Illinois State Board of Education Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program

Statewide Program Evaluation
FY23

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Department of Education's Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (21st CCLC) is designed to: 1) Provide students opportunities and access to academic resources; 2) Provide students in grades K-12 with youth development services, programs, and activities; and 3) Provide families served by the 21st CCLC programs opportunities for literacy and related educational and personal development. To this end, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has implemented the statewide 21st CCLC program since 2003. The state program has 7 goals.

Goal 1: Schools will improve student achievement in core academic areas.
Goal 2: Schools will show an increase in student attendance and graduation from high school.
Goal 3: Schools will see an increase in the social emotional skills of their students.
Goal 4: Programs will collaborate with the community.
Goal 5: Programs will coordinate with schools to determine the students and families with the greatest need.
Goal 6: Programs will provide ongoing professional development to program personnel.
Goal 7: Programs will collaborate with schools and community-based organizations to provide sustainable programs.

IMPLEMENTATION

The state of Illinois had 183 active grants during FY23 (July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023), representing 5 grant cohorts (2015, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023). These grants operated 578 sites that served 65,043 students. The totally number of students this year exceeded the number served in FY19, before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, attendance totals by grant cohort indicated that cohort 2015 and 2019 grantees were still working to reach pre-pandemic attendance levels.

When considering grants and sites by ISBE's 21st CCLC regional funding area, the city of Chicago (region 7) included 44% of grants, 46% of sites, and 55% of program participants. Participants across the state were racially/ethnically diverse: 39% are Hispanic or Latino and 37% are Black or African-American.

FY22 introduced a change to how program attendance was reported, shifting from reporting days to hours of attendance. In FY23, over 50% of participants in grades PreK through 5 attended 90 hours or more, while 24% of participants in grades 6 through 12 reached this attendance level.

Programs largely relied on referrals from school staff and parents/guardians when recruiting students and identified students with the greatest need through academic achievement data, free/reduced lunch status, and teacher progress reports. According to state data, 52% of participants were low income, 14% limited English proficiency, and 10% had an IEP. Programs indicated that they worked to retain students by creating an inviting and inclusive environment, and that they believed the relationships with caring adults provided through the program is a key element that supports student recruitment and retention.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

While all 21st CCLC programs provided academic support, the vast majority of grantees offer other components and activities, including social-emotional learning (SEL), arts, and STEM, to create a comprehensive program.

Percent of grantees offering programming by age group served.

Programming Type	Elementary (N=156)	Middle (N=151)	High (N-99)
Social-emotional learning	97%	95%	92%
Arts programs	97%	97%	92%
STEM activities	95%	94%	87%

Additional program components and activities included:
- Implementation of trauma-informed practices (76%) and Positive Behavior and Support (PBIS) (68%) to support students.
- The use of technology for homework support (over 80% of grantees), and computer literacy and programming activities (over 60%).
- Inclusion of fitness activities (over 80%) and group sports (over 70%) in programming.
- Offering field trips (over 80%).
- Summer program (76% of sites), with the majority of those providing summer programming for 4-6 weeks.

In addition, nearly all sites (99%) reported that they provided some sort of family programming or parent engagement activities, with the majority (over 80%) indicating that they held family activity nights and student showcases and performances. Grantees reported engaging 9,451 family participants. Parent involvement persisted as a challenge, with half of grantees reporting low parent involvement as a barrier to reaching program goals.

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

Several indicators provided different perspectives on student outcomes.
- State assessment data for participants in grades 4-8 indicated that 10% of those participants demonstrated growth in reading and 4% demonstrated growth in mathematics.
- GPA data for students in grades 7-8 and 10-12 indicated that 71% of those who had a GPA below 3.0 in the previous year improved in FY23.
- APR Teacher Survey data indicated that 78% of elementary students and 71% of middle and high school students improved with respect to completing homework, and over 70% of students across grades improved their academic performance.
- APR Teacher Survey data also indicated that 72% of elementary students and 59% of middle and high school students improved their behavior in class.
- School attendance data indicated that 70% of participants (across grades) that had attendance below 90% in the previous year improved attendance in FY23.
- Grantees reported that 46% of students that had in-school suspensions in the previous year had fewer suspensions in FY23.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

21st CCLC programs relied heavily on school-day staff, with 34% of their staff made up of school-day teachers and 17% being other non-teacher school staff. Grantees provided their staff with professional development and training in a number of areas, mostly commonly social-emotional learning (84%), team-building (74%), and trauma-informed practices (73%).

Grantees engaged in their own local program evaluation activities, with 75% indicating they had an external program evaluator. Grantees also continued to work toward program sustainability by developing partnerships and coordinating with other funding sources to support the program. Forty-two percent of grantees indicated that most or all their program components are sustainable at this time.

CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation data considered in this report provided evidence of progress toward meeting each of the statewide program objectives:

- **Participants in the program will demonstrate increased academic achievement:** While state assessment data showed growth for a small percentage of participants, other indicators, including the perspective of school day teachers and student GPA indicated that 70% of participants demonstrated some sort of academic improvement.
- **Participants in the program will demonstrate an increased involvement in school activities and in participating in other subject areas such as technology, arts, music, theater, sports and other activities:** Nearly all grantees provided opportunities for program participants to engage in a wide variety of arts, STEM, and physical activities, as well as use technology.
- **Participants in the program will demonstrate social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes:** Teachers reported that more than half of their students improved their classroom behavior. In addition, some participants improved their school day attendance and decreased in-school suspensions.
- **The 21st CCLC programs will provide opportunities for the community to be involved and will increase family involvement of the participating children:** While parent engagement persists as a significant challenge for grantees, essentially all grantees offered some form of family engagement program.
- **Programs will provide opportunities, with priority given to all students who are lowest performing and in the greatest need of academic assistance:** 52% of participants were low income, 14% limited English proficiency, and 10% had an IEP.
- **Professional development will be offered by the programs and ISBE to meet the needs of the program, staff, and students:** 84% of grantees provided their staff professional development on social-emotional learning, and over 70% provided training on team-building and trauma-informed practices..
- **Projects will create sustainability plans to continue the programs beyond the federal funding period:** 42% of grantees indicated that most or all the programming is sustainable after the grant.

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INTRODUCTION

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has implemented the United States Department of Education-funded Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (21st CCLC) since 2003. According to ISBE's strategic plan, the program:

1) Provides opportunities and access to academic resources designed for students, especially those from underrepresented groups, high poverty areas, and low-performing schools. These activities are focused on core academic areas, as well as extra-curricular subjects and activities. Programs and sites use strategies such as tutorial services and academic achievement enhancement programs to help students meet Illinois and local student performance standards in core academic subjects such as reading and mathematics.

2) Provides students in grades K-12 with youth development services, programs, and activities, including drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, art, music, and recreation programs, technology education programs, and character education programs designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students and their families.

3) Provides families served by the 21st CCLC programs opportunities for literacy and related educational and personal development.

ISBE has seven statewide goals and corresponding objectives for the 21st CCLC program included in the table below.

	Goal	Objectives
1	Schools will improve student achievement in core academic areas.	Participants in the program will demonstrate increased academic achievement
2	Schools will show an increase in student attendance and graduation from high school.	Participants in the program will demonstrate an increased involvement in school activities and in participating in other subject areas such as technology, arts, music, theater, sports and other activities.
3	Schools will see an increase in the social emotional skills of their students.	Participants in the program will demonstrate social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes
4	Programs will collaborate with the community.	The 21st CCLC programs will provide opportunities for the community to be involved and will increase family involvement of the participating children.
5	Programs will coordinate with schools to determine the students and families with the greatest need.	Programs will provide opportunities, with priority given to all students who are lowest performing and in the greatest need of academic assistance.
6	Programs will provide ongoing professional development to program personnel.	Professional development will be offered by the programs and ISBE to meet the needs of the program, staff, and students.
7	Programs will collaborate with schools and community-based organizations to provide sustainable programs.	Projects will create sustainability plans to continue the programs beyond the federal funding period.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This statewide evaluation report encompasses all grant-funded programs and activities implemented through subgrants active during FY23 (July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023). These subgrants include awards given in 2015 that were given an additional 5 years of funding at the end of their initial 5-year awards, as well as grants awarded in 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023. Grants awarded in 2019 were in their final year, while grants awarded in 2023 had 6-9 months of operation during this reporting period. Subgrant awards and the associated organizations, called "grantees" throughout this report, are referred to by their award year as Cohort 15, 19, 21, 22, and 23 throughout this report.

This report provides a summary and analysis of data collected by and made available to EDC for FY23. These data include:
- EDC's Annual Evaluation Survey, administered to all active grantees in June 2023, is indicated throughout this report as AS. The survey was completed by 183 grantees (97% response rate).
- Annual local evaluation reports submitted by each grantee for FY23. Reports for Cohort 19 grantees were submitted in June and July 2023 because their grants ended June 30, 2023. Reports for all other cohorts were submitted in January 2024. Data from these reports are indicated as LER.
- Illinois Report Card data (IRC), which are the data provided to the federal APR system and include student attendance and achievement information for the 2022-23 school year, are indicated throughout this report as APR.

This report is organized into the following sections.

- *Program Implementation:* This section includes information about grantees' implementation of programs for the year. It includes program totals for attendees and sites, as well as information about organizations and staffing, recruitment and retention, and program components.

- *Participant Activities and Outcomes*: This section provides data about student participation in activities, attendance in school, student behavior, and student and family inclusion.

- *Organizational Capacity:* This section provides information about the organizational capacity of grantees, including staff development, progress toward meeting stated program goals, program evaluation, and sustainability.

- *Conclusion:* This section considers the data and findings with respect to each of the statewide program objectives.

GPRA Indicators
The U.S. Department of Education implemented new Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) indicators for FY22. The new GPRA indicators included some significant changes:
- Student attendance changed from being reporting by days to hours. While previously, students were designated "regular" attendees if they came to the program for more than 30 days, under the new indicators there is no "regular" designation.
- Under the new GPRA, academic achievement is measured by positive changes in state assessment scores for participants in grades 4 through 8. For students in grades 7-8 and 10-12, GPA is used as an indicator of improvement.
- Requirements for the APR Teacher Survey data changed. Previously, surveys were collected for "regular" attendees in all grades. Under the new GPRA, surveys are collected for all participants in grades 1 through 5. The APR Teacher Survey is expected to include questions about

engagement in learning as indicated by improvement in homework completion, classroom participation, and classroom behavior.

- School day attendance is now included as a GPRA indicator. Improvement in attendance is reported for students with attendance below 90% for the previous year.
- School day suspension data are also a GPRA indicator. The number of students that have a decrease in in-school suspensions compared with the previous year is now reported as an indicator.

These GPRA changes have had an impact on the statewide evaluation. Changes in assessment and academic achievement data mean that this report does not include trend data. Also, while no longer required, we have continued to collect APR Teacher Survey data for both elementary and middle/high participants if grantees have those data available. As it is not required, sites are sending out fewer surveys for middle and high school students than in previous years. Data on the number of surveys distributed and received are included in the table below.

Table 1. APR Teacher Survey distribution and response rates for FY23 (AS)

	Elementary	Middle/High
Sites that distributed surveys	384	214
# Surveys distributed	24,024	8,173
# Surveys received	15, 734	5,886
Percent of surveys returned (survey response rate)	65%	72%
Total participants	31,827	33,216
Percent of participants surveyed	49%	18%

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

GRANTS, SITES, AND ATTENDANCE

There were 183 grants operating programs during FY23 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023). These included grants from 5 cohorts: 2015, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023. These grantees provided programming at 578 sites and served over 65,000 students. Fifty percent of grants operated 1, 2, or 3 sites. The majority of grants served students in elementary grades (80%) and middle school (79%), and more than half of student participants (55%) were in grades 3 through 8. Fifty-five percent of grantees served high school students, and 26% of all participants were in high school.

