievement—30+ Day Treatment (Below-Proficient Students)

Grade	Reading				Math			
	Effect	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Effect Size	Effect	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Effect Size
4	0.689	0.526	0.191	0.048	1.862	0.954	0.051*	0.091
5	1.378	0.483	0.004***	0.088	1.337	0.783	0.088*	0.081
6	0.293	0.470	0.532	0.020	2.023	0.792	0.011**	0.112
7	0.409	0.573	0.475	0.024	3.016	0.765	0.000***	0.149
8	0.330	0.585	0.573	0.028	0.229	0.984	0.816	0.011

Note: SE = standard error; *** significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

Table 20 is similar to Table 19 but shows the results for 70+ day treatment. Table 20 demonstrates a significant positive impact of treatment on reading achievement for Grade 5, but no significant impact for any other grade level. Similar to the results for the 30+ treatment group, significant, positive impact for mathematics achievement was observed for Grades 4 through 7, but not for Grade 8. Again, the results for Grade 7 in particular are notable, with an effect size of .155 standard deviation units.

Table 20. Impact of 21st CCLC on Achievement—70+ Day Treatment (Below-Proficient Students)

Grade	Reading				Math			
	Effect	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Effect Size	Effect	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Effect Size
4	0.432	0.563	0.443	0.030	1.791	1.067	0.093*	0.087
5	1.142	0.546	0.037**	0.074	1.930	0.915	0.035**	0.116
6	-0.009	0.538	0.987	-0.001	2.030	0.929	0.029**	0.111
7	0.783	0.724	0.280	0.044	3.139	0.963	0.001***	0.155
8	-0.113	0.779	0.885	-0.010	-0.065	1.233	0.958	-0.003

Note: SE = standard error; *** significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

Truancy and Retention Outcomes

Impact models were run for truancy and retention outcomes, looking again at treatment levels of 30+ and 70+ days but focusing exclusively on students who were below proficient in reading or mathematics. As shown in Table 21, significant, *negative* effects (i.e., lower rates of truancy and retention for participants) were found for both the 30+ day group and 70+ day group (below proficient in reading and/or mathematics) in comparison to non-participants. In terms of retention, a significant, negative effect was observed for those students below proficient in reading, but not for those below proficient in mathematics (though the statistics significance of the finding for the 30+ day treatment group is modest). In terms of odds, the 21st CCLC participants in the 30+ day group were .94 times as likely to be retained as non-participants, while for the 70+ day group the odds ratio for participants was 1.126, indicating that participants were slightly *more* likely to be retained than non-participants. This group may, however, be attending at a higher level specifically because of a higher academic need.

Table 21. Impact of 21st CCLC on Non-Test Performance (Below-Proficient Students)

Subject	Treatment	Days Truancy				Retention			
		Effect Size	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Rate Ratio	Effect Size	S.E.	<i>P</i>	Odds Ratio
Mathematics	30+ day	-0.183	0.013	< 0.001***	0.833	-0.059	0.044	0.180	0.943
	70+ day	-0.225	0.016	< 0.001***	0.799	0.085	0.054	0.114	1.089
Reading	30+ day	-0.252	0.000	< 0.001***	0.777	-0.047	0.028	0.092*	0.954
	70+ day	-0.199	0.014	< 0.001***	0.820	0.119	0.040	0.003***	1.126

Note: SE = standard error; *** significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

Results were also analyzed by grade level for both the 30+ day treatment group (Table 22) and the 70+ day treatment group (Table 23). As shown in Tables 22 and 23, there was a significant, negative effect of 21st CCLC programming on truancy rates for all grade levels (for students below proficient in either mathematics or reading). Effect sizes were greatest for Grade 8 participants in the 70+ treatment group, where participants below proficient in mathematics had an average truancy rate .639 times that of non-participants and participants below proficiency in reading had an average truancy rate of .702 times that of non-participants. Statistical significance was not observed for most grade levels in either treatment group with respect to impact on

retention, with the exceptions of Grades 4 and 5 (with the effect in some cases being *positive*, indicating a higher likelihood of retention for participants).

