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NIU Outreach and Regional Development
Interactive Illinois Report Card Project

August 2006
This research was conducted at the request of and funding through the Illinois State Board of Education. The contents of the report reflect the conclusions drawn by the researchers based on the data and best research practices. The report does not represent the views or official position of Northern Illinois University.
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Executive Summary

In 2005-2006, the State of Illinois had 96 active 21st Century Community Learning Center grants awarded to 76 different organizations. The State of Illinois established seven objectives, which provided the foundation for this study:

Objective 1  Participants will demonstrate an increased involvement in school activities and in participating in other subject areas such as technology, arts, music, theater, and sports and other recreation activities.

Objective 2  Participants in the program will demonstrate increased academic achievement.

Objective 3  Participants in the program will demonstrate social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes.

Objective 4  The 21st CCLC programs will work toward services that benefit the entire community by including families of participants and collaborating with other agencies and non-profit organizations.

Objective 5  These programs will serve children and community members with the greatest needs for expanded learning opportunities.

Objective 6  21st CCLC program personnel will participate in professional development and training that will enable them to implement an effective program. Professional development activities must be aligned with the No Child Left Behind Act definitions and National Staff Development Council’s professional development standards.

Objective 7  21st CCLC program projects will use the funding most efficiently by coordinating and collaborating with state and other funding sources, agencies, and other community projects to supplement the program, and not supplant the funds, and to eventually become self-sustaining.

From these objectives, three areas of research emerged: evidence of meeting program objectives, quality of profile and performance data, and factors impacting program implementation and outcomes. Data on each grant was collected from January through July 2006 through a survey with each program administrator (response rate 75 out of 76) and comprehensive site visits to 12 sites and partial visits to 3 sites. In total, 29 percent of the awards were subjected to a site visit in 2005-2006. Site visits included interviews, focus groups, and/or written surveys with program staff, tutors, classroom teachers, school leaders, parents, and community partners. Other data sources included PPICS Annual Performance Reports, FRIS records, original applications and continued requests for funding, interviews with ISBE personnel, Illinois student performance data, and the Interactive Illinois Report Card.

The 21st CCLC sites in Illinois are addressing the seven objectives and showing progress towards achieving them. The program administrators are passionate about the programs and have the support of their partners. In general, stakeholders believe this is a necessary and effective program in helping to turn around the lives of students who, without this program, could fall prey to gangs, drugs, or chronic underachievement. Nearly three-fourths of the program staff, classroom teachers, and parents believe students are improving academically and sixty percent who needed to change behavior have done so. The most successful programs appear to be those that connect with the individual student and provide a rich curriculum composed of instructional activities that are meaningful, interesting, and hands-on. The following themes emerged from the research.
Focusing on the Student
Programs that most successfully helped students relied on close one-to-one contact with the student and on creating individualized instructional and supportive service plans for the student.

Recommendations
1. Each 21st CCLC site should maximize the amount of time students have to connect with a positive role model in a one-to-one or small group setting.
2. The 21st CCLC sites should continuously assess the skills of the staff and provide necessary professional development to ensure that all tutors and front-line personnel build positive relationships with the students.
3. The 15 to 20 percent of students showing a decline in behavior should be tracked to determine why they were not successful and if other interventions or changes in the 21st CCLC program could have helped them improve.
4. Add unique identifiers to the Illinois student achievement records to allow changes in academic performance to be tracked by student from year to year.
5. Grantees, schools, and ISBE need to ensure the students in 21st CCLC programs are coded as such on the student achievement records along with their level of participation. Provide any necessary professional development to accomplish this.
6. ISBE could create an instrument for 21st CCLC programs to rate themselves on quality factors, such as how well they engage individual students, how well they align instruction to the Illinois learning standards, and the effectiveness and types of pedagogical approaches used. Based on the ratings received, programs can be directed to appropriate professional development materials and opportunities to visit exemplary peers.

Recruiting and Retaining Students
Sites varied greatly in how students were recruited, selected, and retained by the program. The retention of students was related to the types of programming offered.

Recommendations
1. The 21st CCLC programs experiencing difficulty in recruiting and retaining students should reassess the programming offered to determine if it is meaningful and interesting to the students. The use of an external or peer evaluator should be considered.

Building Relationships
Building trusting relationships is critical to the success of the 21st CCLC program. As new programs quickly learned, there needed to be a strong cooperative relationship between the school and the 21st CCLC program. Building and maintaining this relationship takes time and persistent work.

Site administrators of the most successful 21st CCLC programs deliberately built strong relationships with all constituents. They were highly visible people who had open door policies and interacted daily with students, staff, school staff, and partners. The program administrators of programs with the most probable sustainability strategically approached legislators, sat on boards of potential partners, built community buy-in, and implemented aggressive public relation strategies. Sites ran the smoothest where the site coordinator had a good working relationship with a principal who strongly supported the program.

Recommendations
1. Because the roles of program administrator and site coordinator are critical to the success of the program, changes in leadership in either of these two positions can affect the effectiveness of the 21st CCLC. When such changes occur, customized professional development activities may be needed. ISBE may wish to consider providing exemplary 21st CCLC programs with additional funding to help centers in transition.
2. The 21st CCLC programs should strategically select and maintain partnerships that enhance their capacity to provide specific programming and services needed to best serve their students and families.

3. ISBE should continue to focus on linking 21st CCLC projects together, especially for professional development that might be more cost effective and as a way to build a network among the grantees. Peer visits should be encouraged and facilitated.

**Involving Parents**

The 21st CCLC projects that were most successful in engaging parents integrated them into planning processes and activities. In other words, activities and services were not provided for the parent; rather, the parent was an integral partner in the program.

**Recommendations**

1. The 21st CCLC programs in which parent involvement is low should assess how they could involve parents as partners and an integral part of the program. ISBE could help in the documentation of best practices.

2. Only those family/parent programs that have a clear academic focus and outcomes should be counted in the Annual Performance Report.

**Improving Sustainability Efforts**

The reality is that at the end of the five-year cycle many of the 21st CCLC projects may be greatly curtailed or die away. Two major ramifications of such a scenario are that 1) students in need of service will no longer be served and 2) the progress made in identifying effective approaches of meeting the needs of individual students; in implementing integrated, thematic approaches and newer pedagogical approaches; and in engaging parents as partners can be lost as well.

**Recommendations**

1. At this juncture, exemplary sites need resources to share what they have learned with newer sites to ensure the progress made so far will not be lost and to help newer sites build capacity quicker.

2. It would be appropriate in light of the findings of this formative evaluation to reevaluate the continuation for funding request process and criteria. Some sites are cutting services as the funding decreases instead of building sustainability. Most projects are well into the grant cycle before energies are directed toward sustainability. Sites falling behind should be counseled through professional development, one-on-one assistance from ISBE, and/or through mentoring by an exemplary site administrator.

3. Annual requests for continuation for funding should request grantees to specify the professional development activities anticipated during the next year and how these activities will help build staff capacity and help realize the program’s goals and outcomes.

4. PPICS data are in sustainability efforts; however, the accuracy, reliability, and validity of the data have not been established. For example, the methodology used in collecting survey data, steps taken to prevent selection bias, and the confidence intervals for interpretation are not reported.

5. The U.S. Department of Education and state boards of education should help 21st CCLC programs become sustainable through entrepreneurial, innovative approaches and/or additional funding.