Table 2: Grantees, sites, and students served (AS, APR)

	FY23
Grantees	183
Sites	578
Total # students served	65,043
Average # students per grant	276
Median # of students per grant	227

Table 3: Number of sites per grant (AS)

	Grantees (N=183)	
	Number	Percent
1 site	29	16%
2 sites	29	16%
3 sites	33	18%
4 sites	70	38%
5 or more sites	22	12%
Total	183	100%

Table 4: Grants by grade level served (AS)

	Grants (N=183)	
	Number	Percent
Elementary School Students (Grades PreK-5)	147	80%
Middle School Students (Grades 6-8)	145	79%
High School Students (Grades 9-12)	101	55%

Table 5: Grade level of participants (APR)

	Participants	
	Number	Percent
Pre-Kindergarten	303	0%
Kindergarten	2353	4%
1st grade	4453	7%
2nd grade	5412	8%
3rd grade	6453	10%
4th grade	6519	10%
5th grade	6334	10%
6th grade	5711	9%
7th grade	5541	9%
8th grade	5208	8%
9th grade	4627	7%
10th grade	4535	7%
11th grade	4077	6%
12th grade	3517	5%
Total	65043	100%

Grant cohorts vary in size. Cohort 19 includes 22 sites, while cohort 15 includes 75 sites. Overall, the proportion of students served by each cohort aligns with the proportion of grants in the cohort (see Table 6). Looking at the number of participants served from year to year, it fluctuates as cohorts have started and ended. In FY23, total student participation was greater than pre-pandemic levels; however, when looking at participation numbers by cohort over the past 5 years, we can see that even though the FY23 total participation is higher, participation by cohort is still lower than it was in FY19 (see Table 7).

Table 6: Grants, sites, and student participants by cohort, 2022-23(APR)

Cohort	# Grants	% of All Grants	# Students	% of All Students
2015	72	39%	26,603	41%
2019	22	12%	9,224	14%
2021	30	16%	10,896	17%
2022	37	20%	10,898	17%
2023	22	12%	7,422	11%
Total	183	100%	65,043	100%

Table 7: Number of students served over the past 6 years, by cohort (APR)

Cohort	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
2013	16375	14703	12155	5878	9720	
2015	35281	35280	28690	14936	23628	26603
2019		11396	10885	5756	8492	9224
2021				4772	10799	10896
2022					8079	10898
2023						7422
Total	51,656	61,379	51,730	31,342	60,718	65,043

Regional Funding Areas

ISBE's 21st CCLC program has divided the state into 7 regional funding areas (see Figure 1). EDC coded grantee organizations based on grantee organization address into these regions to provide information about the distribution of programming across the state.

In FY23, 53% of grantees were located in Region 7, which is the city of Chicago. As illustrated in Table 8 below, the distribution across regions is largely consistent across grants, sites, and participants (i.e. Region 4 has 7% of grants, 6% of sites, and 8% of participants). However, some variance might be attributed to the population density of some areas (Region 7) and sparseness of other areas (Region 3).

Table 9 provides information about the distribution of grants across regions in each cohort. The proportion of grants in each region varies from year to year, although Region 7 is consistently the home of over 40% of grants. As cohorts end (2019 in FY23 and 2015 in FY24), it may be useful for ISBE to consider regions that may benefit from addition funding in subsequent cohorts.

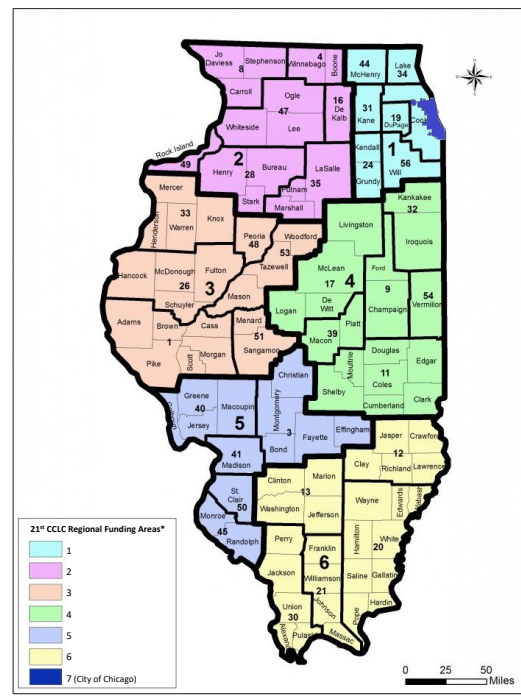Figure 1. ISBE 21st CCLC regional funding areas

Table 8: Grants, sites, and participants by region (AS)

Region	Grants		Sites		Participants	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Region 1	29	16%	91	16%	8526	13%
Region 2	18	10%	51	9%	6594	10%
Region 3	27	15%	95	16%	6881	11%
Region 4	12	7%	33	6%	3273	5%
Region 5	7	4%	23	4%	2103	3%
Region 6	10	5%	18	3%	2079	3%
Region 7 (Chicago)	80	44%	267	46%	35587	55%
TOTAL	183	100%	578	100%	65043	100%

Table 9: Grants in each cohort, by region (AS)

Region	2015		2019		2021		2022		2023		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Region 1	9	12%	2	9%	4	13%	8	24%	6	27%	29	16%
Region 2	11	15%	2	9%	0	0%	3	8%	2	9%	18	10%
Region 3	9	12%	3	14%	7	23%	6	16%	2	9%	27	15%
Region 4	4	5%	2	9%	3	10%	2	5%	1	5%	12	7%
Region 5	5	7%	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%	1	5%	7	4%
Region 6	4	5%	1	5%	1	3%	1	3%	3	14%	10	5%
Region 7 (Chicago)	33	44%	11	50%	15	50%	17	45%	7	32%	80	44%
TOTAL	75	100%	22	100%	30	100%	37	100%	22	100%	183	100%

Participant Demographics

The largest proportion of participants were Hispanic or Latino students, at 39%; Black or African-American students made up 37% of participants (see Figure 2). Students were fairly evenly split by gender, with 44% female, 38% male, and 18% no data provided.

Figure 2. Race/ethnicity of participants

Participants by race/ethnicity

- Asian, 2%
- Mult-racial/ethnic, 3%
- White, 18%
- Black or African American, 37%
- Hispanic or Latino, 39%
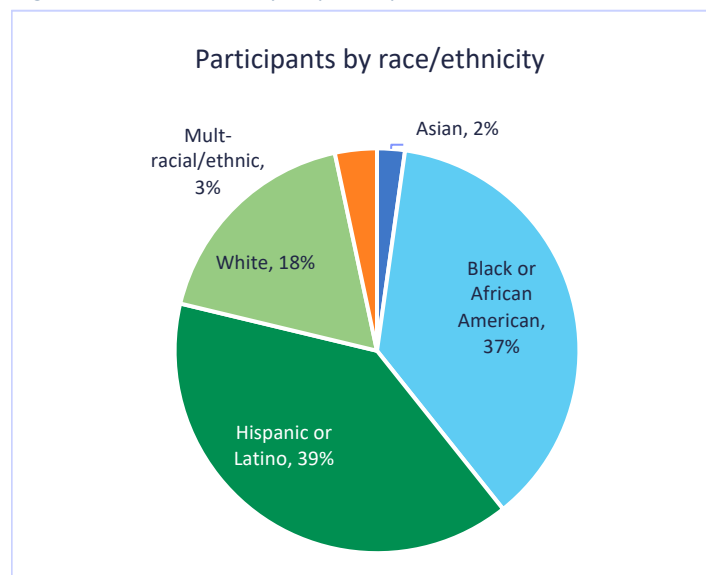
Participant Attendance and Dosage

FY23 is the second year of the 21st CCLC program reporting student attendance in hours instead of days, due to changes in the Federal Government Performance Results Act, or GPRA, indicators. Students are grouped into one of 6 bands of attendance: less than 15 hours, 15-44 hours, 45-89 hours, 90-179 hours, 180-269 hours, and 270 or more hours. There is no designation for "regular" attendance or target number of hours specified by the US Department of Education.

As in previous years, participants in grades preK through 5 had higher attendance rates than students in grades 6 through 12. Over 50% of elementary students attended 90+ hours of programming, while only 24% of middle and high schools did so. Over one third of participants in grades 6 through12 attended 15 hours or less of programming.

Figure 3. Proportion of students in each attendance band by grade level (APR)
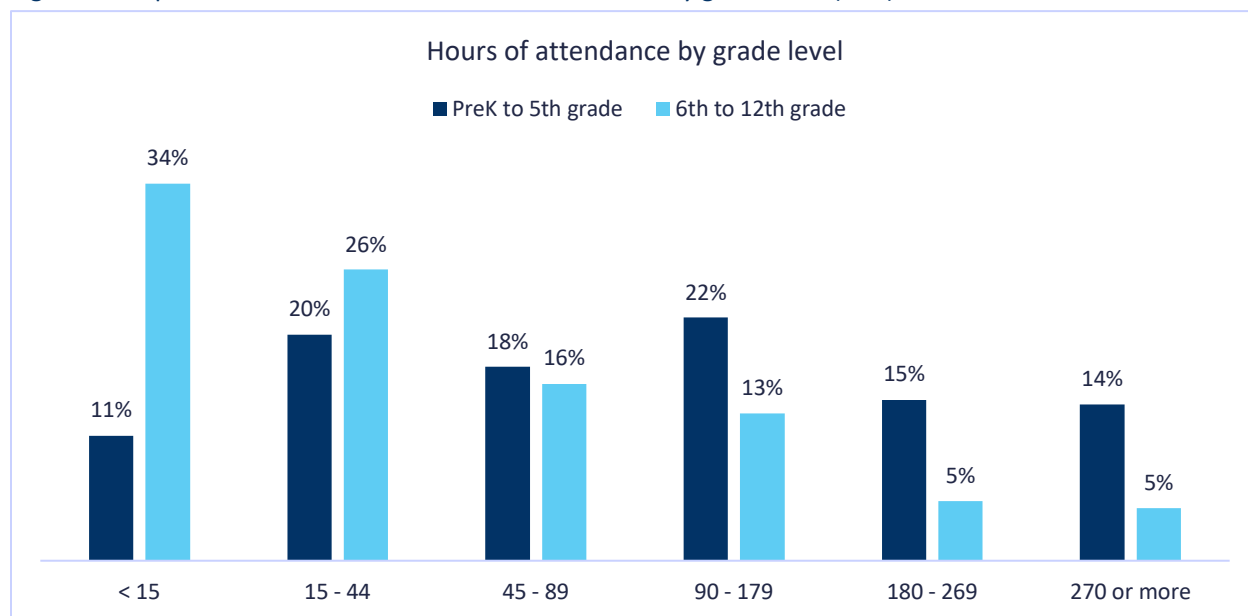
PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Recruitment and retention

Grantees reported that, across grade levels, their primary source of program referrals are school staff (Table 10). Nearly all grantees rely on school staff, including teachers and counselors, to identify and recommend students to participate in the program. Parent/guardian referrals are also used by most programs, with programs serving high school students also relying heavily on student self-selection.

When it comes to identifying students with the greatest needs and making those staff referrals, grants most frequently rely on grades and other academic assessment data (Table 11). School attendance data, student enrollment in the free or reduced lunch program, and teacher progress reports are also used to identify students to refer to the program.

Table 10: Program referral sources, by age group (AS)

Type of Referral	% of grantees indicating referral method for:		
	Elementary School (N=147)	Middle School (N=145)	High School (N=101)
School Staff Referrals (e.g., teachers, administrators, counselors, etc.)	99%	99%	100%
Parent/Guardian referrals	97%	95%	91%
Internal Program Referrals	88%	85%	87%
Student self-selections (including returning students)	88%	93%	99%
Community agency referrals	48%	46%	47%
Sibling/peer referrals	63%	59%	52%

Table 11: Indicators of students with the greatest need, by age group (AS)

Indicator	% of grantees indicating use of indicator for:		
	Elementary School (N=147)	Middle School (N=145)	High School (N=101)
Grades and/or school and district assessment data	96%	97%	95%
School attendance data	90%	88%	85%
Free/reduced lunch status	80%	81%	81%
Teacher progress reports	79%	81%	81%
Special needs designation or IEP information	75%	74%	75%
Standardized assessment scores	71%	72%	65%
English-language learner status	69%	72%	74%
Disciplinary incidents or behavior referrals	69%	68%	71%

Grantees were asked to report on their program's capacity to support students with specific challenges (Table 12). The majority of grantees indicated that they were prepared to support students experiencing homelessness (82%) as well as health conditions including asthma (80%) and diabetes (71%).