Table 22. Impact of 21st CCLC on Non-Test Performance – 30+ Day Treatment (Below-Proficient Students)

Subject	Grade	Days Truancy				Retention			
		Effect Size	S.E	<i>p</i>	Rate Ratio	Effect Size	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Odds Ratio
Mathematics	4	-0.144	0.033	0.000***	0.866	1.090	0.471	0.021**	2.974
	5	-0.202	0.033	0.000***	0.817	-0.975	0.561	0.082*	0.377
	6	-0.136	0.025	0.000***	0.873	-0.202	0.392	0.607	0.817
	7	-0.206	0.024	0.000***	0.814	-0.090	0.380	0.813	0.914
	8	-0.236	0.030	0.000***	0.790	-0.702	0.759	0.355	0.496
Reading	4	-0.139	0.027	0.000***	0.870	0.597	0.332	0.073*	1.817
	5	-0.181	0.025	0.000***	0.834	-0.652	0.378	0.084*	0.521
	6	-0.132	0.021	0.000***	0.876	-0.048	0.320	0.881	0.953
	7	-0.252	0.000	0.000***	0.777	-0.172	0.338	0.611	0.842
	8	-0.143	0.033	0.000***	0.867	-0.520	0.975	0.594	0.595

Note: SE = standard error; *** significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

Table 23. Impact of 21st CCLC on Non-Test Performance – 70+ Day Treatment (Below-Proficient Students)

Subject	Grade	Days Truancy				Retention			
		Effect	S.E	<i>p</i>	Rate Ratio	Effect	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Odds Ratio
Mathematics	4	-0.139	0.037	0.000***	0.870	0.833	0.516	0.107	2.300
	5	-0.254	0.038	0.000***	0.776	-1.521	0.730	0.037**	0.218
	6	-0.208	0.031	0.000***	0.812	-0.005	0.433	0.990	0.995
	7	-0.185	0.031	0.000***	0.831	0.277	0.409	0.497	1.319
	8	-0.448	0.047	0.000***	0.639	-0.208	0.800	0.795	0.812
Reading	4	-0.115	0.030	0.000***	0.891	0.846	0.380	0.026**	2.330
	5	-0.210	0.029	0.000***	0.811	-0.708	0.493	0.151	0.493
	6	-0.157	0.026	0.000***	0.855	0.142	0.356	0.690	1.153
	7	-0.276	0.031	0.000***	0.759	0.021	0.414	0.960	1.021
	8	-0.354	0.052	0.000***	0.702	-1.420	1.111	0.201	0.242

Note: SE = standard error; *** significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

Outcomes for 21st CCLC Participants with IEPs

An attempt was made to analyze the impact of programming on 21st CCLC participants who were identified as having an individual education plan (IEP). In total, there were 743 participants who had an IEP. The method used in the analyses described in preceding sections was not used here, however, because it was impossible to determine non-participants' IEP status (making it impossible to construct a comparison group). Instead, a correlational approach was taken, using

hierarchical linear modeling to determine whether increased levels of program participation were correlated with better outcomes. The results of these tests are presented in Table 24.

Overall, there was a positive correlation between program participation and student mathematics and reading achievement, but the correlation was not statistically significant. Likewise, there was a negative correlation between program participation and days of truancy, and a negative correlation between program participation and retention, but only in the case of truancy was the effect statistically significant (and only modestly so). The correlation estimate is also very small: Each additional day of participation was correlated with a .01% decrease in truancy.

Table 24. Outcomes for 21st CCLC Participants with IEPs (Correlational HLM Model)

Outcome	Coefficient	S.E.	<i>p</i>
Math Achievement	0.026	0.025	0.303
Reading Achievement	0.008	0.015	0.605
Days Truancy	-0.001	0.001	0.072*
Retention	-0.025	0.029	0.382

Notes: *SE* = standard error; *** significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.10.