In closing, the impact of the 21st CCLC program is difficult to measure but is tangible to those observing students in the program. Countless testimonial and documented “life-changing” stories come from each of the awarded projects. History can be used to predict what the outcome would have been for many of these students if they had not been in the program. The 21st CCLC program is creating a future of change, hope, and opportunity.
Acknowledgements

A project of this magnitude can be completed only with the assistance and collaboration of multiple agencies and individuals. The authors wish to thank the many staff members at the Illinois State Board of Education who provided time, guidance, and the data necessary to complete the analyses, especially Gail Meisner, Carol McCue, Paul Kren, Joe Banks, Andy Metcalf, and Myron Mason.

A special recognition goes to the administrators of the 96 grants and their staff members who kindly and enthusiastically allowed us to interview them and delve into what worked and what did not work at their after-school sites. Their valuable insights and reflective discussions provided in-depth information not readily collected via other methods.

We are especially grateful to the grant managers who coordinated on-site visits for Northern Illinois University researchers and consultants. The interviews with staff, parents, and/or community partners, as well as the observations of after-school sessions, allowed us to better understand the day-to-day operations, successes, and challenges of 21st Century Community Learning Center. We appreciated your gracious willingness and openness towards our visit, questions, surveys, and observations.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Alton Community SD 11</td>
<td>Karen Scott</td>
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<td>Jan Galbraith</td>
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<td>Central States SER, Jobs for Progress</td>
<td>Ariel Nievas</td>
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<td>Dolton West School District 148’</td>
<td>Dot Weathersby</td>
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<td>Lynn Gilbertsen</td>
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<td>Johna Schullian</td>
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<td>Illinois Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs</td>
<td>Thomas Finley</td>
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<td>Iroquois/Kankakee Counties ROE **</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeastern Illinois University</td>
<td>Henry Ricks</td>
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<td>Project Success of Vermillion County</td>
<td>Kevin Kegley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rock Island Public Schools</td>
<td>Maxine Russman</td>
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<td>Rockford Public Schools 205</td>
<td>Ed Hayden</td>
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<td>Urbana School District 116</td>
<td>Linda Gibbens</td>
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* In conjunction with Comprehensive School Reform site visit.
** Partially done, to be completed in September 2006

Lastly, the staff at Northern Illinois University and the technical consultants on this project deserve special commendations for their work and dedication to the project, especially Sherrie Taylor, Lisa Bergeron, Paulette Bowman, J. Bruce Austin, Timothy Butterfield, Emily Rollins, and John Lewis.
Program Evaluation Overview

The 21st Century Community Learning Center program (21st CCLC), authorized under Title IV, Part B, or the No Child Left Behind Act, provides funding to states to provide opportunities “for students and their families to continue to learn new skills and discover new abilities after the school day has ended.” In program year 2005-2006, Illinois had 96 active 21st CCLC awards. Because some organizations received awards in more than one competition (2003, 2004, and/or 2005), there are 76 different organizations with at least one active 21st CCLC award in program year 2005-2006. Appendix A lists all of the awards by organization.

The evaluation of 21st CCLC centers is mandated in the federal legislation both at the grantee and the state level. Awardees report annual data through the Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS) coordinated by Learning Point Associates. This information is summarized in the Annual Performance Report (APR) for each 21st CCLC award. Annual reports by award, an annual state summary, and miscellaneous other reports are available electronically at the Learning Point Associates website: http://www2.learningpt.org/ ppics. The most recent annual reports and individual APR reports are for program year 2004-2005.

This report summarizes the state-level formative evaluation of the 21st CCLC program in the State of Illinois during program year 2005-2006. While the PPICS data collected for the APRs and the state summaries provided by Learning Point Associates were used as a data source, the focus of this research went beyond the annual performance analyses to look in depth at what worked, where improvement is needed, where unanticipated benefits occurred, and what best practices appear to be emerging.

Statement of Problem

The State of Illinois identified seven measurable objectives for 21st CCLC programs, as presented in Exhibit 1. Each objective was linked to measurable performance indicators. These objectives and performance indicators provided the primary foundation for the first section of the formative evaluation, which consists of three sections:

I: Evidence of Meeting Program Objectives
II: Quality of Profile and Performance Data
III: Factors Impacting Program Implementation and Outcomes

Section II looked at the processes and data collected for annual performance reporting, and Section III aimed to identify the factors which facilitated or hindered the implementation of the 21st CCLC project and the realization of the intended outcomes.

Specific research questions, performance indicators, and data sources were identified for each of the three sections of the formative evaluation, as presented in Appendix B. A summary of specific research questions is shown in Exhibit 2.

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Exhibit 1  Illinois Objectives for 21st CCLC

Objective 1  Participants will demonstrate an increased involvement in school activities and in participating in other subject areas such as technology, arts, music, theater, and sports and other recreation activities.

Objective 2  Participants in the program will demonstrate increased academic achievement.

Objective 3  Participants in the program will demonstrate social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes.

Objective 4  The 21st CCLC programs will work toward services that benefit the entire community by including families of participants and collaborating with other agencies and non-profit organizations.

Objective 5  These programs will serve children and community members with the greatest needs for expanded learning opportunities.

Objective 6  21st CCLC program personnel will participate in professional development and training that will enable them to implement an effective program. Professional development activities must be aligned with the No Child Left Behind Act definitions and National Staff Development Council's professional development standards.

Objective 7  21st CCLC program projects will use the funding most efficiently by coordinating and collaborating with state and other funding sources, agencies, and other community projects to supplement the program, and not supplant the funds, and to eventually become self-sustaining.

Exhibit 2  Research Questions in Formative Evaluation

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<th>Questions</th>
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<td>Section I Evidence of Meeting Program Objectives</td>
<td>What effect does the program have on youth behaviors as measured by changes in classroom behavior, attendance rates, involvement in school activities, attitudes toward school and learning, disciplinary referrals, and dropout and graduation rates? Objectives 1 &amp; 3</td>
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<td>What impact does the program have on student achievement, including homework completion, classroom grades, promotions, and performance on the state assessments? Objective 2</td>
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<td>In what ways does the program serve the parents of the program participants? Is there increased involvement by participants' parents in regular school activities? Objective 4</td>
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<td>What is the impact of the collaborations with other agencies and non-profit organizations? Objective 4</td>
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<td>Did the RFP award process result in programs being awarded to serve the children and community members with the greatest need? Objective 5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Did the professional development activities provided through the State of Illinois to 21st CCLC program personnel adhere to No Child Left Behind Act definitions and the National Staff Development Council's professional development standards? Objective 6</td>
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<td>What are the current efforts toward providing for sustainability of the current programs, especially of the programs in their final year of funding? Objective 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section II Quality of Profile and Performance Data</td>
<td>Did the 21st CCLC program personnel find the data collection methods and evaluation resources, in particular PPICS, useful and relevant in documenting their programs and outcomes?</td>
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<td>Would additional data and/or data collection methods have helped document the outcomes of the programs and provided supplemental information for decision making?</td>
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<td>Section III Factors Impacting Program Implementation and Outcomes</td>
<td>To what extent are the grant recipients implementing the activities and evaluation plan proposed in their RFPs, as revised in their annual continuation requests?</td>
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<td>Which factors hinder and which factors facilitate reaching the objectives?</td>
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Methodology

The formative evaluation used a multi source, multi method approach that combined quantitative and qualitative data. Analyses included anecdotal, descriptive, and multivariate methodology. This approach enabled researchers to collect the myriad of data needed to address the breadth of the objectives and the organizational, programmatic, strategic, and implementation characteristics of the various sites.