Table 12. Program preparation to support students with specific challenges or needs (AS)

Is your program equipped and/or are staff prepared to support students with the following needs?	Grants (N=183)	
	Number	Percent
Students experiencing homelessness	150	82%
Students with asthma	146	80%
Students with diabetes	129	71%
Students with other chronic health conditions	128	70%

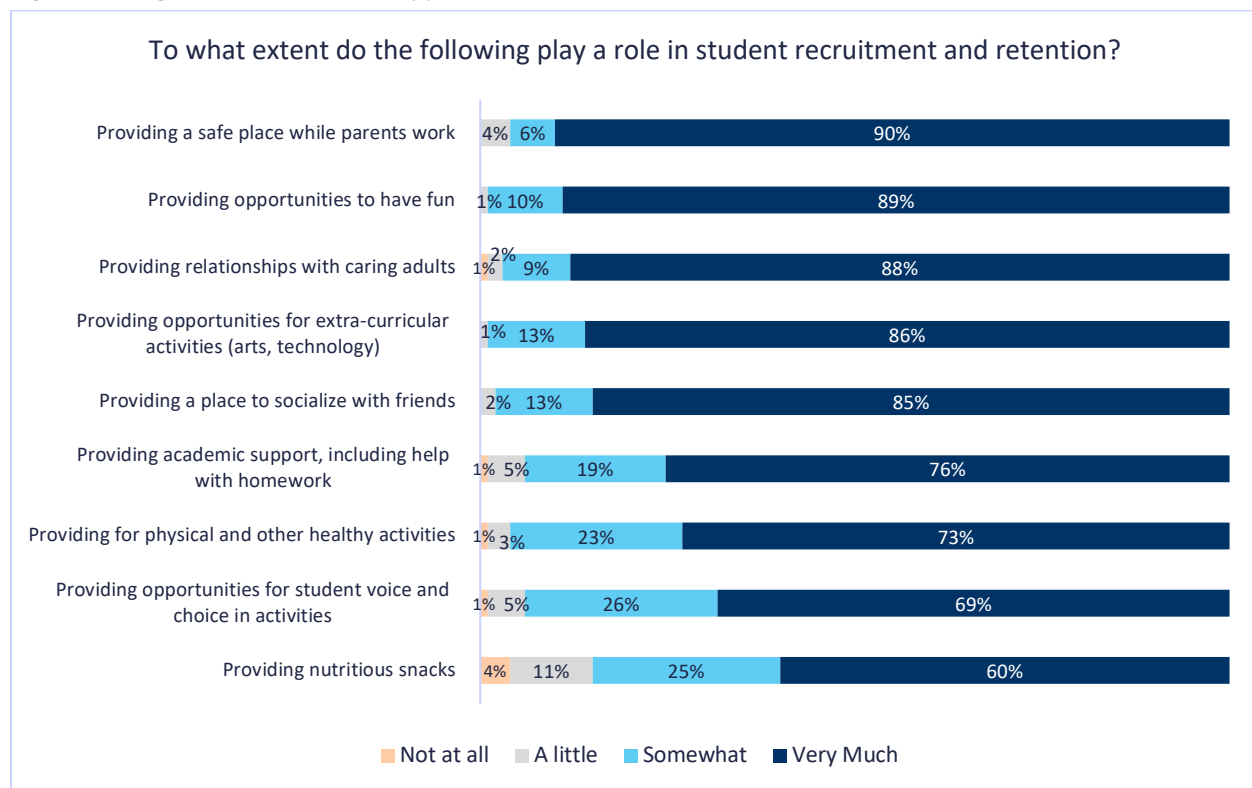When it comes to retaining students, nearly all grantees indicated that they provided an inviting and inclusive environment in order to encourage attendance (Table 13). Programs serving elementary and middle school students reached out to parents when they noticed student absences, while programs serving high school students reached out to school staff and/or directly to students when attendance fell off.

When it comes to what programs offered to support program recruitment and retention, grantees indicated that providing a safe place to work, opportunities to have fun, and relationships with caring adults very much play a role (Figure 4).

Table 13. Program retention strategies, by age group (AS)

Strategy	% of grantees indicating retention strategy for:		
	Elementary School (N=147)	Middle School (N=145)	High School (N=101)
Program provides an inviting and inclusive environment that encourages student attendance	98%	96%	98%
Program reaches out to parents when students demonstrate patterns of absenteeism	96%	94%	88%
Program conducts outreach to school staff (e.g., teachers, administrators, counselors, etc.) when students demonstrate patterns of absenteeism	90%	91%	94%
Program reaches out to students when they demonstrate patterns of absenteeism	86%	88%	94%
Program operates an incentive system rewarding student attendance in the program	52%	5%	47%

Figure 4. Program elements that support student recruitment and retention (AS)

To what extent do the following play a role in student recruitment and retention?

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Very Much
Providing a safe place while parents work		4%	6%	90%
Providing opportunities to have fun		1%	10%	89%
Providing relationships with caring adults	1%	2%	9%	88%
Providing opportunities for extra-curricular activities (arts, technology)		1%	13%	86%
Providing a place to socialize with friends		2%	13%	85%
Providing academic support, including help with homework	1%	5%	19%	76%
Providing for physical and other healthy activities	1%	3%	23%	73%
Providing opportunities for student voice and choice in activities	1%	5%	26%	69%
Providing nutritious snacks	4%	11%	25%	60%

Communications

Grantees primarily communicate with parents, guardians and families through phone calls, notes sent home, and in-person meetings. In addition, grantees indicated that they used social media and text messages. Grantees continue to rely on multiple approaches and channels to stay connected with participants' families.

Table 14. Methods of communication with parents/guardians, by age group (AS)

	% of grantees indicating communication method for:		
	Elementary School (N=147)	Middle School (N=145)	High School (N=101)
Phone calls	97%	96%	93%
Notes sent home	93%	91%	83%
In-person meetings	89%	86%	83%
Text messages	86%	81%	80%
Newsletters	83%	86%	72%
Social media	78%	77%	80%
Classroom communication apps	65%	66%	61%
Virtual meetings	54%	55%	53%
Program website	48%	47%	45%

Transportation

Less than half of the grantees indicated that they offer transportation for their program participants. Transportation is most frequently made available by grantees serving middle school students (45%). Of the grantees who do make transportation available, 24% use 21st CCLC funds to do so.

Table 15: Availability of transportation by student age group (AS)

Offers Transportation	% of grantees
Elementary School (N=147)	39%
Middle School (N=145)	45%
High School (N=101)	37%

Table 16. Funding sources for grantees that provide transportation (AS)

Funding source for grantees that provide transportation	Grantees (N=183)	
	Percent	Percent
21st CCLC funds	24%	24%
In-kind funds	8%	8%
Both 21st CCLC and in-kind funds	19%	19%

PROGRESS IN PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Grantees indicated the progress they made with respect to various aspects of program implementation over the past year (Table 17). Over 90% of grantees indicated that they were meeting or above expectations with respect to implementing academic activities as well as enrichment and recreational activities. Grantees reported making less progress when it came to coordinating their program with school day programs, with approximately 20% of grantees indicating that they were below or approaching expectation.

Table 17: Progress in implementing program activities, all grants (AS)

		Below expectation	Approaching expectation	Meeting expectation	Above expectation
Implemented academic activities	Elementary	0%	6%	74%	20%
	Middle	0%	8%	72%	20%
	High	1%	7%	74%	18%
Implemented other enrichment/ recreation activities	Elementary	0%	3%	44%	54%
	Middle	0%	1%	50%	48%
	High	3%	6%	42%	50%
Coordinated afterschool program with school's day programs	Elementary	1%	18%	49%	32%
	Middle	1%	17%	50%	32%
	High	1%	21%	42%	37%

PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Nearly all grantees indicated that they provided arts programming, social-emotional learning activities and tutoring and/or homework help as part of the programming. In addition, most grantees reported that they include STEM programming and activities to support 21st century skill development. These types of activities are in alignment with the statewide program objectives. More information about some of the programming offered in these areas is provided below.

Figure 5. Program components offered by age group (AS)

Program components offered by age group

Component	Elementary (N=147)	Middle (N=145)	High (N=101)
Arts program	97%	97%	92%
Social-emotional learning	97%	95%	92%
Tutoring/homework help	96%	96%	92%
STEM program	95%	94%	87%
21st century skills	92%	91%	90%
Mentoring	71%	70%	77%
Service-learning	31%	38%	65%
Credit recovery	17%	22%	50%
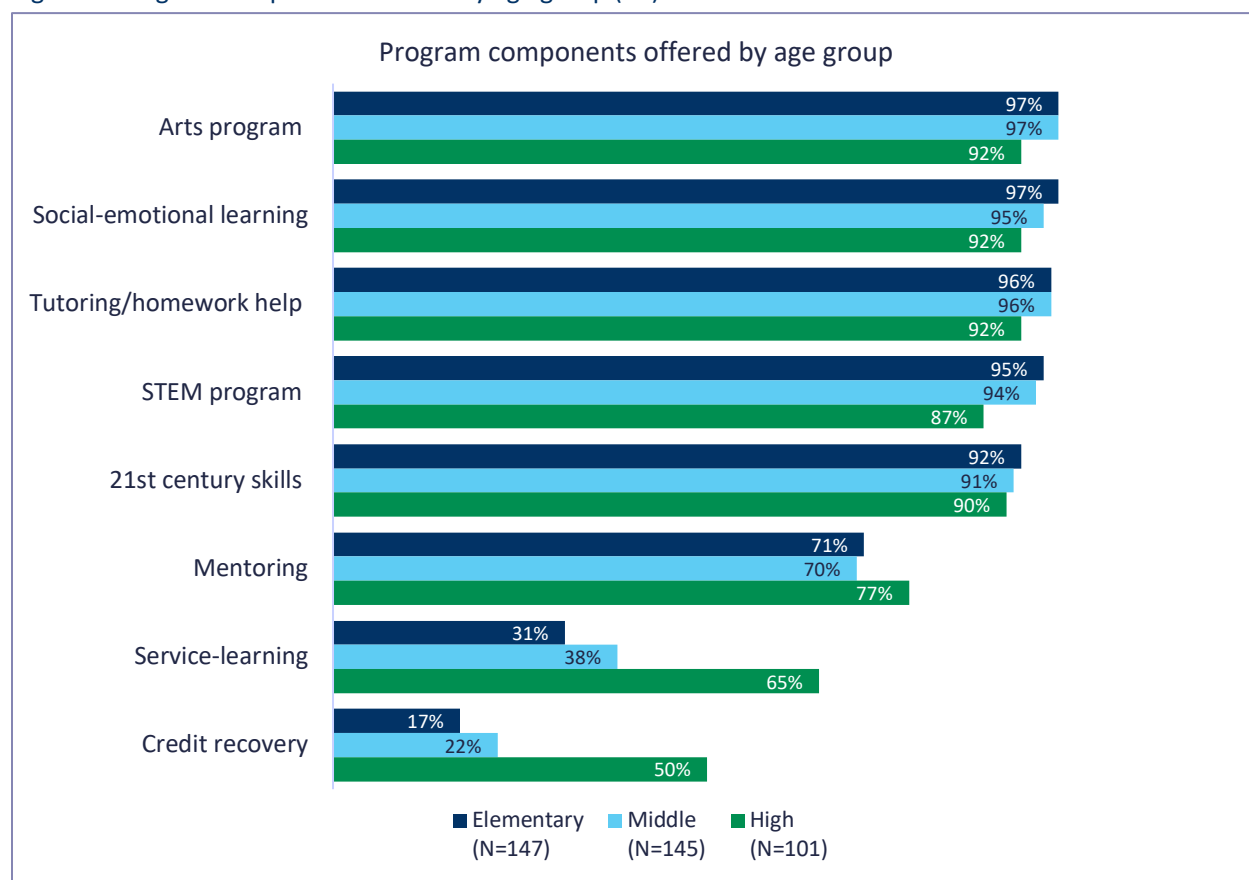
Arts programming: Grantees that provided arts programming most often offered activities in the visual arts (95%), including photography and drawing. Many grantees also included performance arts activities in their program (81%).