It should be stressed that any outcomes witnessed by this particular sub-group cannot be tied to the program; positive results *may* be caused by the program, but may be caused by other factors. These analyses are not causal. Further, it is difficult to determine statistically significant effects with a group even as large as this sub-group; compared to the entire state, or the entire population of 21st CCLC participants across New Jersey, 743 students is not enough for many statistical models to perform well, especially given that some of the students in this population lacked prior year information for use as a baseline.

In future years, it may be of interest to investigate youth outcomes for this group using a student survey, along with more center-level and grant-level characteristic data. If impact analyses are desired, then finding a way to obtain IEP status indicators for non-participants will be necessary.

Summary and Limitations of Results

The propensity score stratification approach employed here seeks to minimize the impact of selection bias on the estimates of program impact. However, it is an untestable assumption that such models can fully account for selection bias. To the extent that other variables exist (not available for this analysis) that predict student participation in 21st CCLC and also are related to student achievement, these analyses may be limited. To that end, these analyses provide initial evidence about the impact of 21st CCLC on academic achievement but should not necessarily be considered equivalent to experimental studies, which have strong internal validity.

That said, the results indicate that there is a positive impact of 21st CCLC programming on mathematics achievement for 30+ day and 70+ day treatments for students with all proficiency levels (pooled across grades), and a positive impact on mathematics achievement for both 30+ day and 70+ day treatment for students who were classified as below proficient. For reading achievement, there were no significant effects observed for either the 30+ day or 70+ day

treatments, but there were positive, significant effects for both attendance level groups when looking only at participants below proficient in either mathematics or reading. For students below proficiency in the previous year, the effect sizes were larger than typically observed in statewide 21st CCLC impact evaluations (Naftzger, Devaney, Newman 2015), especially for mathematics results in Grade 7.

The effect of the program on retention is less clear, and in some cases seemed to run counter to the theorized outcome; that is, in some cases participation in the program showed *higher* probabilities of retention. However, there is some question about the quality of the retention variable within the data. NJSMART staff at NJDOE indicate that the retention variable is only populated if school staff remember to change a student's grade at a particular point in time (presumably at the end of the school year); if the grade level is corrected in September, the retained variable does not automatically update. The findings pertaining to retention, therefore, must be treated as preliminary and, potentially, flawed. Results are only as good as the data, and the quality of this particular data element is not clear.

More pronounced (and more certain) results were observed in terms of 21st CCLC impact on truancy levels. For every 21st CCLC group and sub-group analyzed as part of the impact evaluation, participation in 21st CCLC reduced truancy levels (with observed statistical significance). This effect was generally, if not uniformly, larger at higher grade levels, notably Grade 8. Overall, students who participated in the 21st CCLC program for 30+ days had average truancy rates .868 times those of non-participants, while students who participated 70+ days had average truancy rates of .760 times those of non-participants. Similar results were observed for students below proficient, and for every grade level. For reference, 21st CCLC participants had an average of 4.6 days of truancy during 2013-14, while non-participants as a group had about 4.7 days of truancy on average over the same time-frame.