Appendix B maps the performance indicators and measurement sources to specific research questions and provides more detail on the instruments used. The primary and secondary sources included the following:

Primary Sources
1. Telephone interview with each 21st CCLC award administrator and/or staff
   • Interviews conducted in February through June with 75 of the 76 (98.7%) organizations that received at least one award
   • Average length 58 minutes
   • Additional follow-up phones calls and surveys used to garner more in-depth information for selected organizations.
2. Telephone or in-person interview with four ISBE staff knowledgeable of the program (February through July).
3. The 15 organizations selected for site visits (29 percent of all of the 21st CCLC active awards in 2005-2006)
   a. Site Visits to 12 organizations receiving at least one 21st CCLC award (See Appendix A for awards selected for site visits)
      • Included 3 from southern Illinois, 3 from central Illinois, and 6 from Chicago and the collar counties; of these 6 grants, 4 were from Chicago
      • Conducted visits and surveying from February through July
      • Site visit interviews with the program administrator, on-site teachers and tutors, parents, and partners
      • Researchers asked for contact information of a selection of parents, classroom teachers, school administrators, and community partners for follow-up phone and/or mail surveys.
   b. Partial site visits to 3 programs in conjunction with a Comprehensive School Reform visit (See Appendix A for awards selected)
      • Interview of program director.

Secondary Sources
1. Original applications for funding and annual requests for continuation
   • Viewed at the ISBE offices in Springfield, Illinois.
2. ISBE Fiscal Program Reports
   • Obtained on-line from the FRIS system of ISBE.
3. Program documentation and professional development records from ISBE staff.
   • Latest performance data available was for program year 2004-2005 (http://ppics.learningpt.org/ppics/reports/2005APRPDFS/IL.PDF).
5. Interactive Illinois Report Cards
   • Available on-line from Northern Illinois University (http://iirc.niu.edu).
6. State assessment file of individual-level student assessment data for ISAT and PSAE with identifiers for students participating in 21st CCLC programs statewide
   • Provided by ISBE.

The research project was conducted during January through July 2006 by a team of NIU researchers and consultants. All organizations receiving a 21st CCLC award were called via telephone or by e-mail by NIU researchers. During this correspondence, appointments were established for a phone interview with the organization’s 21st CCLC program director and/or staff members who could best answer the interview questions, which were provided before the phone conversation as requested. Visitation dates were arranged for those sites selected for a site visit, and organizations were sent materials outlining the site visit protocols and requests for interviews and/or focus groups with the administrator of the grant, site personnel, teachers, tutors, school officials, community partners, and parents.

Interview and survey data were collected from 21st CCLC staff, school staff, and parents from the twelve major sites visited in spring 2006. Because the number of surveys returned varied from 5 to 125 per award, results were averaged by award, then by organization receiving the award, and then compiled. No statistical differences were found among the perceptions of the 21st CCLC administrators and staff, the teachers at the school, and the parents; thus, the data were aggregated by award.

The data from the primary and secondary sources were compiled by grant and summarized by research question. Two researchers independently reviewed the data and compared interpretations and codings. Any differences in interpretation were judicated through follow-up questions to the appropriate source.

In summarizing the results, the researchers did not search for causal or definitive findings. The limitations of the data did not warrant those types of interpretations: the multiple sources of data have varying degrees of reliability and only a selection of sites provided the more in-depth, on-site evaluative data. The research, however, was useful in providing formative information on the implementation and outcomes of the 21st CCLC program in Illinois.

From July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007, NIU researchers will conduct a formative evaluation for program year 2006-2007 and a summative evaluation for those awardees completing the five-year grant cycle. A secondary purpose of the 2005-2006 formative evaluation was to assess the data sources for accuracy and usability in more complex multivariate analyses; to identify factors to pursue in more detail as primary conditions for success in the summative evaluation; and to establish baseline data for the newer awards.
Summary of Findings

The research findings are reported in parallel to the three sections of research:

I: Evidence of Meeting Program Objectives
II: Quality of Profile and Performance Data
III: Factors Impacting Program Implementation and Outcomes.

As a caveat, this program evaluation included open-ended survey instruments to collect data from all awardees and case study methodology for the site visits and follow-up surveys. Program administrators were asked to identify characteristics, findings, and conclusions that were the most important; therefore, the percentages reported for these findings do not represent the total domain of all programs with that characteristic. Likewise, case studies cannot be generalized to the total domain; however, the data provides a richer context to help understand the overall findings.

Evidence of Meeting Program Objectives

Seven questions were used to assess how well the Illinois 21st CCLC projects are meeting the objectives established for the 21st CCLC program by the State of Illinois. This report concentrates on the data collected during spring 2006 as part of the formative evaluation. Appendix C provides information on the latest annual performance report available from Learning Point Associates, which provides profile and performance data.

The following sections on each of the seven research questions include the question, data on the performance indicators, and then a summary of the themes found in the aggregation of the data on the performance indicators and any pertinent recommendations.

Student Behavior and Participation

1. What effect does the program have on youth behaviors as measured by changes in classroom behavior, attendance rates, involvement in school activities, attitudes toward school and learning, disciplinary referrals, and dropout and graduation rates? Objectives 1 & 3

This research question addressed both the first and third Illinois objectives, which related to student behavior and attitudes. The sources of evidence included the interviews and surveys of the program administrators, site staff, teachers at the school, and parents.

Changes in Classroom Behavior

The survey asked respondents to rate the degree to which students’ behavior changed, using a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 being “significant decline” and 7 being “significant improvement.” In addition, respondents could indicate that the students “did not need to improve.” The results in Exhibit 2 represent the levels of improvement indicated for only those students who needed to improve.

Even though 60.5 percent of the staff indicated students improved in “behaving in class,” over one-fifth reported students had a decline in behavior. The twelve sites are a limited sample; however, the results are similar to those in the State of Illinois 2005 Annual
Performance Report of all sites,\(^3\) in which 58.9 percent of the teachers indicated an improvement in students’ classroom behavior and 15.12 percent noted a decline.

Exhibit 2  Staff Perceptions of Student Improvement in Behavior and Performance

![Bar chart showing staff perceptions of student improvement in behavior and performance.]

Source: Compilation of Staff and Teacher Surveys from Site Visits, Spring 2006

Attendance Rates
The site survey data from 2006 and the 2005 Annual Performance Report for Illinois indicate that more than half of the teachers and staff thought 21st CCLC students improved their day-school classroom attendance (2006 data - 52.8% versus 2005 data - 57.9%).

Attendance in the 21st CCLC program is related to classroom attendance for many of the projects: students must be in the classroom during the day to be eligible to attend the after-school activities. About 15 percent of all 21st CCLC program administrators mentioned that student attendance was irregular due to competing programming after school with SES, sports, clubs, and other activities, especially at the junior high and high school level.\(^4\) Another 15 percent of the program administrators mentioned that students often do not want to go home.

Programs with consistently high enrollments over the past two years\(^5\) were examined in more detail. The program administrators of these programs listed the following as their two primary factors associated with program success: 1) ensuring programming is

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\(^4\) NIU, Interview of Program Directors of 21st CCLC Awards, Spring 2006.

\(^5\) Attendance rates of over 85% during the past two years.
meaningful, active, and interesting and 2) building relationships with students and parents.\textsuperscript{6}

\textbf{Involvement in School Activities}

This formative evaluation did not evaluate this indicator. Ten program administrators were asked how this indicator should be assessed, and they recommended asking the students or parents. One program director cautioned that increased involvement could be directly tied to the increasing number of opportunities available to the students. Another pointed out that involvement in 21st CCLC or SES often prohibited student involvement in other activities due to scheduling issues.