Table 18: Types of arts programming and activities (AS)

	Grantees offering Arts Programs (N=175)	
	Count	Percent
Visual Arts (photography, drawing, sculpture)	166	95%
Performance Arts (dance, theater)	141	81%
Music	127	73%
Decorative Arts (ceramics, jewelry)	123	70%
Applied Art (architecture, fashion design)	79	45%
Art History (visiting art museums)	65	37%

Tutoring/homework help: Tutoring and homework help are integral to supporting students' academic achievement, and nearly all grantees indicated that these were part of their program. When asked to report what subject areas were supported, 94% of grantees reported addressing ELA/reading and mathematics. Over half of grantees also indicated that they supported science content.

Table 19: Subject areas addressed through tutoring and homework help programming (AS)

	Grantees offering tutoring and homework help (N=175)	
Subject areas addressed	Count	Percent
ELA/Reading	165	94%
Mathematics	164	94%
Science	108	62%
Bilingual staff to support students (instructors, tutors, or volunteers)	41	23%
Social studies/History	28	16%
Foreign languages	5	3%

STEM Programming: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programming was offered by over 94% of grantees serving elementary and middle school students, and 87% of those serving high school students. Eighty-four percent of grantees that included STEM programming indicated that they offer STEAM activities (STEM + Arts). Robotics clubs and computer programming or coding activities were offered by 78% of grantees, while 66% of grantees offered computer programming or coding activities. Grantees also indicated that they rely on outside expertise for their STEM activities, with 71% indicating the use of STEM kits provided by a vendor and 63% partnering with another organization to provide STEM programming. Over half of grantees reported that school-day science teachers supported their STEM component.

Table 20: STEM programming activities and strategies (AS)

	Grantees offering STEM Programs (N=170)	
	Count	Percent
STEAM activities or programming	142	84%
Robotics clubs or activities (Lego and others)	133	78%
STEM kits provided by vendor	120	71%
Computer programming or coding activities	112	66%
Family STEM nights or activities	109	64%
Partnerships with STEM organizations or program providers	107	63%
Activities aligned with school standards (NGSS)	101	59%
Environmental science activities	94	55%
School-day science teachers to support activities	88	52%

21st Century Skills: 21st Century skills can encompass a wide range of interpersonal, communication, and other "soft" skills that are valuable for students to build. Over 90% of grantees indicated that they offer programming designed to support 21st Century skill development. When asked to specify the skills they focus on through their programming, grantees most frequently indicated a focus on collaboration and teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication.

Table 21. Skills addressed in 21st century skill development programming (AS)

	Grantees offering 21st century skill development component (N=149)	
	Count	Percent
Collaboration and teamwork	146	98%
Critical thinking	144	97%
Problem-solving	143	96%
Communication	141	95%
Initiative and self-direction	126	85%
Information and media literacy	90	60%
Global awareness	87	58%
Civic literacy	63	42%

Service-learning: Ninety-eight grantees reported student participation in service-learning programs. Over 10,000 participated in service-learning activities over the course of the year, with the majority of these being middle and high school students. When describing service-learning activities, many grantees reported that activities varied and were driven by student interest. Activities included mentoring younger students (i.e. ,"buddy" programs), neighborhood beautification and community garden projects, food drives, and outreach to veterans and senior citizens.

Table 22. Number of students participating in service-learning by age group (AS)

Student age group	Number (N=98)
Elementary school participants	3,435
Middle school participants	2,074
High school participants	4,927
Total participants	10,436

Social-emotional learning

Nearly all grantees provide a social-emotional learning (SEL) component in their programming, but the nature of that programming varies greatly across the grants. Many grantees indicated that they use particular strategies and practices to support the development of positive behavior and student wellness. These include use of trauma informed practices (79% of grantees) and the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports system, or PBIS (66%).

Table 23: Social-emotional programming: Behavior strategies and approaches (AS)

	Grantees offering social-emotional programming (N=174)	
	Count	Percent
Trauma-Informed Practices	132	76%
Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS)	118	68%
Restorative Justice Practices	89	51%

In addition, many grantees implemented structured programs and specific curricula designed to support SEL skill development (Table 26). Grantees reported using a wide variety of programs and curricula, the most common being Character Counts (28%), Means and Measures of Human Achievement (MHA) Toolkit (16%), Positive Action (16%) and Second Step (16%) (Table 26). Many grantees indicated that they use their own curricula or have developed their own activities to support SEL.

Grantees submitted data about support activities to the Annual Performance Report (APR) system. Based on APR data, 24% of 579 sites provided drug abuse and violence prevention, and/or counseling services through the program, and served a total of 11,006 participants.

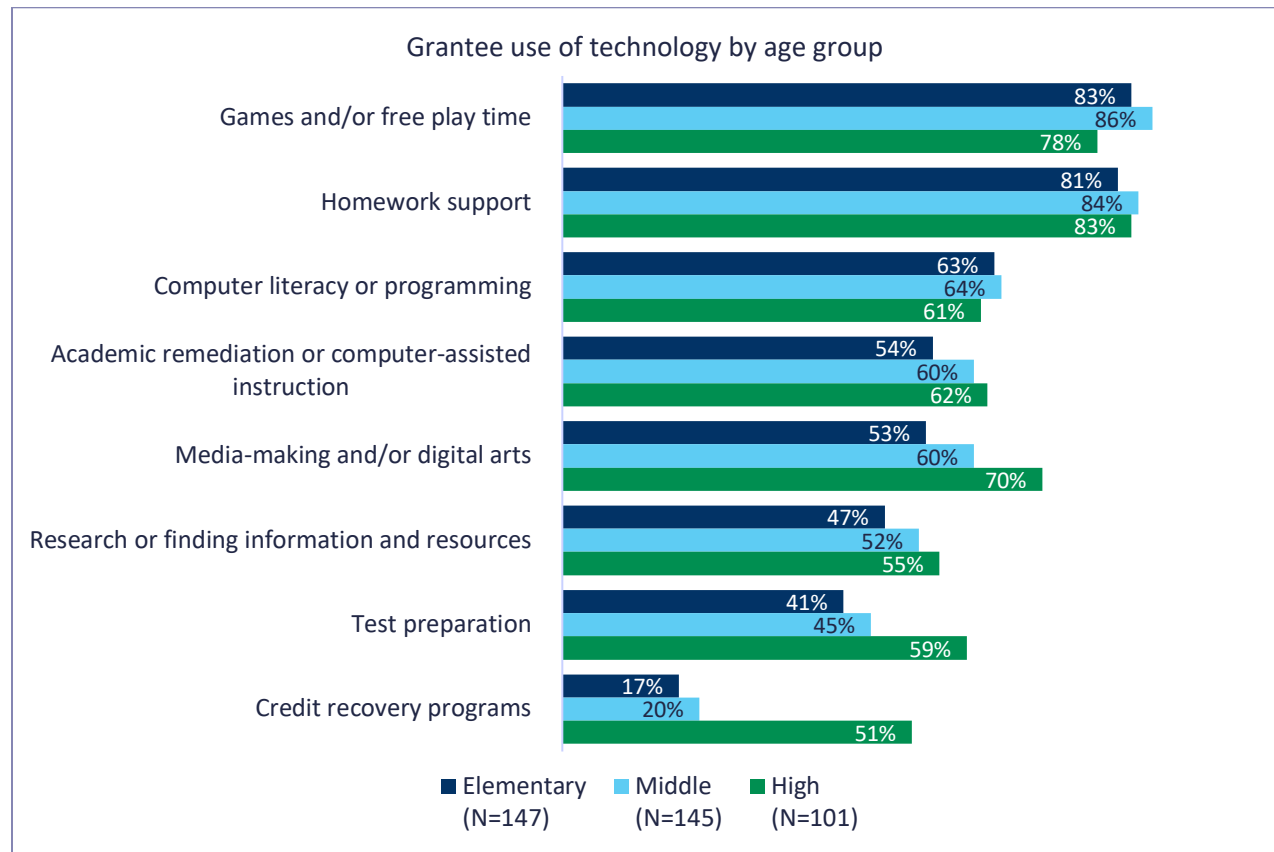Table 24: Social-emotional programming: Skill-building curricula and activities (AS)

	Grantees offering social-emotional programming (N=174)	
	Count	Percent
Character Counts	48	28%
Means and Measures of Human Achievement (MHA) Toolkit	27	16%
Positive Action	28	16%
Second Step Curriculum	28	16%
Stephen Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People Program	16	9%
Aggression Replacement Training	8	5%
Too Good for Violence / Too Good for Drugs	5	3%
Lions Quest Curriculum	4	2%
Other: Included locally developed curricula, Every Monday Matters, Calm Classroom, SMART Moves.	76	44%

Technology

Technology plays a valuable role in 21st CCLC programs, providing many students access to technology they may not have at home and the opportunity to use and learn technology in a way they may not have time for during the school day. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the role and use of technology accelerated in may programs (and schools).

While there were shifts in technology use during the pandemic, grantees have returned to using technology primarily for homework support and games and/or free time play. Grantees serving high school students reported greater use of technology for doing media-making and digital arts, test preparation, and credit recovery.

Figure 6. Technology use in program by grade level (AS)

Grantee use of technology by age group

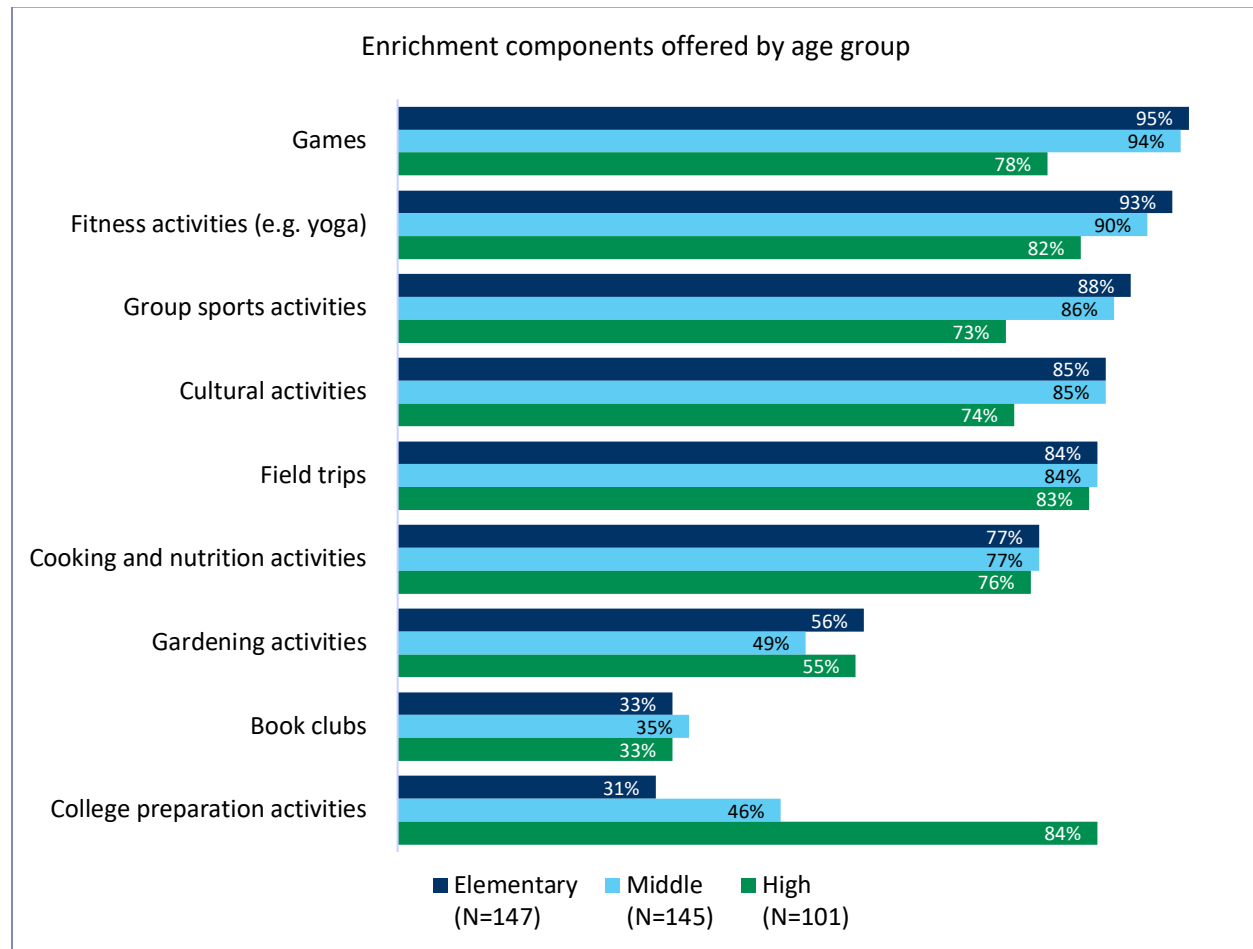| Category	Elementary (N=147)	Middle (N=145)	High (N=101)
Games and/or free play time	83%	86%	78%
Homework support	81%	84%	83%
Computer literacy or programming	63%	64%	61%
Academic remediation or computer-assisted instruction	54%	60%	62%
Media-making and/or digital arts	53%	60%	70%
Research or finding information and resources	47%	52%	55%
Test preparation	41%	45%	59%
Credit recovery programs	17%	20%	51%

Pre-K programming

Eighteen percent of grantees indicated that their program served pre-Kindergarten children. When asked to describe their programming for pre-K children, grantees shared that they:

- Collaborated with the office of early childhood education to ensure alignment with age-appropriate programs.
- Offered arts and crafts activities.
- Included pre-K students in a range of activities alongside their peers in kindergarten and 1st grade.
- Worked on skill building and fine and gross motor skills with pre-K students, using manipulatives that focus on early learning, colors, shapes, basic math, listening, and social skills.