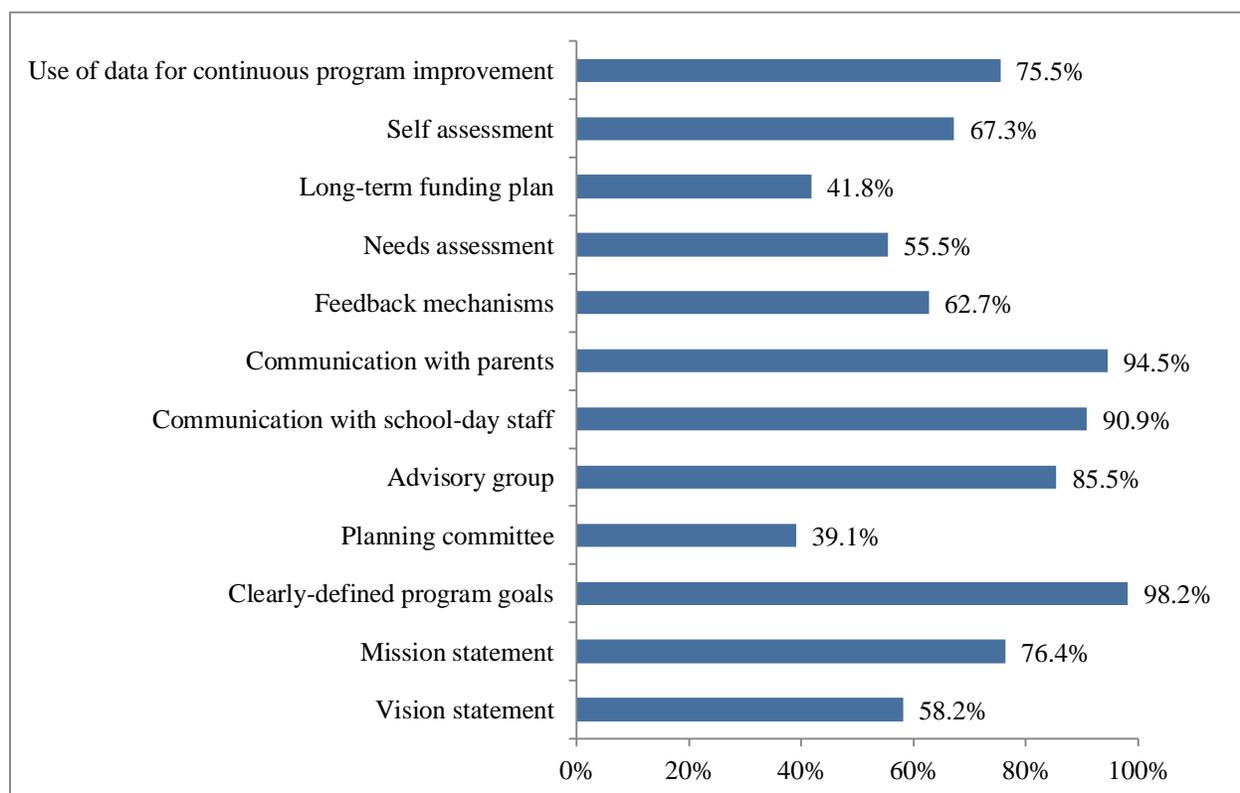
Chapter 6. Sustainability

As part of the end-year ETRS survey collected during the fall of 2014 (covering 2013-14), grantees reported on a new domain of sustainability-related questions. This section presents the answers provided by grantees (for each of their centers) in response to those questions.

The first question relating to sustainability asked whether the center in question had a written sustainability plan. All centers responded (122¹¹), with 90.2 percent (110) answering “Yes,” 8.2 percent (10) answering “No,” and 1.6 percent (two) responding that they didn’t know.

When asked what elements their sustainability plan included, nearly all programs with sustainability plans indicated they had *clearly defined program goals*, *communication with parents*, and *communication with school-day staff*. Relatively few indicated their plans included a *long-term funding plan*, or a *planning committee*. See Figure 12 for all plan elements.