\textbf{Attitudes toward School and Learning}

Program administrators, teacher/tutors, and parents interviewed gave numerous anecdotal examples of how participation in a 21st CCLC program completely changed a student’s attitude and life. Over 83 percent of the program administrators mentioned the impact the program has had on at least one individual student. One 21st CCLC project has summarized students' stories as testimonials on a handout that is used for promoting the program and providing documentation for procuring additional funding.

\textbf{Disciplinary Referrals}

Some students in the 21st CCLC projects have had previous interaction with the judicial system. Three program administrators mentioned the lower recidivism rates associated with attending after-school programs.

Program administrators and teaching staff reported fewer disciplinary referrals and behavior problems; however, over half of the program administrators mentioned that the improvements might be attributable to school-wide implementation of behavior programs, such as PBIS, which are also consistently applied in the 21st CCLC activities.\textsuperscript{7}

\textbf{Dropout Rates and Graduation Rates}

These indicators will be evaluated during the summative evaluation in 2006-2007.

\textsuperscript{6} NIU, Interview of Program Directors of 21st CCLC Awards, Spring 2006.
\textsuperscript{7} NIU, Teacher/Tutor Interviews at 15 site visits, Interview of Program Directors of 21st CCLC Awards, Spring 2006.
Discussion and Recommendations on Student Behavior, Participation, and Attitudes (Objectives 1 and 3)

When the data are aggregated and weighted from the surveyed perceptions of 21st CCLC site personnel, classroom teachers, and parents, it appears about 60 percent of the 21st CCLC students who need to change behaviors are, indeed, showing improvement. On the other hand, about 15 to 20 percent of the participants are showing declines.

Many of the program administrators, teachers, tutors, parents, and community partners mentioned the role the 21st CCLC played in providing a safe haven for students and as showing them an alternative lifestyle. Helping students avoid gangs and drugs was a primary goal. It is anticipated that without the 21st CCLC program, significant numbers of the students would fall even further through the cracks and enter a gang/drug lifestyle.

All stakeholder groups had numerous examples of the impact the 21st CCLC program had on an individual student. Further analyses were conducted on the anecdotal testimonials and the program administrator surveys for those programs with the highest ratings on improved student behavior and improvements in attitude. Both analyses indicated that the students who make the most progress are those who feel connected to the program, most often through a strong, positive relationship with one or more staff members. The students, also, were in programs with a rich curriculum composed of instructional activities that were meaningful, interesting, and hands-on.

Recommendations

Building strong positive relationships with individual students takes skilled tutors and low staff-to-student ratios. Some sites had large turnover rates of tutors or the majority of their tutors are volunteers who are from a college or high school. Sites should maximize the amount of time students have to connect with a positive role model in a one-on-one or small group setting. In addition, sites should continuously assess the skills of the staff and provide necessary professional development to ensure all tutors and front-line personnel build positive relationships with the students.

The 21st CCLC programs experiencing difficulty in recruiting and retaining students should reassess the programming offered to determine if it is meaningful and interesting to the student. The use of an external or peer evaluator should be considered.

Why are 15 to 20 percent of the students showing declines in behavior? These students should be tracked to determine why they were not successful and if other interventions or changes in the 21st CCLC program could have helped them improve.
## Student Achievement

### Objective 2

2. What impact does the program have on student achievement, including homework completion, classroom grades, promotions, and performance on the state assessments? Objective 2

This research question was addressed through the project administrator interviews; interviews and surveys of center personnel, classroom teachers, and parents; and an analysis of the State of Illinois student performance data.

### Homework Completion

Almost all program administrators mentioned homework assistance as a component of their 21st CCLC project. About one-fourth identified one of the key outcomes of the program was that students go to school prepared to learn because they have their homework completed. The survey of staff, teachers, and tutors at the site visit locations confirms this finding--those surveyed indicated nearly 70 percent of the students who needed to improve actually did improve their completion of homework (Exhibit 2). This is comparable to the finding in the 2005 Illinois Annual Performance Report.

Completing homework, by itself, does not automatically result in improved academic performance by the student. The type of assistance received in completing the assignments and the skills developed through doing the assignment are two factors that could greatly affect student academic performance. Too much help could actually hinder learning.

### Classroom Grades

About one-fourth of the program administrators surveyed (n=18) mentioned that the improvement of classroom grades is a major outcome of the project. In the 2005 Illinois Annual Performance Report (Appendix C), less than half of the students in the program increased their grade in reading (44.8%) or math (39.2%) by a half grade or more.

Given the fact that grading scales and criteria differ between and within schools, this is not an unusual finding. Grades are complex measures based on a multitude of factors.

### Promotions

This indicator will be assessed in the summative evaluation.

### Academic Performance

As shown in Exhibit 2, over three-fourths of the staff, teachers, and parents surveyed in spring 2006 as part of the site visits indicated that students in the 21st CCLC program improved in terms of academic performance. The 2005 Illinois Annual Performance Report found that 72 percent of the teachers surveyed felt similarly.

The students are often referred to the program because they are at-risk of failure. Anecdotal evidence of how students improve academically while in the 21st CCLC program is abundant, mostly through perceptual data. The question becomes one of magnitude--did the 21st CCLC participants increase sufficiently to equal their peers who are not attending the 21st CCLC program?
State assessment data for the 2005 ISAT and PSAE exams were provided by ISBE. The data identifies students who participated in 21st CCLC programming. Data for those schools with at least one 21st CCLC participant were aggregated to determine if there were any statistically significant differences \((p < .01)\) between the performance of students in the 21st CCLC program and those in the school at the same grade who were not in the program.

There were no statistically significant differences in third and fifth grade reading scores or third grade math. The 21st CCLC students had a higher mean math score in fifth grade; however, their peers outperformed them in eighth grade reading and math and in eleventh grade math. Thus, it appears that the 21st CCLC students are narrowing the achievement gap in the lower grade levels.

Exhibit 3  Comparison of 2005 Reading Scores on Illinois State Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Students NOT in 21st CCLC</th>
<th>Students in 21st CCLC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>Mean Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>6,410</td>
<td>155.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>6,919</td>
<td>152.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth</td>
<td>10,062</td>
<td>153.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh</td>
<td>1,871</td>
<td>154.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibit 4  Comparison of 2005 Math Scores on Illinois State Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Students NOT in 21st CCLC</th>
<th>Students in 21st CCLC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>Mean Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>6,418</td>
<td>158.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>6,927</td>
<td>160.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth</td>
<td>10,083</td>
<td>156.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh</td>
<td>1,872</td>
<td>151.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers examined the performance data for each 21st CCLC award. It was noted that some of the 21st CCLC awards included schools for which no students on the ISAT (grades 3,4,7, or 8) or PSAE were flagged as 21st CCLC participants. Schools did not have sufficient numbers of IMAGE or IAA data which would account for the missing data.

Further analyses were not completed due to the missing data. Follow-up conversations with selected program administrators revealed that students were not flagged due to a variety of reasons: the 21st CCLC sites did not tell schools who was attending the after-school sessions and some schools had limited or no provisions in their software to flag the data for the submission to ISBE.
Other Findings on Student Achievement

The 21st CCLC program administrators provided some insights into what the centers are doing to increase student achievement.