Additional enrichment activities

In addition to more structured program activities such as the program components described above, grantees offer numerous enrichment activities that may be less structured, periodic, or offered as part of "free" time during the program. Grantees indicated that these activities are valuable in both attracting students to the program and providing students with the opportunity to participate in and learn about things they would not otherwise have access to. These enrichment components most often included games, fitness and group sports activities, cultural activities, and field trips (Figure 7). Eighty-four percent of grantees serving high school students also offer college prep activities.

Figure 7. Enrichment activities by grade level (AS)

Enrichment components offered by age group

Activity	Elementary (N=147)	Middle (N=145)	High (N=101)
Games	95%	94%	78%
Fitness activities (e.g. yoga)	93%	90%	82%
Group sports activities	88%	86%	73%
Cultural activities	85%	85%	74%
Field trips	84%	84%	83%
Cooking and nutrition activities	77%	77%	76%
Gardening activities	56%	49%	55%
Book clubs	33%	35%	33%
College preparation activities	31%	46%	84%

Summer programming

On the annual survey, 76% of all sites (442 sites)[1] indicated that they provided summer programming in the summer of 2022. Summer programming ranged in duration from 1 to 10+ weeks, with 74% of those sites that implement summer programs indicating that their program was 4-5 weeks long (Table 25). Grantees were asked to describe how their summer programming differed from their school year program. Many grantees reported that their summer programs had a greater focus on social-emotional learning and physical activities, along with field trips and other recreation. Some grantees used summer programs as an opportunity to provide on hands-on learning and STEM activities that were not possible during the school year. Others reported that their summer programs focused on academic support and remediation. Grantees also reported that their summer programs were an opportunity for students to build job skills.

Many grantees noted that their summer programs were an opportunity to build connections with and among students and their families, and that they made an effort to provide summer programming that was distinct from their school-year program. Grantees described:

> *Our summer programming allowed students the opportunity to build relationships with additional leaders that do not work in the school-year program. The summer programming afforded us a chance for more field trips and community activities. Students were able to build relationships with additional students that do not attend the school-year program.*

> *Participants had weekly field trips aligned with specific academic lessons and additional emphasis was given to SEL and life skills. Academic components were more hands-on and integrated into our "fun" activities. We focused on strengthening the "basics" for all students.*

Table 25. Duration of summer programming by site (AS)

	Sites providing summer programming (N=442)	
	Count	Percent
1-3 weeks	56	13%
4-6 weeks	326	74%
7-9 weeks	50	11%
10+ weeks	5	1%
Not reported	5	1%
TOTAL	442	100%

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[1] The Annual Evaluation Survey asks grantees to report summer programming by site, since summer programming tends to vary across sites within one grant.

STUDENT AND FAMILY INCLUSION

Providing services to students and families with the greatest needs is one of ISBE's 21st CCLC program objectives. Grantees commonly identified "high need" students based on variables including their socio-economic status (i.e., free or reduced lunch status) and academic needs including English-language proficiency and individualized educational program (IEP) needs. This year, across all grantees 52% of participants were designated as low-income, while 14% were limited English proficiency and 10% had an IEP. According to APR data, 13% of sites provided services for individuals with disabilities, serving over 1,200 participants, and 14% of sites provided activities for English learners, serving 3,407 participants (Table 27).

Table 26: Population information of all participants (APR)

Student Population	# of participants	% of participants[2]
Low-income	34,022	52%
Limited English Proficiency	8,926	14%
IEP	6,267	10%

Table 27: Programming (hours and participants) for high need students (APR)

Activities	% (#) Sites Offering	# of participants
Services for Individuals with Disabilities	13% (77)	1,209
Activities for English Learners	14% (80)	3,407

Family programming

ISBE's statewide objectives for the 21st CCLC program include providing services to students' families. When reporting on their progress providing services to families, 74% of grantees serving elementary and middle school students indicated that they were meeting or above expectations. However, 40% of grantees indicated that they were below or approaching expectations with respect to high school students' families (Table 28).

Table 28: Progress in implementing program activities, all grants (AS)

Provided services to the students' extended families with 21st CCLC funds	Below expectation	Approaching expectation	Meeting expectation	Above expectation
Elementary (N=147)	4%	22%	60%	14%
Middle(N=145)	2%	23%	62%	12%
High (N=101)	15%	25%	49%	12%

Grantees indicated the types of programming and activities they provided to participants' parents, guardians, and families (Table 29). Family activity nights and showcases and performances were the most common activities, with over 80% of grantees reporting these. Grantees also indicated that they provided parent education activities (65%) and parent-teacher conference support (57%). According to

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[2] Percent calculated based on total number of students for whom data was available.

APR data, 33% of sites reported that they provided parenting skills and/or family literacy programming to 5,483 participants.

Table 29. Family programming and activities offered by grantees (AS)

	All Grantees (N=183)	
	Count	Percent
Family activity nights (game nights, movie nights, etc.)	84%	153
Showcases and performances	81%	149
Parent education activities	65%	118
Parent-teacher conference support	57%	105
Health and wellness activities (nutrition, fitness)	57%	105
College application process and guidance (including FAFSA)	34%	63
Technology classes	29%	53
Adult education (ESL, GED)	26%	48
Our program does not offer parent/family programming or engagement activities	1%	2
Other: most frequently included cultural activities and parent mentoring or support groups.	13%	24

According to APR data, 33% of sites reported that they provided parenting skills and/or family literacy programming to 5,483 participants. The total number of family participants reported was under 10,000. This is a significant drop—less than 50% of the previous year. While family engagement is a persistent challenge for grantees, the great fluctuation in family participants from year to year point to potential tracking and reporting issues.

Table 30: Number of family participants 2018 – 2023 (APR)

Student grade level	Number of Family Participants				
	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Grades PreK-5	13,262	9,502	7,951	14,812	6,150
Grades 6-12	9,721	8,079	5,346	9,151	3,391
Total	22,983	17,581	13,297	23,963	9,451

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

A key objective of the 21st CCLC program is to improve students' academic achievement. Measurement of improvement is a challenge. Standardized assessments were significantly disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, changes in standardized testing over the past 5+ years in the state of Illinois along with changes to GPRA mean that any longitudinal or trend data on student achievement has been disrupted.

In addition, many of the gains and benefits that students realize through their participation in 21st CCLC programs may not translate to improvements in standardized test scores. The 21st CCLC program requests the school-day teachers of all participants in grades 1 through 5 to complete a survey to indicate changes in participants' engagement and performance in the classroom. This APR Teacher Survey offers a different perspective on outcomes, and these results are reported in addition to assessment data below.

Assessment data

Through the Illinois Report Card data system, data are provided on the number of students in grades 4-8 participating in the 21st CCLC program who demonstrated growth on state assessments in mathematics and reading. Ten percent of students demonstrating growth, with little discernable variation when looking at percentages by hours of participation. Four percent of students demonstrated growth in mathematics, and as with reading, there was little variation based on hours of participation.

Table 31. Academic growth based on state assessment data for participants in grades 4 through 8 (APR)

Hours of participation	Mathematics			Reading		
	# Participants w/ data	# Demonstrated growth	% Demonstrated growth	# Participants w/ data	# Demonstrated growth	% Demonstrated growth
Less than 15 hours	4449	172	3.9%	4459	442	9.9%
15-44 hours	5763	280	4.9%	5785	558	9.6%
45-89 hours	4145	182	4.4%	4155	412	9.9%
90-179 hours	4417	171	3.9%	4449	444	10.0%
180-269 hours	2424	90	3.7%	2432	245	10.1%
270 or more hours	2059	81	3.9%	2058	223	10.8%
Total	**23257**	**976**	**4.2%**	**23338**	**2324**	**10.0%**

In response to the new GPRA indicators, this is the first year with additional academic achievement data in the form of improvements to students' GPA. Through the Illinois Report Card data system, data were provided at the grantee level on students in grades 7-8 and 10-12 that had a GPA of less than 3.0 in the prior year and improved in the current year. Twenty-six grantees provided data on 787 students who needed to improve their GPA. Of these, 71% (n=555) improved their GPA over the 2022-23 school year. Of the 26 grantees that reported data, 21 or 80% reported that 50% or more of the students with a GPA less than 3.0 last year improved (Table 32). It is important to recognize the small number of students for whom these data were reported this year.
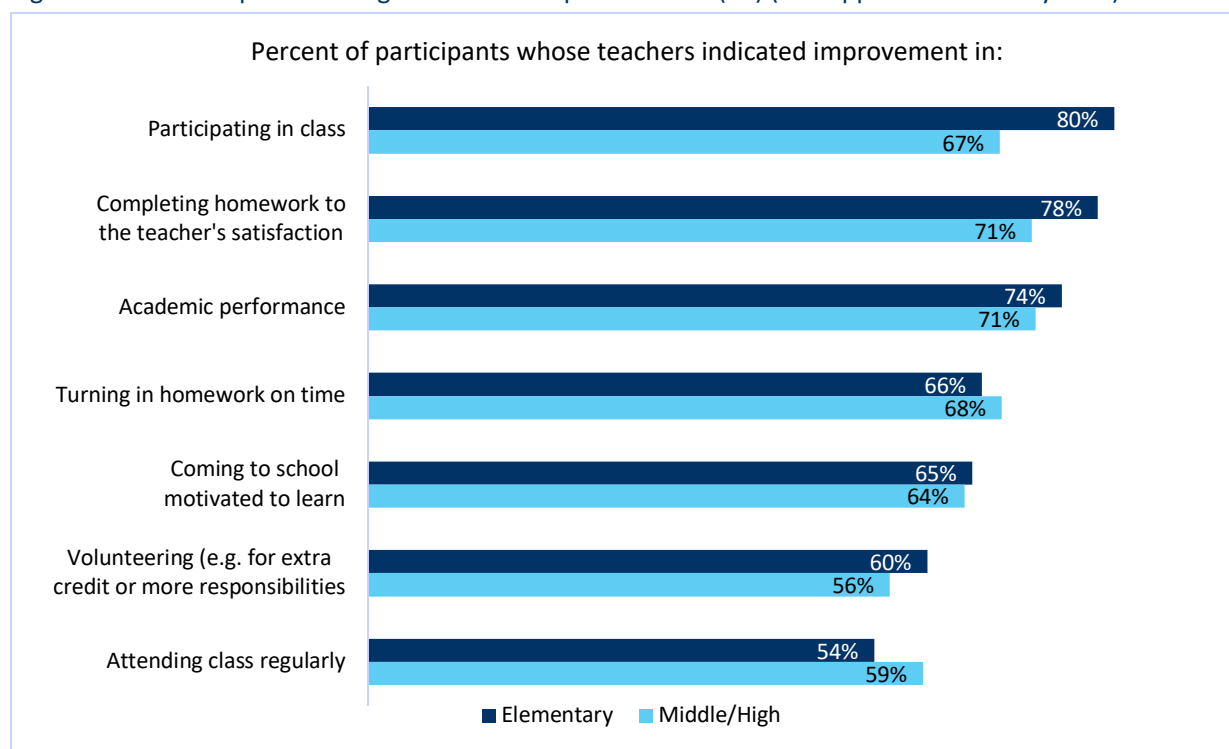
Table 32.Grants reporting improvement in student GPA in grades 7-8 and 10-12 (APR)

Percent of students with GPA of >3.0 last year who improved this year	# of Grants	% of Grants
Less than 25% of students improved	2	8%
25-49% of students improved	3	12%
50-74% of students improved	11	42%
75-100% of students improved	10	38%
Total	**26**	100%

APR Teacher Survey data

According to APR Teacher Survey data, 80% of elementary students who needed to improve did so with respect to participating in class, and 78% improved completing homework to the teacher's satisfaction (see). Teachers indicated that 74% of elementary students improved their academic performance. In comparison, a lower percentage of middle/high students who needed to improve did so, according to teachers, with 67% improving class participation and 71% improving homework completion and academic performance. The areas where a larger percentage of middle/high students than elementary students improved were turning in homework on time and attending class regularly.