Figure 12. Elements Included in Center Sustainability Plans



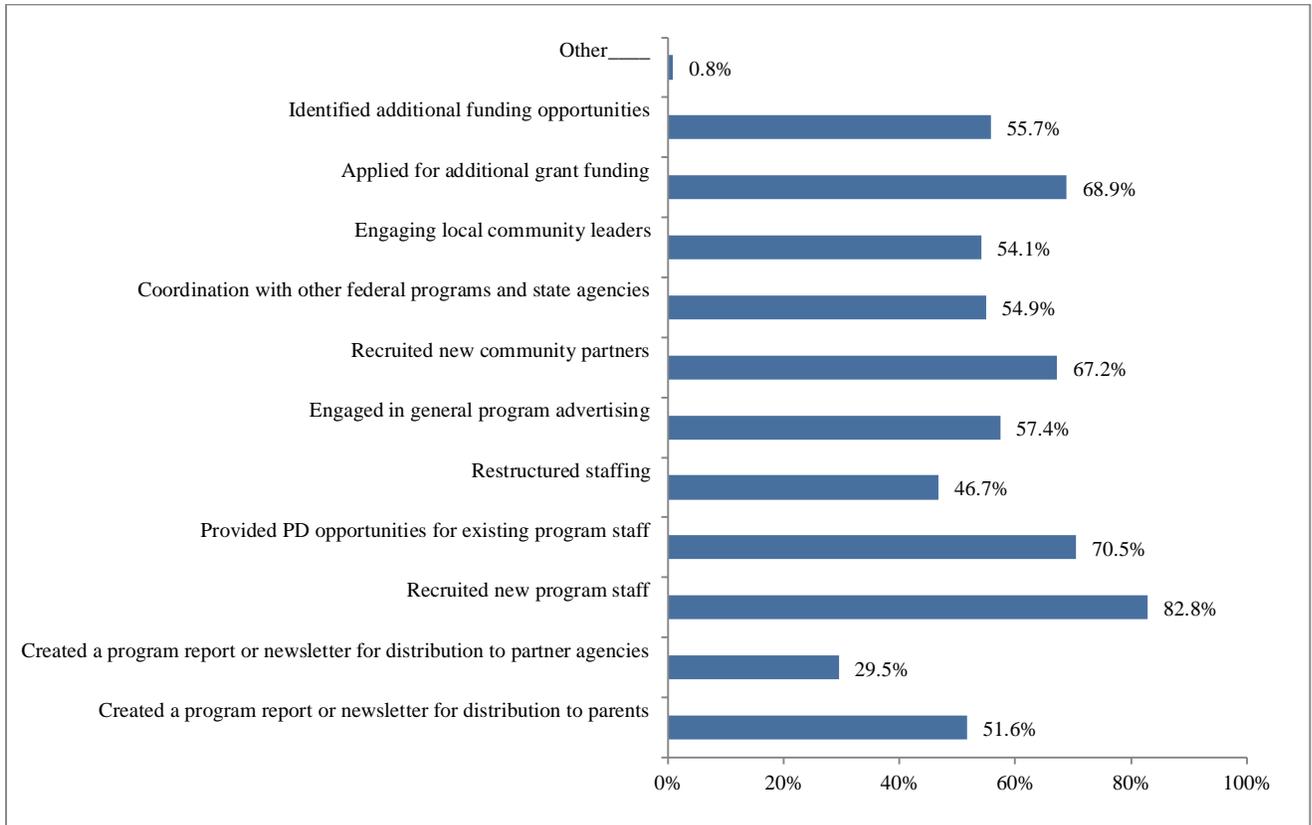
Note: Based on 110 centers reporting their program had a sustainability plan.

Respondents were also asked to indicate what activities the program staff have undertaken to enhance sustainability. Relatively few programs indicated they had *created a program report or newsletter for distribution to partner agencies*, while a vast majority of programs indicated they

¹¹ Because this survey data was collected later in 2014 than other data shown in this report, some centers that responded may not have operated for all of 2013-14. This small set of centers is not represented in the preceding chapters.

had recruited new program staff. Most response categories were selected by a majority of respondents. See Figure 13.