- When program administrators and staff were asked to identify the best practices in increasing students’ academic performance, the two most noted answers concerned improving pedagogy and coordinating the “day” school with the 21st CCLC program.
- Improved pedagogy was noted most often by community-based providers, whereas school districts were most likely to see the alignment with the “day” school as most important.
- When asked to describe the “improved pedagogy,” respondents pointed to the individualized instruction provided through tutoring, increased use of differentiated instruction, and using approaches to reduce the ratio of teacher/tutor to student.
- Improved pedagogy also included using more hands-on activities.
- About 8 percent of the program administrators mentioned that they provided professional development activities for their staff on understanding learning styles.
- Coordinating the “day” school and 21st CCLC program most often involved communication of what happened in the day, any special concerns with individual students, and information on the types of academic problems with which the students may need help.
- During the past year, ISBE provided professional development activities to the 21st CCLC organizations on how to progress beyond homework assistance activities and implement focused academic instruction tied to the Illinois State Standards that will build skills sets needed by students if schools are to make AYP. This academic focus was new to some of the older community-based organizations. In 2006-2007, the training through ISBE funding will look at how to integrate the 21st CCLC project into the school improvement plan.
- Students in the 21st CCLC programs often were referred to the program because they were not succeeding in the traditional classroom. In the before- and after-school programs, teachers are trying new techniques and approaches to see what will work with individual students. For example, credit recovery programs are used especially in high schools to keep students progressing towards graduation.
- One school, as part of their Comprehensive School Reform grant, implemented the Kegan model in which English-speaking and ESL students and high- and low-achieving students are grouped to work on problems. This approach was carried over to the 21st CCLC sites, too.
- One 21st CCLC program with students from kindergarten through grade 12 used cross-age programming to allow older students to mentor younger students, thus putting the older student into a position of success.
- Some programs aim to involve students in projects to increase higher level thinking skills. One program uses an “awareness, analyze, action” approach. In one thematic unit students researched the impact of the AIDS disease by examining the statistics related to people their age. The unit included writing brochures and walking in the AIDS Walk.
## Discussion and Recommendations on Student Achievement

Changes in student academic achievement can be assessed in various ways, such as test score data and perceptual data. From a research perspective, the best measures of changes in academic performance are those that show the change of performance of an individual student between two points in time. The 2005 Illinois data, however, did not provide this type of analysis. First, not all 21st CCLC participants were flagged in the state assessment data; any conclusive statements concerning the ISAT, PSAE, IMAGE, and IAA assessments would be inappropriate. Second, in 2005, there was no unique identifier on the student record to allow comparison in performance by individual student from year to year. The 2005 state data is of minimal value in assessing changes in academic performance of students in the 21st CCLC program.

The perceptual data strongly indicates that students are progressing academically. Over three-fourths (76.3%) of classroom teachers, 21st CCLC staff, and program administrators reported that the 21st CCLC students who needed to improve academically are doing so.

All of the programs for which data were collected had a focus on academic improvement. Tutoring, whether one-on-one or in small groups, was a major component of the majority of programs. Numerous sites used individualized instruction, computer-based instruction, and differentiated instruction to provide programming to individual students. Because each site has a program customized to meet the unique needs of the students and the community it serves, there is great diversity in programming and process across the sites.

A common theme among the program administrators was the importance of communication between the school and the 21st CCLC program. The first year of the project was often one of building trust among the school personnel and the various partners. For some sites, trust is still an issue, and there is little routine conversation between the two programs.

The interviews with the program administrators and the site visits suggest that there is a continuum for interaction between the “day” school and the 21st CCLC. After routine conversations are established for facility and operational issues, the next steps appear to be coordination of content covered, coordination of instruction for individual students, and finally coordination of strategic planning, and the 21st CCLC is seen as an integral part of the school. Sites which progress along the continuum had a strong site leader who worked well with the school and a school administrator who valued the 21st CCLC program as a critical part of the school.

### Recommendations

Documenting student achievement through test score data is problematic at this time. Unique identifiers should be added to Illinois student records to allow changes in academic performance to be tracked by student from year to year.

Each site needs to communicate with the school those students who participate in the 21st CCLC and their level of participation. Schools and 21st CCLC need to ensure the students are coded on the student’s state record by level of participation. ISBE may
need to offer professional development activities to help these entities provide this data in an accurate, timely manner.

Because the roles of program administrator and site coordinator are critical to the success of the program, changes in leadership in either of these two positions can impact the effectiveness of the 21st CCLC. When such changes occur, customized professional development activities may be needed. ISBE may wish to consider providing exemplary 21st CCLC programs with additional funding to help centers in transition.

In general, community-based programs have more difficulty in understanding how to focus instruction on the critical skills in the Illinois learning standards, and school-based programs have more difficulty in implementing newer pedagogical approaches. Many of the sites could benefit with learning more about how exemplary sites are realizing student academic improvement through focusing on the Illinois learning standards and using newer, research-based pedagogy. Interviews with the program administrators indicate that best-practice sessions or searchable databases are not enough for struggling sites. Sometimes they do not realize they are struggling or they are struggling for survival and do not take time to use the resources. ISBE may wish to create an instrument for programs to rate themselves on how they align instruction to the Illinois learning standards and the types of pedagogical approaches used. Based on the ratings received, programs can be directed to appropriate professional development materials and opportunities to visit exemplary peers.

Parent Involvement

3. In what ways does the program serve the parents of the program participants? Is there increased involvement by participants’ parents in regular school activities? 
Objective 4

The lack of parent involvement is a common concern of school systems across Illinois. This is true even for schools receiving awards for exemplary academic improvement and achievement.8

During the telephone and on-site surveys, program administrators described the enrichment and support services provided to the families of the participants. The approaches used to involve parents ranged greatly across the 21st CCLC programs. At one end of the continuum, activities paralleled traditional approaches described by one program administrator as “build it and they will come.” Activities are planned and parents are invited via letters to attend the event. Some events are attended well; others are not. This approach was found more often in school districts and newer not-for-profit organizations.

At the other end of the continuum were 21st CCLC programs that have found ways to have active involvement of parents as integral members of the decision-making process and as necessary components of the program. Older, well-established, community-

based centers and organizations were more likely to be at this end of the continuum. These organizations, also, tended to have more established programming offered through the center or other on-going partnerships established before the 21st CCLC program.

Parent Perception of the Program
Data collected from parents from the sites visits revealed that parents vary in their expectations of the 21st CCLC programs. A significant portion of parents look to the 21st CCLC to help their child with homework and ensure that it is completed. This finding was correlated to parents with limited English ability and/or lower levels of education. The majority of parents (76%) did not see the 21st CCLC as important in meeting their own personal needs.

Approaches Used to Involve Parents
Over 40 percent of the program administrators interviewed mentioned “lack of parent involvement” as a critical factor hindering the project. The 21st CCLC sites have tried various approaches to engage more parents and have found varying degrees of success.