Figure 8. Teacher-reported changes in academic performance (AS) (See Appendix A for N by item)[3]

Percent of participants whose teachers indicated improvement in:

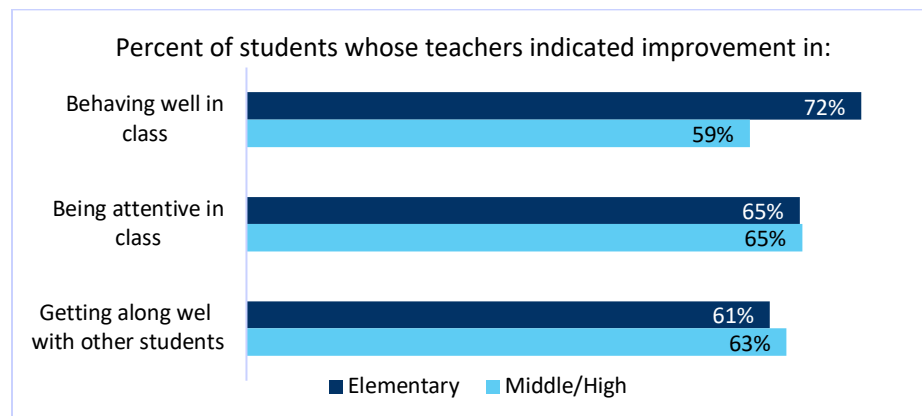|	Elementary	Middle/High
Participating in class	80%	67%
Completing homework to the teacher's satisfaction	78%	71%
Academic performance	74%	71%
Turning in homework on time	66%	68%
Coming to school motivated to learn	65%	64%
Volunteering (e.g. for extra credit or more responsibilities	60%	56%
Attending class regularly	54%	59%

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[3] APR Teacher Survey data included in this report are collected through the Annual Evaluation Survey. Grantees report data for the items they included (see Appendix A). Percents reported in this figure are based on the total N for the item minus the number of students teachers indicated "Did not need to improve."

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

APR Teacher Survey data

The APR Teacher Survey also includes questions about improvement in student behavior in the classroom. Seventy-two percent of elementary students' teachers indicated that students improved with respect to behaving well in class; 59% of middle and high school students' teachers indicated the same (Figure 9). Over 60% of students across grades improved in being attentive in class and getting along well with other students, according to teacher reports.

Figure 9. Teacher-reported changes in classroom behavior (AS) (See Appendix A for N by item)

Percent of students whose teachers indicated improvement in:

- Behaving well in class: Elementary 72%, Middle/High 59%
- Being attentive in class: Elementary 65%, Middle/High 65%
- Getting along wel with other students: Elementary 61%, Middle/High 63%
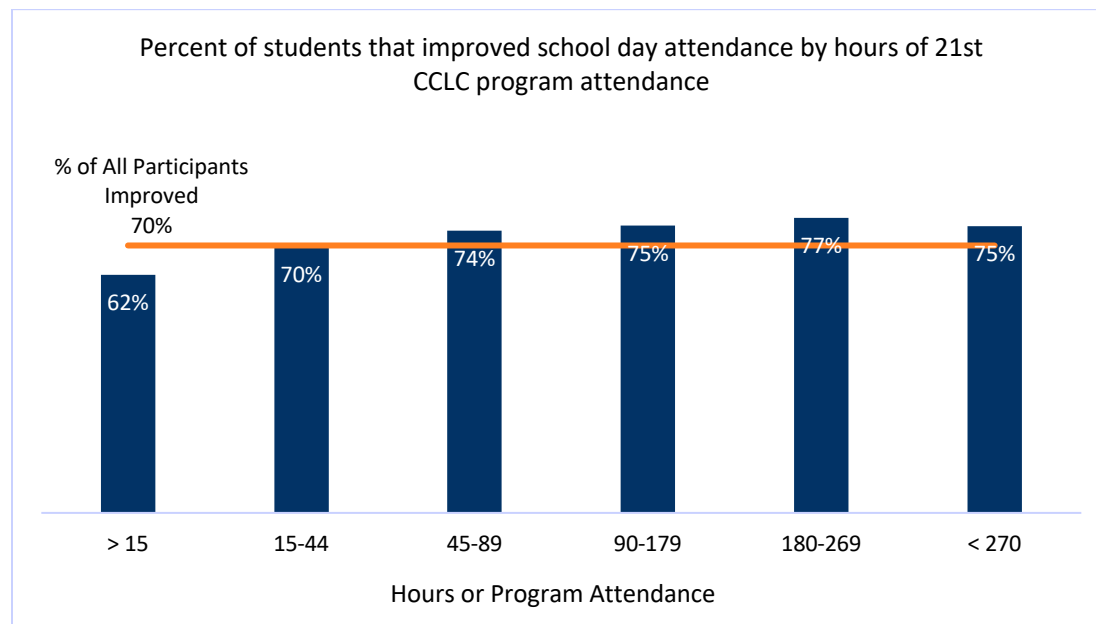
■ Elementary ■ Middle/High

School-day attendance

With the new GPRA indicator focused on improved school-day attendance, the Illinois Report Card data system now includes data on the number of students who had attendance below 90% during the previous year and improved attendance for the current year. Seventy percent of these students improved attendance during the 2022-23 school year. Data were reported by hours of program attendance, and while 62% of students who attended 21st CCLC programs for less than 15 hours improved school-day attendance, 77% of students who attended 180-269 hours improved their school-day attendance (see Table 33 and Figure 10).

Table 33. Improvement in participants' school-day attendance (APR)

Hours of participation	# students with <90% attendance last year	# of those students whose attendance improved	% of those students whose attendance improved
Less than 15 hours	4831	3009	62%
15-44 hours	4136	2878	70%
45-89 hours	2867	2119	74%
90-179 hours	2751	2067	75%
180-269 hours	1588	1227	77%
270 or more hours	1296	972	75%
Total	**17469**	**12272**	**70%**

Percent of students that improved school day attendance by hours of 21st CCLC program attendance

% of All Participants Improved

Hours or Program Attendance

In-school suspensions

An additional new-this-year data point included in the new GPRA indicators is the report of decreased in-school suspensions. Grantee indicated the number of students that had in-school suspensions during the previous year, and the number of students who decreased suspensions during the 2022-23 school year. Thirty-nine grantees reported that 610 students had suspensions during the previous year, and 286, or 46%, had fewer suspensions this year.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Grantees provided data about their staff, including positions and whether staff were paid or volunteer. Over 7,000 staff worked at ISBE's 21st CCLC programs in FY23. One third of those staff were school-day teachers, and 17% of staff were other non-teaching school staff (Table 34).

Aside from ISBE-provided program-specific training, the most common topic for staff professional development included social and emotional learning (84%), staff team-building training (74%), trauma-informed practices (73%) (Table 35).

Table 34: Staffing types of all grantees (APR)

Staff Type	Paid	Volunteer	Total	% of Percent
School Day Teachers	2303	119	2422	34%
Other Non-Teaching School Staff	1101	84	1185	17%
Subcontracted Staff	855	30	885	12%
Administrators	701	73	774	11%
Other	476	18	494	7%
Community Members	362	149	511	7%
College Students	233	171	404	6%
High School Students	204	72	276	4%
Parents	62	110	172	2%
Total	6297	826	7123	100%

Table 35. Types of professional development provided (AS)

	Grantees (N=183)	
	Number	Percent
21st CCLC Program-Specific Training (e.g. ISBE conferences, ISBE webinars)	155	85%
Social and Emotional Learning Training	154	84%
Staff Team-Building Training	136	74%
Trauma Informed Practice Training	134	73%
Disciplinary and/or Behavioral Training (e.g. Anger Management, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS))	121	66%
Safety Training (e.g. First Aid, CPR training)	103	56%
Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training	92	50%
Youth Program Quality Assessment Training	92	50%
STEM Training	87	48%
Media/Technology Training	60	33%
Health Training (e.g. nutrition education, fitness education, sexual education)	58	32%
Illinois Learning Standards Training and/or Common Core Training	44	24%
English Language Arts Training	39	21%
Other: Included Mental Health First Aid, mandated reporter training, arts integration, and youth voice.	23	13%

EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Grantees are required to conduct their own local program evaluations and are expected to use evaluation and program data to identify areas for program improvement, and 75% of grantees identified an external program evaluator in their local evaluation report.

More than 70% of grantees indicated that they were meeting or above expectations with respect to implementing evaluation activities and using data to improve the program across grade levels (Table 36) in these areas during FY23. Across grade levels, grantees indicated that they are making more progress in implementing evaluation activities than in using data to improve the program.

Table 36: Progress in implementing evaluation activities, by student age group (AS)

		Below expectation	Approaching expectation	Meeting expectation	Above expectation
Implemented evaluation activities	Elementary	0%	16%	69%	15%
	Middle	0%	15%	72%	13%
	High	1%	22%	64%	13%
Used data to improve the program	Elementary	2%	24%	46%	27%
	Middle	2%	22%	48%	28%
	High	%1	27%	40%	31%

FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Over the course of their grants, 21st CCLC grantees are expected to develop and implement a sustainability plan so that their programs can be sustained when grant funding ends. When asked to indicate the proportion of the program components that are currently sustainable, 53% of grantees indicated that some components are sustainable, and 42% indicated that most or all are sustainable (Table 37).

While the majority of grantees indicated that they were meeting or above expectations in areas related to sustainability and partnerships, grantees indicated greater progress with respect to involving other agencies and nonprofit organizations in their program and coordinating with other funding sources to supplement the program than in identifying ways to continue the program after the grant (Table 38). Grantees that serve high school students consistently reported less progress in these areas of sustainability.

Table 37. Proportion of program components that grantees indicated are sustainable, by Cohort (AS)

	All Grantees (N=182)	
	Number	Percent
All are sustainable	8	4%
Most are sustainable	69	38%
Some are sustainable	96	53%
None are sustainable	9	5%

Table 38: Progress in partnerships and sustainability, all grants (AS)

		Below expectation	Approaching expectation	Meeting expectation	Above expectation
Identified ways to continue critical components of the program after the grant period	Elementary	11%	24%	60%	5%
	Middle	6%	31%	58%	5%
	High	12%	28%	56%	4%
Involved other agencies and nonprofit organizations	Elementary	7%	16%	57%	20%
	Middle	6%	17%	57%	21%
	High	13%	23%	51%	13%
Coordinated the program with other funding sources to supplement the school's programs	Elementary	5%	25%	40%	31%
	Middle	3%	22%	44%	30%
	High	6%	27%	35%	33%

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Grantees reported a variety of barriers faced when implementing their programs (Table 39). The most frequently reported barrier was low parent involvement, with grantees indicating that this was a more significant challenge with respect to serving high school students. The prevalence of this barrier to implementation is consistent with previous years. Programs serving high school students also reported student recruitment, retention, and attendance as a barrier to implementation. Programs serving elementary and middle school students indicated the difficulty in recruiting and retaining program staff. This barrier was emerged particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and continued to be an issue for many grantees.