Figure 13. Activities Undertaken by Program Staff to Enhance Sustainability

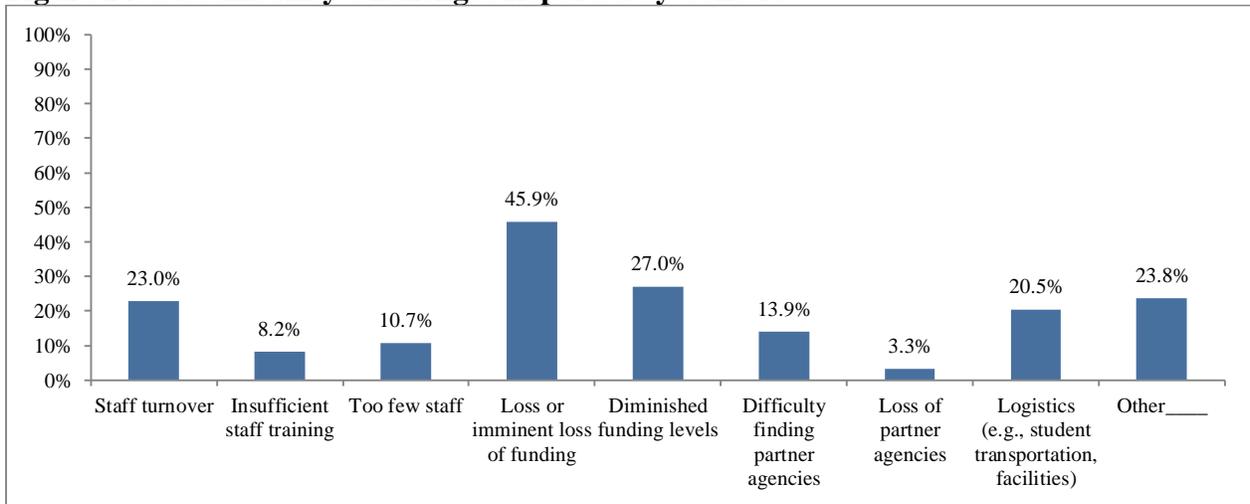


Note: Based on 122 responses.

Centers were also asked to indicate the challenges they have experienced in terms of sustainability. While the responses varied, the most frequent response was *loss or imminent loss of funding*, with *diminished funding levels* being the second highest. Overall, 67 respondents (of 122) indicated one or both of these options, representing about 55 percent of all programs. This is not surprising; in fact, it may be more interesting that more programs did not select either of these options as a challenge.

Other response categories receiving a modestly high level of endorsement (between 20 and 25 percent) included *staff turnover*, *logistics*, and *other*. Other responses, however, required a typed-in description, and included 10 responses of “None” (out of 29 total responses for “Other”), making the response of “Other” somewhat unclear. Those who selected “Other” and provided a typed-in response other than “None” indicated issues with finding partners and working with district administration. See Figure 14 for all responses.

Figure 14. Sustainability Challenges Reported by Centers



Note: Based on 122 responses.

Overall, the results of the sustainability questions present a fairly clear picture, and suggest some areas where particular grantees could potentially use assistance. For those who do not have a written sustainability plan, or have not given it a great deal of consideration, the next step is clearly to write one; and clearly a fairly large number of centers are concerned about funding levels (likely an ongoing issue). However, it is not entirely clear from these basic data the extent to which grantees have considered sustainability in a thorough, cohesive manner. The data presented here show a baseline, however, and may be useful for state-level conversations about sustainability challenges overall.

Chapter 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The information collected and analyzed in relation to the 2013–14 school year was meant to answer four primary evaluation questions related to implementation of the New Jersey 21st CCLC program and the impact of the program on desired student outcomes:

1. What were the primary characteristics of programs funded by 21st CCLC and the students served?
2. How did centers perform on the leading indicators defined for the program, and how is this level of performance relevant to thinking about what additional supports, training, and professional development NJDOE should potentially invest in?
3. How many youth with individual education plans (IEPs) were served by the program, and what outcome levels are associated with their participation in the 21st CCLC program in terms of mathematics and reading assessments, truancy, and retention?
4. To what extent is there evidence that students participating in 21st CCLC program services and activities demonstrate better outcomes compared with students not participating in the program, specifically with respect to:
 - a. Higher academic achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics; and
 - b. Lower truancy and retention rates.

The material throughout this report provides answers for these questions, with notable findings regarding the 21st CCLC program's impact on mathematics achievement and reductions in truancy rates:

- Program staff *frequently* designed and delivered intentional and relevant activities designed to support youth growth and development in mathematics/reading language arts (leading indicator 18).
- Approximately 47 percent of program sites (a) were taking steps to assess youth functioning on social and emotional competencies (leading indicators 7 and 8) and (b) had met goals for the infusion of components meant to support youth-development-related behaviors and SEL functioning of participating youth and actual youth participation targets for the fall semester of 2013 (leading indicators 9 and 20).
- Eighty-three percent of sites reported engaging in some form of self-assessment process employing a specific tool or instrument during the 2013–14 school year (leading indicator 10).
- For students below proficiency in the prior year, there were statistically significant, meaningful effects of the 21st CCLC program on achievement improvement, notably for mathematics (and especially for students in Grade 7). For students in the 30+ day treatment group, participation yielded an improvement in mathematics assessments of .095 standard deviation units, while students in the 70+ day treatment group saw an improvement of .100 standard deviation units over non-participants.