The 21st CCLC project administrators who reported the highest levels of parental involvement mentioned the following strategies as being most helpful in engaging parents:

- Provide free ESL (21%), GED (16%), computer classes (16%), and college classes (3%) at locations convenient for the parents. One center moved the GED classes from the high school to the elementary school so parents would be more comfortable in attending the classes. On the other hand, some sites have not been successful in attracting parents to GED classes.
- Involve parents in the planning and chaperoning of field trips, especially to places they would like to attend.
- Family events are popular, especially if they involve making or doing something. Several sites have had tremendous success with cooking classes (21%) or wellness activities (17%).
- It is harder to attract parents to activities once the student reaches the middle school age. Saturday programming was reported by a few sites as being successful in attracting the parents of older students. Parents of teens were interested in activities on parenting and helping their child get into post-secondary education, e.g., how to complete financial aid forms or how to select a college.
- Some programs hire parents or involve them as critical volunteers in the program.
- Family liaisons were noted by two program administrators as the critical requirement in securing parent involvement and in identifying what they need.
- Personal phone calls to the parents inviting them to an event, daily conversations at time of child pick-up, and written material (multiple-language if needed) sent to the home were noted as successful ways to increase communication with parents.
Parent Involvement at School
This indicator was not assessed in the formative evaluation.

Referrals to Other Services
Most of the program administrators reported that they already had referral connections in place through previous programming, which they tapped into for the 21st CCLC project. This was especially true for community not-for-profits and public school systems. The 21st CCLC project, however, did afford the opportunity to expand the number and types of referral resources, especially in projects with many partners. One program director described the 21st CCLC program as the “center of a web of services to help the students and their families not fall between the cracks.”

Discussion and Recommendations on Parent Involvement

The 21st CCLC program is to benefit the community by including the parents of participants in activities and increase parental involvement in school activities. Interviews with parents, however, revealed a disconnect in expectations. Significant numbers of parents expect the 21st CCLC program to ensure that students complete homework assignments and to provide other engaging programming. About three-fourths of the parents did not expect the 21st CCLC center to involve them.

The 21st CCLC programs in which the parents had a different view were most likely established community or neighborhood centers, which had well-established family services programming. They were also the sites that involved parents as an integral part of the programming.

Given these scenarios, the parent involvement continuums appear to have at one end a philosophy that the 21st CCLC program and the school provide services to the parent; most parents do not feel the need to be involved. At the other end of the continuums there is a philosophy that parents are part of the programming and it is done “with them” and not “for them,” and the parents feel that the program is important to the family.

Exhibit 5 shows the continuums. Organizations are at a disconnect if they believe they need to provide programming “for” families but significant numbers of the parents feel that they do not need to be served. The 21st CCLC programs in which the families are partners have the highest levels of parent satisfaction with the program.

Recommendations
The 21st CCLC programs in which parent involvement is low should assess how they could involve parents as a partner and integral part of the program. For some sites, a successful approach was to involve a few key parents who became advocates for the program and recruited other parents. Other sites used strategic communication plans to help parents change their view of the program from a “student” program to a “family” program.

The 21st CCLC programs should design programs for families which have a clear academic focus and outcomes. Only the attendance at these types of activities should be counted in the Annual Performance Report.
Collaborations with Partners

4. What is the impact of the collaborations with other agencies and non-profit organizations? Objective 4

According to the Illinois 21st CCLC 2005 Annual Performance Report (Appendix C), partners provided a variety of services, goods, and staffing for the center. The primary role was one of providing the enhancements and enrichment activities (Exhibit 6).

The interview and survey data, however, point out that many of the 21st CCLC programs have only a few significant partners though more are listed in the APR. Those sites with many strong partners were likely to have had established relationships with their partners before the 21st CCLC program was funded.
Interviews and surveys of the community partners (n=25) conducted in January through July 2006 asked these organizations to identify why they were involved. The majority of the partners saw this as a way of serving the students and community. They felt the education and enrichment activities they provide are important. Others saw their involvement as a way of expanding their programs or obtaining access to a population they wanted to serve better. Museum and library administrators talked about how important it is for them to have a presence in schools. For a few organizations, providing services on-site at schools or community centers allowed them to gain critically needed facility space.

During one site visit, a focus group interview was held with seven representatives of community partners of the 21st CCLC projects. From their perspective, the way in which the school district approached the 21st CCLC program resulted in stronger, on-going relationships among the not-for-profit sectors of the region. The school district took the lead academic role in the 21st CCLC project. Potential lead partners that would work directly with a school to provide enrichment programming would be needed. The superintendent invited representatives from regional not-for-profit organizations to several open discussions about the not-for-profit capacity in the region and the 21st CCLC opportunity. A community foundation that was well-respected in the region established an RFP process for the school district to use to identify lead partners. The agencies found this a fair and objective process. To this day, the school holds monthly meetings with the not-for-profits in the region to exchange information. These agencies, along with the mayor, other local leaders, and school district personnel, are the After School Achievement Program Sustaining Group, which is working with a public relations expert to raise funds for the continuation of the 21st CCLC projects.

Another approach taken by large school districts is to publish procedural manuals for their partners and/or books listing resources accessible to the 21st CCLC sites.
Discussion and Recommendations for Community Partners

In general, the 21st CCLC programs have valuable working relationships with their partners, and students benefit by the expanding programming possible through these relationships. Program administrators provided numerous anecdotal accounts of how the 21st CCLC programs rely on partners and on how they could not survive without these partnerships.

Grants vary greatly, however, on how partners are used. Some sites appeared to use partners in a limited way.

Recommendations
The 21st CCLC program should strategically select and maintain partnerships that enhance the capacity of the grantee to provide the specific programming and services needed to best serve its students and families. It appears that some grants engage in activities because a partner was available and not because the activity supports the vision and mission of the center.

Serving Schools with Greatest Need

5. Did the RFP award process result in programs being awarded to serve the children and community members with the greatest need? Objective 5

A competitive RFP process was used for the 21st CCLC program. The process and eligibility requirements are documented on the ISBE website. Only those proposals meeting the documented criteria were considered for an award. The proposals undergo a peer review process in which three reviewers independently rate the proposals using the criteria articulated in the RFP. A review of the program files confirmed that the peer ratings are used to prioritize the proposals for funding and the funding is to the proposals in the ranked order.

Selection and recruitment policies for participants vary from site to site, ranging from open admissions to very strict criteria based on income, test scores, grades, and/or behavioral or learning challenges.

Discussion and Recommendations on Serving Schools with Greatest Need

The RFP and rating process used by ISBE results in the awarding of programs that meet the funding criteria. The recommendations of the peer process are used in awarding the grants.

No Recommendations
Professional Development

6. Did the professional development activities provided through the State of Illinois to 21st CCLC program personnel adhere to No Child Left Behind Act definitions and the National Staff Development Council’s professional development standards?

Objective 6

Four ISBE consultants are assigned awards to monitor and provide assistance. In addition, ISBE provides mandatory staff development workshops in the fall and spring. Topics include updates on the 21st CCLC program, fiscal information, training on the data collection process, how to improve communication between the partners and schools, and on best practices across the state. Special sessions are dedicated to new award recipients. Learning Point Associates is contracted to assist in these workshops, which are held across the state at three locations. ISBE staff, also, keep program administrators informed of national conferences of interest. The ISBE actions and activities were found to comply with the NCLB and NSDC standards.

In addition to the mandated professional development, individual 21st CCLC arranged for staff development. In fact, only 13 percent of the organizations used only the mandated professional development. Program administrators were asked to describe the most valuable professional development afforded to their staffs. Nearly one-fourth of the centers described extensive in-house training, 21 percent mentioned recognized external experts, 11 percent rated Regional Office of Education programs as most valuable, and 11 percent mentioned sending staff to national conferences.

The most common barrier to professional development was that the timing of training was not good (11%).

Several administrators mentioned going on valuable peer site visits to observe how day-to-day operations are done at other sites and how common problems are addressed.