Table 39: Indication of program implementation barriers by age group (AS) [Shaded cells indicate top three barriers for each age group]

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Low parent involvement in activities	47%	49%	64%
Difficulty in recruiting and retaining program staff	30%	29%	20%
Student access to technology/internet at home	20%	19%	12%
Too little time with students	18%	18%	30%
Competing activities at school in which the students want to participate	15%	31%	28%
Difficulties in transporting students (cost, logistics)	13%	11%	12%
Difficulty in recruiting students	10%	22%	34%
Inconsistent attendance of students (low student retention)	10%	22%	35%
Technology/internet access at the program	10%	9%	4%
Lack of coordination with school-day teachers	9%	10%	16%
Challenges obtaining school-related data	9%	7%	6%
Competing responsibilities at home, such as the need to babysit siblings	6%	19%	29%
Challenges in communicating with school	6%	8%	10%
Difficulty in maintaining/identifying partners	5%	3%	11%
Difficulty in engaging students	4%	15%	14%
Negative peer pressure and/or gangs influencing students	3%	6%	9%
Difficulty in maintaining a safe environment for students when coming/going from site	2%	4%	9%
Competing responsibilities because student must work	1%	3%	29%

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Most grantees (98%) concluded their local evaluation reports with recommendations for program improvement for the next year. Most of the recommendations were related to issues of recruitment, attendance, and retention (70%). These recommendations included suggestions to recruit specific students and reexamine or revisit recruitment and retention strategies. Examples of specific recommendations from reports included:

- Periodically review retention incentives with students to make sure they are of high interest and have an impact on continuing to improve the number of hours attended. Administer an enrichment interest survey to students at the start of programming in the fall with the goal of increasing student retention rates.
- Continue to recruit academically at-risk students from diverse backgrounds.
- Improve attendance by providing more high interest activities.

Other common categories of recommendations included expanding the range of program offerings and activities (66%); improving, or increasing data collection, use or evaluation (65%); and increasing or improving parent and family involvement and programming (62%).

Although these areas have been identified for improvement in previous years, the percentage of grantees that included these as areas of improvement increased this year. In previous years these areas of improvement were mentioned by about half of the grantees.

Specific recommendations regarding making changes to program offerings and activities noted the need consider new programs to engage more youth in their programming, developing or improving partnerships with outside organizations in order to increase or improve enrichment activities, expanding offerings to include activities focused on social and emotional learning, and offering a more diverse set of activities.

Even though the pandemic is over, and most grantees have returned to a "new normal," some grantees continue to struggle with attendance and staffing, issues they faced during the pandemic. All grantees have returned to in-person learning and some have incorporated pandemic-inspired shifts into their programs. For example, many grantees are now offering both virtual and in-person family engagement activities, an innovation that emerged from the pandemic. Grantees mentioned that offering virtual programming has helped in increasing family engagement, and therefore they continue to offer a hybrid version of family programming offerings and activities.

Table 40. Recommendation for program improvement from local evaluation reports (N=161) (LER)

Recommendation	Grantees	
	Number	Percent
Address recruitment, attendance, and/or retention issues	113	70%
Expand or alter the range of program offerings and activities	106	66%
Improve/increase data collection, data use, and/or evaluation	104	65%
Improve/increase parent and family Involvement and programming	99	62%
Increase/Improve social-emotional program components	60	37%
Increase/improve partnerships and/or community outreach efforts	56	35%
Address program sustainability	53	33%
Increase staff professional development or provide professional development to address a particular need	53	33%
Increase student engagement efforts	51	32%
Increase/improve the connection between program and program staff and school day activities and/or teachers	32	20%
Adjust staff composition, hire staff, or address other issues through program staffing strategy	21	13%
Address Issues of student behavior in programs	16	10%
Focus on staff team building efforts	4	3%
No recommendations offered	3	2%

LESSONS LEARNED FROM COHORT 2019

Twenty-two Cohort 2019 grantees ended their grants at the end of FY23. In reviewing their final local evaluation reports, the following grant achievements and lessons learned were noted across multiple grantees.

Recovering attendance after the COVID-19 pandemic. Five grantees mentioned that their enrollment and attendance have increased or stayed consistent since the pandemic, on trend to keep increasing and even surpassing pre-COVID-19 levels. One grantee suggested that the positive relationships among students, families and the district helped to keep attendance high. Grantees related high attendance to other important outcomes such as academic progress, disciplinary incidents, and changes in social emotional learning outcomes for the students involved.

Staff retention. Three grantees proudly mentioned that staff retention was strong. One grantee reported, "While maintaining consistency in staff was a challenge during and after the pandemic the Year 5 survey data from personnel indicates that providers felt supported, valued, and passionate about their work with the students." Reports suggested that staff were dedicated, creative, flexible, and responsive to parent and student input, encouraging students to complete homework and creating a positive afterschool program culture that influenced the school-day culture and climate.

Engaging communities. Grantees worked to develop strong relationships across sites and with community groups; during the pandemic these relationships were critical to reaching and serving low-income students. Since the pandemic, these relationships have supported recruitment and retention of students and ensure the community knows about the services provided by the grantees and their sites.

Supporting student enrichment. More than any other accomplishment, grantees mentioned their ability to provide important enrichment experiences for students, such as art, music, technology, theater, and other clubs and activities. Specifically cited activities included performing arts programs, family events, a School of Rock program, and a culinary club. Grantees shared that these types of enrichment activities helped build relationships among students and staff and provided engaging and exciting activities that students looked forward to at the end of the school day.

Relationships are critical to program management. Managing a successful program requires building relationships with staff, the districts, outside partners, and parents. Grantee reports included the following insights regarding the importance of relationships:
- A strong relationship with the school district is vital to establish credibility, respond to evolving needs, and manage program logistics and requirements. As one grantee described, "I have learned that your high school administration has to be 100 percent supportive of your program. Not having their support can be very detrimental to your program."
- Developing a good rapport with partners can be critical to maintaining the ability respond to needs as they develop.
- Relationships with different people and partners need to be built and nurtured individually—there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to relationships.
- Involving district teachers in the program helps to build relationships both between the program and the teachers and the students and the teachers.

Strategies to support student engagement. Grantees shared that identifying activities that are of interest to students increases their attendance. One grantee recommended soliciting input from both students and parents on what would be beneficial in terms of programming, and another shared that most of the clubs that are offered through the grant were due to students advocating for these clubs to be a part of the school. In addition, grantees noted the specific needs of high school students with respect to structure and a place to seek help.

Site coordinators are critical for a successful program. Grantees shared that site coordinators are key to a successful program, especially when they are detail oriented and organized, and ready to contribute to reporting to ISBE. One grantee noted the important role of their site coordinator in aligning the program with school standards.

Lessons about sustainability. Sustainability continues to be a challenge for grantees, and the extent to which programs were sustainable at the time of reporting varies. Some grantees indicated that there were no other funding sources for their programs, while other grantees reported that their efforts to increase buy-in from the school community contributed to their sustainability.

CONCLUSION

In FY23, the 183 grantees included both veteran programs that weathered the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and newer grantees that worked to establish their programs. Looking across grantees, sites, and programs, it is clear that ISBE's 21st CCLC program provided valuable positive experiences and supports to students and their families across the states. At the same time, the challenges that 21st CCLC programs have historically faced persist, with some challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. Below, progress and findings related to each of the statewide program objectives are considered in light of the data provided in this report.

Objective #1: Participants in the program will demonstrate increased academic achievement. Available indicators of academic growth and improvement varied greatly and pointed to the challenges in measuring the impact of 21st CCLC program participation on academic achievement. APR Teacher Survey data indicated that 74% of elementary students and 71% of middle and high school students improved their academic performance, and even greater proportions of students improved with respect to completing homework and participating in class. Similarly, 71% of the students grantees identified as having a GPA below 3.0 in the previous year improved their GPA in FY23. However, the number of students for whom these data were reported was extremely small. While these indicators point to academic growth, data from standardized assessments indicated that 10% of students in grades 4 through 8 demonstrated growth in reading, and less than 5% in mathematics. This discrepancy between indicators is not new.

Objective #2: Participants will demonstrate an increased involvement in school activities and in participating in other subject areas such as technology, arts, music, theater, sports and other activities. Grantees continued to offer a wide variety of programming and enrichment activities, with nearly all grantees offering arts and STEM programming as well as fitness activities. Grantees reported using technology in their programs not just as a resource for doing homework but also to offer activities including computer programming and media-making. In addition, over 10,000 students participated in service-learning activities.

In ISBE's 21st CCLC program plan, this objective is tied to the goal of increasing students' school attendance rates. According to APR data, 70% of students with attendance below 90% in the previous year improved their attendance in FY23.

Objective #3: Participants in the program will demonstrate social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes. Almost all grantees provided some form of SEL programming or other behavioral support to participants. The majority of grantees employed trauma-informed practices, PBIS, and/or restorative justice practices in their programs, and they implemented a variety of curricula to support SEL. According to teacher surveys, 72% of students in elementary grades and 59% of middle and high school students improved classroom behavior if they needed to, and over 60% of students across grades improved with respect to getting along well with other students. According to APR data, 46% of students that had in-school suspensions during the previous year had fewer suspension in FY23.

Objective #4: The 21st CCLC programs will provide opportunities for the community to be involved and will increase family involvement of the participating children. Grantees reported that they offered a variety of activities and programs for parents, guardians, and families of program participants. Over 80% of grantees held family activity nights and student showcases and performances as a way to engage

families. In addition, most grantees offered parent education or support activities. While grantees continued to offer these programs, attendance and engagement in these activities continued to be a challenge. Grantees indicated that low parent involvement is a top challenge, and family participation levels decreased from the previous year.

Objective #5: Programs will provide opportunities, with priority given to all students who are lowest performing and in the greatest need of academic assistance. Grantees identified and enrolled students with the greatest need for academic assistance using a variety of recruitment and referral strategies. Nearly all grantees used student grades and/or assessment data to identify students with the greatest academic needs. Fifty-two percent of program participants were designated as low-income students and 14% were limited English proficiency.

Objective #6: Professional development will be offered by the programs and ISBE to meet the needs of the program, staff, and students. Grantees provided a variety of professional learning and training opportunities to their staff. Training continued to focus on SEL and trauma-informed practices, which was likely in directly response to the continued needs of program participants and communities. In addition, grantees offered professional development focused on team-building, which may have been a response to challenges with staff recruitment and retention.

Objective #7: Projects will create sustainability plans to continue the programs beyond the federal funding period. Grantees worked toward program sustainability by developing partnerships and finding resources in their schools and communities to support the program. Forty-two percent of grantees indicated that most or all their program components are currently sustainable. One third of grantees identified the need to address program sustainability in their own evaluation's recommendations for program improvement.

APPENDIX A: APR TEACHER SURVEY DATA

APR Teacher Survey data were collected through the Annual Evaluation Survey and were submitted at the site level. While GPRA requirements now state that surveys only need to include 3 items and be administered for elementary students, the Annual Evaluation Survey provided grantees who are collecting additional data space to report them.

The data below provides information on the number of sites that distributed surveys and their response rates. Complete survey data is also included below.

Table A1: Please indicate whether you administered the federal teacher survey at the end of the 2022-2023 school year for the below populations.

	Sites (N=684)	
	Percent	Count
Elementary School Students	56%	384
Middle/High School Students	31%	214

Table A2: How many teacher surveys were distributed and received for Elementary School Students (grades 1 through 5)?

	Surveys	Number of Sites Reporting
Distributed	24024	327
Received	15734	308

Table A3: How many teacher surveys were distributed and received for Middle/High School Students (grades 6 through 12)?