- Students who participated in the 21st CCLC program for 30+ days had average truancy rates .868 times those of non-participants, while students who participated 70+ days had average truancy rates of .760 times those of non-participants.

Findings with respect to truancy in particular are noteworthy, given the fact that truancy has not been investigated previously as an outcome for the New Jersey 21st CCLC program. Analyses of a similar kind should be pursued in the future, either relating to truancy (looking further at sub-group populations to investigate variation, for instance, across center characteristics) or relating to other school-related outcomes.

Next Steps

The 2015-16 year will be a one of transition, as noted at the beginning of this report. State assessments are changing, and therefore cannot be used as outcome variables at least until there is sufficient historical data to know how the tests are functioning (and so that baseline data can be used as control variables in the impact models). The federal data reporting system is changing, given the updates to the data collection system over the course of 2014 to 2016. The teacher survey, an instrument now over ten years old, has been dropped in favor of a rigorous youth survey measure by NJDOE. The leading indicators are being heavily revised based on grantee, EAG, and NJDOE feedback. These changes, combined with the advent of New Jersey Quality Standards for Afterschool (which are themselves in the process of refinement), present a 21st CCLC program maturing in terms of data collection, grantee support, monitoring, quality improvement, and evaluation.

The evaluation team will, over the course of this next year, focus primarily on creation of a robust youth survey measure, trimming the leading indicators from 22 down to fewer than a dozen indicators, and revision of the ETRS to discard those pieces of information that have proven to be less useful, problematic, or have been superseded by developments since the leading indicators' creation. Only those ETRS components truly useful for evaluation or program improvement will be retained. Further, the timing of data collection will be streamlined based on collected feedback, ensuring all data reported by grantees are of the highest possible quality by placing data reporting in close temporal proximity to data availability. The evaluation team will also focus on supporting New Jersey's quality improvement process by working with NJSACC to fine-tune the quality standard self-assessment. These steps have all been discussed and approved by NJDOE, and are already under way. These transition activities will support a new set of impact analyses during the course of 2017 and 2018, to be reported in impact reports three and four.

Overall, discoveries to date have been encouraging and deserve to be explored further. The evaluation team envisions further exploration regarding the interplay of center and youth characteristics relative to outcomes, while exploring new types of outcomes that may be more revealing in terms of program effects. Such new analyses will be added in the coming years to enhance the overall rigor and detail of the impact report, providing valuable information for both planning and evaluation purposes. The results of the truancy analysis in this report in particular indicate that there is potentially a great deal to be discovered about how the program is affecting participating youth; the activities described planned for the coming year provide a strong platform for making this exploration.

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Appendix A: New Jersey 21st CCLC Staff Survey

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding all staff that work with students in this program:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
a. Program staff listen to youth more than talk at them.	○	○	○	○	○
b. Program staff actively and continuously consult and involve youth.	○	○	○	○	○
c. Program staff provide structured and planned activities explicitly designed to help youth to get to know one another.	○	○	○	○	○
d. Program staff provide opportunities for youth to lead activities.	○	○	○	○	○
e. Program staff provide opportunities for youth to help or mentor other youth in completing a project or task.	○	○	○	○	○
f. Program staff provide opportunities for the work, achievements, or accomplishments of youth to be publicly recognized.	○	○	○	○	○

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding all staff that work with students in this program:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
a. Program staff provide ongoing opportunities for youth to reflect on their experiences (e.g., formal journal writing, informal conversational feedback).	○	○	○	○	○
b. Program staff are effective at finding ways to provide youth with meaningful choices when delivering activities.	○	○	○	○	○
c. Program staff are effective at providing youth with opportunities to set goals and make plans within the confines of the program.	○	○	○	○	○
d. Program staff ask for and listen to student opinions about the way things should work in the program.	○	○	○	○	○