Program directors offered ideas on professional development topics of interest. Some of the most mentioned topics are listed below. Additional information is in the Addendum.

Exhibit 7 Professional Development Topics

- “Road to Sustainability” by National Center for Community Education
- Dealing with bullies
- Drug recognition training
- Grant writing
- How other sites prepare individualized programs for students
- How to connect the “day” school to the 21st CCLC programming
- How to establish benchmarks for measuring improvement
- How to identify learning and behavior problems
- How to increase participation
- Research on best practices
- Teaching learning strategies
- Understanding Latino culture
- Understanding poverty
- Using data for continuous improvement of individualized instruction
Discussion and Recommendations on Professional Development

The training provided by ISBE met all of the quality standards. Individual 21st CCLC programs offered an array of professional development opportunities to their staffs; however, some offered none beyond what was mandated. Many of the exemplary sites requested more information on how other sites were handling day-to-day operational challenges and programming.

Recommendations

Annual requests for continuation for funding should request grantees to specify the professional development activities anticipated during the next year and how these activities will help realize the goals and outcomes. This information can be used by ISBE to identify topics for the mandated training and to help link grants together where joint training might be more cost effective and be a way to build a network among grants.

The timing of mandated training should be carefully considered. Late spring meetings can conflict with end-of-school activities and be difficult to attend.

Sustainability

7. What are the current efforts toward providing for sustainability of the current programs, especially of the programs in their final year of funding? Objective 7

The sustainability of the sites and the current level of programming are of grave concern to the awardees. Each award has a sustainability plan; however, on average, the majority of the programs do not begin thinking about sustainability until late in year three of the grant. Nearly two-thirds of the 2003 grants do not have any sustainable funding identified at this time.

One school administrator described the situation as “new ground with a steep learning curve.” He is sharpening many business-oriented skills and working to engage his staff in entrepreneurial approaches.

The exhibit below lists the most common approaches mentioned by program personnel in the interview and surveys. It does not reflect how many are actually using the approach.
### Exhibit 8 Most Common Approaches to Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th># of Awardees Mentioning Using Approach (n=75)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replace funding with unidentified alternative sources</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other grants and foundations</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase awareness of program in the community through public relations, marketing, newspaper articles, etc.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use grant writer</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reallocate other Title or federal funds</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategically place community leaders on advisory committees so they can spread the word about the program</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use partners to build base of support within the community</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awardees with multiple sources of income plan on integrating and leveraging their resources, even more than they do currently</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get funding from local government</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use other resources in the center</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the website strategically to solicit funds and build case</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve politicians</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement fees</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish word-of-mouth campaigns</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become an SES provider</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create barter programs with partners, facility for materials</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement a citywide initiative</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed a referendum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in TIF</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create federation of schools</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Discussion and Recommendations on Sustainability

Only a few grants have feasible sustainability arrangements in place. At least twelve have professional grant writers working on finding new funding streams. The programs which have been the most successful in identifying sustainable funding are relying on their parent organization, community center, or school district to find the funding to continue the program. See additional information in the Addendum.

Recommendations

The annual continuation request for funding asks grantees to outline the steps being taken toward sustainability. Grants which are not making progress on their sustainability plan or have cut services to accommodate the decreases in funding should be counseled. The counseling could be in the form of professional development activities, one-on-one with an ISBE staff member, and/or through mentoring by an exemplary site.

The majority of sustainability plans are not entrepreneurial or innovative. Professional development activities and guidance is needed to help these grantees think “out of the box.”
Quality of Profile and Performance Data

Two research questions were used to evaluate the process and quality of data collected on the 21st CCLC program.

1. Did the 21st CCLC program personnel find the data collection methods and evaluation resources, in particular PPICS, useful and relevant in documenting their programs and outcomes?

Over one-third of the program administrators or their appropriate staff member (37.3%) made a favorable comment about the ease of use of the PPICS system, and 8 percent commended the help desk. On the other hand, 18.7% made a negative comment, most often describing the system as “tedious” or “repetitive.”

Suggestions to improving the system included
- Making text boxes less constricting; need more space
- Fix glitch that calculates the change from A to A- inaccurately
- Have monthly collections
- Provide updates and reports in a more timely manner

2. Would additional data and/or data collection methods have helped document the outcomes of the programs and provided supplemental information for decision-making?

Over 10 percent of the program administrators mentioned that the amount of data available to them is overwhelming and not in useable formats.

About one-fourth of the respondents mentioned the most useful data to their program is pre- and post-tests given to students to measure incremental improvement and also used to prescribe interventions.

Nearly 20 percent advocated for the use of individual progress reports on individual students as the most valid data to use in evaluating the program. Others proposed multimedia evaluations, portfolios, and authenticated testimonials as methods to document the outcomes of the 21st CCLC program.

About 11 percent questioned the usefulness of self-report surveys, which are based on perceptions. These respondents would like to see data required that measures changes made by individual students within a school year through reliable and valid tests of academic skills and self-esteem.

The 21st CCLC programs serve those students who are not succeeding in the traditional classroom for a myriad of reasons. Many of the programs include students with varying degrees of behavioral challenges and learning disabilities. Students with more severe afflictions often drop from the program because the 21st CCLC sites do not have the services they need. Program evaluation data needs to be sufficient to analyze what works for which students and what does not work. This approach involves tracking
individual student progress and the interventions provided to that student. The current data sets and methodologies do not support this type of analyses.

One site is trying to implement such a system through an in-house Microsoft Access integrated database to serve the reporting requirements of multiple grants and to coordinate the RIN numbers assigned by DHS and DCFS to track what programs in which an individual child is involved.

Over 20 percent of the program administrators mentioned using auxiliary data systems created to track individual student performance.

One program director pointed to the need for more asset mapping data and “needs assessments with meaning.”

---

**Discussion and Recommendations for Quality of Data**

Data is collected for different levels of evaluation. PPICS is a data system that provides reports aggregated at the site, grant, and state level. The descriptive reports do not afford the grantee the ability to delve into detailed analyses to answer questions such as, “Who does the grant serve well? Who does it not serve? Which strategies work on which student?” Because these are the types of questions needed for a comprehensive evaluation, during the coming year the data collection instruments and methodology for collecting summative data will be refined to provide more detailed, reliable and valid data for the summative evaluation.

In interviewing staff who enter data into the PPICS system, it became obvious that not all grantees are entering comparable data. A perusal of the 2005 APRs showed that discrepancies in data existed, and there was no way to determine the reliability or validity of the perceptual data. Nor was the research methodology used to garner the perceptual data documented. See Addendum for additional evaluation information.

Staff members at the 21st CCLC sites need data at a different level than that provided in PPICS. More specifically, some sites are using pre- and post-tests of students throughout the year to measure success and to determine academic interventions. Nearly one-fifth voiced disapproval over the PPICS system and made recommendations on how to improve it.

**Recommendations**

The PPICS data should be perused for discrepancies in reporting, provide information on the methodologies used to collect the data, and include reliability and validity information, including confidence intervals.
Factors Impacting Program Implementation and Outcomes

Researchers collected data across the multiple sources in order to assess the level of implementation of the grant and to identify factors that helped or hindered the implementation of the program and realization of the outcomes. The Addendum has additional information on programming, evaluation, professional development, and sustainability.

1. To what extent are grant recipients implementing the activities and evaluation plan proposed in their RFPs, as revised in their annual continuation requests?