	Surveys	Number of Sites Reporting
Distributed	8173	178
Received	5886	163

Table A4: APR Teacher Survey data for elementary students (Data from 238 sites)

Elementary Students	Did not need to improve	Significant Improvement	Moderate Improvement	Slight Improvement	No Change	Slight Decline	Moderate Decline	Significant Decline	Total
Turning in his/her homework on time	3194	1696	1814	1521	2137	330	113	67	10872
Completing homework to the teacher's satisfaction	2922	1791	5332	1584	1960	321	125	66	14101
Participating in class	2950	1739	5715	1935	2092	197	74	40	14742
Volunteering (e.g. for extra credit or more responsibilities	2876	1212	1363	1583	2620	116	49	23	9842
Attending class regularly	4564	1135	1070	1010	2260	313	86	75	10513
Being attentive in class	3045	1342	1629	1845	2015	437	144	53	10510
Behaving well in class	3842	1283	4722	1480	2186	505	176	90	14284
Academic performance	2140	1731	2237	2171	1688	296	108	64	10435
Coming to school motivated to learn	3386	1353	1553	1605	2014	325	98	45	10379
Getting along well with other students	3927	1242	1323	1420	1938	417	117	70	10454

Table A5: APR Teacher Survey data for middle/high school students (Data from 153 sites)

Middle/High Students	Did not need to improve	Significant Improvement	Moderate Improvement	Slight Improvement	No Change	Slight Decline	Moderate Decline	Significant Decline	Total
Turning in his/her homework on time	1722	1119	824	824	956	232	86	49	5812
Completing homework to the teacher's satisfaction	1696	1139	1037	795	856	198	118	51	5890
Participating in class	1643	1207	1042	783	1164	182	80	38	6139
Volunteering (e.g. for extra credit or more responsibilities	1571	884	626	621	1519	109	38	30	5398
Attending class regularly	2537	815	754	433	1019	199	109	52	5918
Being attentive in class	1971	909	906	745	970	251	127	43	5922
Behaving well in class	2506	842	649	596	1104	228	95	42	6062
Academic performance	1404	1163	1119	911	867	263	111	49	5887
Coming to school motivated to learn	1786	1017	704	717	1037	219	86	50	5616
Getting along well with other students	2575	898	683	528	989	155	68	28	5924

APPENDIX B: LOCAL EVALUATION REPORT SUMMARY

ISBE requires all active grantees to submit an annual local evaluation report. The same report template has been used by the grantees since 2015 with minor updates to reflect changes in grant duration. For FY23, a separate template was provided for Cohort 2019 for their final, end of grant report. While grantees are instructed to submit one report per grant, a few grantees either submitted one report for multiple grants or multiple reports (one report per site) for one grant. Local evaluation reports were submitted for all active grants, and 161 reports were reviewed for this summary.[4]

EDC reviewed all submitted reports. The evaluation review focuses on the categories of data included in the report, the extent to which the evaluations addressed the statewide goals, and recommendations for program improvement. In addition, the review of final reports, submitted by grantees at the end of their grant, aims to synthesize grant achievements and lessons learned. EDC's review serves several functions in service of the evaluation: it allows EDC to quantify and describe how grantees are evaluating their programs and what kinds of data they offer as evidence of their programs' success; it provides EDC with a deeper understanding of the progress, successes, and challenges of the grantees and enables EDC to identify trends across the state; and it provides EDC with data to inform future evaluations as well as evaluation technical assistance efforts.

Reports for FY23 (reporting on activities and data from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023) were submitted at the end of June 2023 by Cohort 2019, and in January 2024 by ISBE grantees in Cohorts 2015, 2021, and 2022.

COHORT 2019 GRANTEES

Twenty-two Cohort 2019 grantees ended their grants at the end of FY23. In reviewing their final local evaluation reports, the following grant achievements and lessons learned were noted across multiple grantees.

Recovering attendance after the COVID-19 pandemic. Five grantees mentioned that their enrollment and attendance have increased or stayed consistent since the pandemic, on trend to keep increasing and even surpassing pre-COVID-19 levels. One grantee suggested that the positive relationships among students, families and the district helped to keep attendance high. Grantees related high attendance to other important outcomes such as academic progress, disciplinary incidents, and changes in social emotional learning outcomes for the students involved.

Staff retention. Three grantees proudly mentioned that staff retention was strong. One grantee reported, "While maintaining consistency in staff was a challenge during and after the pandemic the Year 5 survey data from personnel indicates that providers felt supported, valued, and passionate about their work with the students." Reports suggested that staff were dedicated, creative, flexible, and responsive to parent and student input, encouraging students to complete homework and creating a positive afterschool program culture that influenced the school-day culture and climate.

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[4] The number of reports is not the same as the number of active grants because of these reporting issues.

Engaging communities. Grantees worked to develop strong relationships across sites and with community groups; during the pandemic these relationships were critical to reaching and serving low-income students. Since the pandemic, these relationships have supported recruitment and retention of students and ensure the community knows about the services provided by the grantees and their sites.

Supporting student enrichment. More than any other accomplishment, grantees mentioned their ability to provide important enrichment experiences for students, such as art, music, technology, theater, and other clubs and activities. Specifically cited activities included performing arts programs, family events, a School of Rock program, and a culinary club. Grantees shared that these types of enrichment activities helped build relationships among students and staff and provided engaging and exciting activities that students looked forward to at the end of the school day.

Relationships are critical to program management. Managing a successful program requires building relationships with staff, the districts, outside partners, and parents. Grantee reports included the following insights regarding the importance of relationships:
- A strong relationship with the school district is vital to establish credibility, respond to evolving needs, and manage program logistics and requirements. As one grantee described, "I have learned that your high school administration has to be 100 percent supportive of your program. Not having their support can be very detrimental to your program."
- Developing a good rapport with partners can be critical to maintaining the ability respond to needs as they develop.
- Relationships with different people and partners need to be built and nurtured individually—there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to relationships.
- Involving district teachers in the program helps to build relationships both between the program and the teachers and the students and the teachers.

Strategies to support student engagement. Grantees shared that identifying activities that are of interest to students increases their attendance. One grantee recommended soliciting input from both students and parents on what would be beneficial in terms of programming, and another shared that most of the clubs that are offered through the grant were due to students advocating for these clubs to be a part of the school. In addition, grantees noted the specific needs of high school students with respect to structure and a place to seek help.

Site coordinators are critical for a successful program. Grantees shared that site coordinators are key to a successful program, especially when they are detail oriented and organized, and ready to contribute to reporting to ISBE. One grantee noted the important role of their site coordinator in aligning the program with school standards.

Lessons about sustainability. Sustainability continues to be a challenge for grantees, and the extent to which programs were sustainable at the time of reporting varies. Some grantees indicated that there were no other funding sources for their programs, while other grantees reported that their efforts to increase buy-in from the school community contributed to their sustainability.

COHORT 2015, 2021, AND 2022 GRANTEES

Grantees not at the end of their grants submitted local evaluation that responded to instructions to use the standard report template. The report template asks grantees to provide information on program implementation and progress toward each of the 7 statewide program objectives. It also asks grantees to describe their evaluation plan and data collection. Eighty percent of grantees used the template for their report. Seventy-five percent of grantees identified an external evaluator in their report.

The increased use of the report template over the past 5 years has led to more consistent reporting with respect to the statewide objectives. The great majority of grantees reported on each of the objectives, most with data and evidence to support their progress (see Table A1 below).

Table B1: Cohorts 15, 21, and 22 progress on statewide objectives (N=161)

Statewide Objective	Not reported	Reported progress with no evidence	Reported progress with inconclusive evidence	Reported progress with evidence
1. Participants in the program will demonstrate increased academic achievement	3%	6%	38%	53%
2. Participants will demonstrate an increased involvement in school activities and in participating in other subject areas such as technology, arts, music, theater, sports and other activities.	2%	8%	35%	55%
3. Participants in the program will demonstrate social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes	5%	7%	27%	61%
4. The 21st CCLC programs will provide opportunities for the community to be involved and will increase family involvement of the participating children.	14%	12%	22%	52%
5. Programs will provide opportunities, with priority given to all students who are lowest performing and in the greatest need of academic assistance.	2%	4%	14%	80%
6. Professional development will be offered by the programs and ISBE to meet the needs of the program, staff, and students.	13%	2%	15%	70%
7. Projects will create sustainability plans to continue the programs beyond the federal funding period.	14%	6%	32%	47%

Family engagement

Eighty-one percent of grantees reported on family engagement activities, and 51% included family participation and attendance data in their report. The most commonly reported family engagement activities were family events (social nights, STEM nights, etc.) and parent nights, including program meet-and-greet events. Some grantees reported providing skill-building workshops (30%) and adult education programming (21%) for parents.

Table B2: Types of family activities reported (N=161)

Types of activities	Grantees	
	Number	Percent
Family events (social and academic)	69	43%
Parent cafes, parent nights and meet and greet	59	37%
Skill-building workshops	49	30%
Arts, dance and music	46	29%
Health, nutrition & wellness	44	27%
Adult education	34	21%
Informational sessions	30	19%
Parent leadership and mentoring	26	16%
Family field trips	10	6%
Higher education support	9	6%

Outcome Data

When reporting outcomes, the three most common indicators reported by grantees included school-day attendance, result from the Teacher APR Survey, and changes in students' grades. Many grantees also administer students and/or parent surveys to inform their program evaluations. Additional measures or assessments included NWEA scores and MAP reading and math assessments, I-Ready, and SAYO.

Table B3: Types of outcome data reported (N=161)

Outcome data source	Grantees	
	Number	Percent
School-day attendance	126	78%
Teacher APR Survey	119	74%
Grades/Grade change	114	71%
Student Survey	108	67%
Parent Survey	92	57%
Discipline reports	63	39%
Other Test Scores	45	28%
Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR)	40	25%
Grade promotion	35	22%
SAT	15	9%

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Most grantees (98%) concluded their evaluation reports with recommendations for program improvement for the next year. Most of the recommendations were related to issues of recruitment, attendance, and retention (70%). These recommendations included suggestions to recruit specific students and reexamine or revisit recruitment and retention strategies. Examples of specific recommendations from reports include:

- Periodically review retention incentives with students to make sure they are of high interest and have an impact on continuing to improve the number of hours attended. Administer an enrichment interest survey to students at the start of programming in the fall with the goal of increasing student retention rates.
- Continue to recruit academically at-risk students from diverse backgrounds.
- Improve attendance by providing more high interest activities.

The next three most common areas of recommendations were related to expanding the range of program offerings and activities (66%); improving, or increasing data collection, use or evaluation (65%); and increasing or improving parent and family involvement and programming (62%).

Although these areas have been identified for improvement in previous years, the percentage of grantees stating these as areas of improvement did increase this year and the description of specific challenges were different as well. In previous years these areas of improvement were mentioned by about half of the grantees.

Regarding making changes to programming offerings and activities, some grantees stated that programming offerings needed to improve to engage more youth in their programming. Other grantees suggested program offerings and activities such as developing or improving partnerships with outside organizations that can provide better enrichment activities; or expanding offerings to include activities focused on social and emotional learning and a more diverse set of activities.

Even though the pandemic is over, and most grantees have returned to a "new normal," some grantees continue to struggle with attendance and staffing, issues they faced during the pandemic. All grantees have returned to in-person learning and some have incorporated pandemic-inspired shifts into their programs. For example, many grantees are now offering both virtual and in-person family engagement activities, an innovation that emerged from the pandemic. Grantees mentioned that offering virtual programming has helped in increasing family engagement, and therefore they continue to offer a hybrid version of family programming offerings and activities.

Table A4: Recommendations (N=161)

Recommendation	Grantees	
	Number	Percent
Address recruitment, attendance, and/or retention issues	113	70%
Expand or alter the range of program offerings and activities	106	66%
Improve/increase data collection, data use, and/or evaluation	104	65%
Improve/increase parent and family Involvement and programming	99	62%
Increase/Improve social-emotional program components	60	37%
Increase/improve partnerships and/or community outreach efforts	56	35%
Address program sustainability	53	33%
Increase staff professional development or provide professional development to address a particular need	53	33%
Increase student engagement efforts	51	32%
Increase/improve the connection between program and program staff and school day activities and/or teachers	32	20%
Adjust staff composition, hire staff, or address other issues through program staffing strategy	21	13%
Address Issues of student behavior in programs	16	10%
Focus on staff team building efforts	4	3%
No recommendations offered	3	2%