How often do you lead or participate in program activities that are...	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
a. Based on written plans for the session, assignments, and projects?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Well planned in advance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Tied to specific learning goals?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Meant to build upon skills cultivated in a prior activity or session?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Explicitly meant to promote skill building and mastery in relation to one or more state standard?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Explicitly meant to address a specific developmental domain (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional, civic, physical, etc.)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Structured to respond to youth feedback on what the content or format of the activity should be?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Informed by the expressed interests, preferences, and/or satisfaction of participating youth?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding linkages to the school day:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Relevant to My Role in the Program	Not Sure
a. On a week-to-week basis, I know what academic content will be covered during the school day with the students I work with in the afterschool program.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. I coordinate the content of the afterschool activities I provide with my students' school-day homework.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. I know whom to contact at my students' day school if I have a question about their progress or status.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. The activities I provide in the afterschool program are tied to specific learning goals that are related to the school-day curriculum.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. I use student assessment data to provide different types of instruction to students attending my afterschool activities based on their ability level.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. I help manage a formal 3-way communication system that links parents, program, and day-school information.	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. I participate in regular, joint staff meetings for afterschool and regular school day staff where steps to further establish linkages between the school day and afterschool are discussed.	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. I meet regularly with school day staff not working in the afterschool program to review the academic progress of individual students.	○	○	○	○	○	○
i. I participate in parent-teacher conferences to provide information about how individual students are faring in the afterschool program. (NOTE: If you are a school-day teacher, please respond to this question in relation to students you do not have in your school-day classroom).	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please indicate whether you receive each of the following, and to what extent you use it in planning for the activities you provide:	Do not Receive	Occasionally Use	Often Use	Not Relevant to My Role in the Program
a. Individual student academic plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Students' standardized test scores.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Students' grades.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Input from students' day school teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Other. Specify _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often are students participating in the activities <i>you</i> provide in the program afforded the following types of opportunities:	Never Available	Available Occasionally in Some Classes or Activities	Available Regularly in Most Classes or Activities	Always Available
a. Work collaboratively with other students in small groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Have the freedom to choose what activities or projects they are going to work on or participate in.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Work on group projects that take more than one day to complete.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Lead group activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Provide feedback on the activities they are participating in during time set aside explicitly for this purpose.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Participate in activities that are specifically designed to help students get to know one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Make formal presentations to the larger group of students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about how your students build ownership of the program:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
a. Youth are afforded opportunities to take responsibility for their own program.	○	○	○	○	○
b. Youth have the opportunity to set goals for what they want to accomplish in the program.	○	○	○	○	○
c. Youth help make plans for what activities are offered at the program.	○	○	○	○	○
d. Youth make choices about <i>what</i> content is covered in program offerings.	○	○	○	○	○
e. Youth make choices about <i>how</i> content is covered in program offerings.	○	○	○	○	○
f. Youth help create rules and guidelines for the program.	○	○	○	○	○

How frequently do you engage in the following tasks with other staff working in the afterschool program:	Never	A Couple of Times Per Year	About Once a Month	Nearly Every Week
a. Conduct program planning based on a review of program data.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Use evaluation data to set program improvement goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Discuss progress on meeting program improvement goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Observe other afterschool staff delivering programming in order to provide feedback on their practice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Conduct program planning in order to meet specific learning goals in coordinated ways across multiple activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Share ideas on how to make programming more engaging for participating students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Share experiences and follow up about individual youth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Receive feedback from school-day teachers and/or administrators on how the program could better support student learning needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Participate in training and professional development on how to better serve youth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Discuss current research-based instructional practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often do you or other center staff:	Never	Sometime	Frequently
a. Send materials about program offerings home to parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Send information home about how the student is progressing in the program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Hold events or meetings to which parents are invited.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Have conversations with parents over the phone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Meet with one or more parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Ask for input from parents on what and how activities should be provided.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Encourage parents to participate in center-provided programming meant to support their acquisition of knowledge or skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Encourage parents to participate in center-provided programming with their children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>