Implementation
As would be expected, 21st CCLC program administrators are making adjustments during implementation. The most common adjustments are changing the activities or programming and the changing of hours to better meet the needs of the students and their parents. Adding morning hours is the most common adjustment, followed by moving afternoon hours to be early evening hours, in which case students can attend other activities or go home and then return for the 21st CCLC programming.

Some programs decreased the number of sites due to closing of schools, inactivity at the site, and/or lack of coordination between the school and the after-school program.

All sites in which an interview with the program administrator was completed appear to be implementing appropriate activities; however, sites ranged from primarily homework assistance centers to holistic programming around integrated themes designed to develop students’ skill sets.

Evaluation
Program administrators described wide variations in the implementation of their evaluation plans. Over one-fourth use external evaluators and over 15 percent use grant writer/evaluators to document the outcomes of their project. About 10 percent described a comprehensive, integrated evaluation process in which data is used for substantive project planning and improvement. On the other hand, over 10 percent of the awardees barely collect the minimum PPICS data and do not use it for program improvement.

2. Which factors hinder and which factors facilitate reaching the objectives?

Interviews with the 75 program administrators included questions on which factors hindered and which factors facilitated successful outcomes of the 21st CCLC project. Two raters independently coded the factors into the categories. The categorizations were compared; differences were investigated and judicated by contacting the appropriate 21st CCLC program for clarification. The percentages below reflect those awardees who offered the factor in an open-ended question; it does not reflect the domain of those actually using the approach.

The most cited facilitating factors revolved around being student-focused.
### Exhibit 9 Factors Mentioned Most Often as Facilitating Positive Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitating Factor</th>
<th># of Respondents Mentioning Factor as Important (N=75)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students form strong relationships with the program staff, and these relationships lead to motivation to attend the session and the ability of staff to identify the programs and services a students needs the most</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide individualized instruction through tutors</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use classroom teachers to staff center</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a safe haven</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep staffing to student ratios low</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives and rewards</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff is bilingual in ESL environments</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative relationship and sharing of information between classroom teachers and 21st CCLC staff</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create individual instructional plans for students based on pre- and post-testing and tracking of the quality of student's work</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly articulated behavioral expectations, the same as those used during the day, and uniformly enforced with students</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build strong relationships with all constituents</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match programming to needs of students; eliminate activities and partners with little value-added</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer programming to minimize setbacks</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use high school students as mentors</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting students through word-of-mouth of satisfied participants</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New techniques and pedagogical approaches can be tested in the after-school program</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following factors were hindrances to the project. The top two factors concerned the lack of parental involvement and a home life that is not good.
## Exhibit 10  Factors Mentioned Most Often as Hindering Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hindrance</th>
<th># of Respondents Mentioning Factor as Important (N=75)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in getting parents involved</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home life is not good for student</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in recruiting students</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in working with schools</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent attendance of students</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming logistics of simultaneous implantation of multiple activities by different partners</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language barriers for students</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student behavior problems</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apathy/lack of motivation, especially of older students</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of classroom teacher buy-in and/or cooperation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transporting students expensive and logistical problem</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in recruiting qualified staff</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of gangs</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer pressure to use drugs</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of computers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility too small and crowded</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of partners for key aspects of programming</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The impact of these factors will be further measured and explored in the summative evaluation conducted in 2006-2007. Discussion and recommendations on these factors are in the next section.
Summary - Formative Themes

The 21st CCLC program serves a population that is at risk in a myriad of ways. Just as each site serves a unique population within a unique neighborhood, within each site is a group of unique students with unique needs. The power of the 21st CCLC program lies in its ability to be flexible and innovative in combining the resources of profit, not-for-profit, public, and private organizations in ways to provide the instruction, programming, and support services needed to help individual students and their families to grow and succeed.

The 21st CCLC sites in Illinois are addressing the seven objectives and showing progress toward achieving them. The program administrators are passionate about the programs and have the support of their partners.

This formative evaluation used multiple approaches in looking at the individual 21st CCLC projects in order to identify what is working and identify ways to improve the statewide implementation of the program. The preceding sections looked at the evidence found for each of the research questions. In reviewing the discussions and recommendations, five themes emerged: focusing on the student, recruiting and selecting students, building relationships, involving parents, and improving sustainability efforts. The recommendations are re-iterated below by theme.

Focusing on the Student

The 21st CCLC sites with the greatest indications of improvements in student performance were the programs that focused on the needs of individual students. Most students in the program are there because they have not been successful in the traditional classroom. They come into the program with complex combinations of problems and needs including language barriers, peer pressure to join gangs or use drugs, dysfunctional families, behavioral disorders, and/or learning disorders.

Programs that have most successfully helped students overcome these barriers have relied on close one-to-one contact with the student and on creating individualized instructional and supportive service plans for the student.

Many of the 21st CCLC programs in Illinois have strategically selected partners that will provide the programming and services that are needed by the students in the program. They have in place the tracking systems needed to monitor the progress of students. Staff members use newer pedagogical and integrative approaches to engage students and build their skill sets through experiential and hands-on learning.

On the other end of the continuum, some Illinois sites can be described as homework assistance centers using traditional teaching methodologies.

The seminal question is "What works best for which students?" Preliminary analysis of the 2005 achievement data by site indicates the sites with the integrative, individualized, hands-on approaches are showing more promise than those centers implementing traditional methodologies. This is only a preliminary finding due to missing data.
If this is the case, some sites may want to rethink their instructional approaches and professional development. One-on-one tutors, often volunteers, need to have the skills to identify the barriers an individual student faces and the skills to implement the newer pedagogical methodologies. Standard curricula may not be effective. Differential instruction may be need to be implemented.

In order to answer the question posed, comprehensive tracking systems at the student level will be needed. Also, currently, not all students in a 21st CCLC program are flagged as such on the state system.

Recommendations
1. Each 21st CCLC site should maximize the amount of time students have to connect with a positive role model in a one-to-one or small group setting.
2. The 21st CCLC sites should continuously assess the skills of the staff and provide necessary professional development to ensure that all tutors and front-line personnel build positive relationships with the students.
3. The 15 to 20 percent of students showing a decline in behavior should be tracked to determine why they were not successful and if other interventions or changes in the 21st CCLC program could have helped them improve.
4. Add unique identifiers to the Illinois student achievement records to allow changes in academic performance to be tracked by student from year to year.
5. Grantees, schools, and ISBE need to ensure the students in 21st CCLC programs are coded as such on the student achievement records along with their level of participation. Provide any necessary professional development to accomplish this.
6. ISBE could create an instrument for 21st CCLC programs to rate themselves on quality factors, such as how well they engage individual students, how well they align instruction to the Illinois learning standards, and the effectiveness and types of pedagogical approaches used. Based on the ratings received, programs can be directed to appropriate professional development materials and opportunities to visit exemplary peers.

Recruiting and Retaining Students
Sites varied greatly in how students were recruited, selected, and retained in the program. Several sites had completely open admission policies, whereas others have rigorous selection criteria. Student retention was related to the types of programming offered.

Recommendations
1. The 21st CCLC programs experiencing difficulty in recruiting and retaining students should reassess the programming offered to determine if it is meaningful and interesting to the student. The use of an external or peer evaluator should be considered.

Building Relationships
Building trusting relationships is critical to the success of the 21st CCLC program. As new programs quickly learned, there needed to be a strong cooperative relationship between the school and the 21st CCLC program. Building and maintaining this relationship takes time and persistent work.
Site administrators of the most successful 21st CCLC programs deliberately built strong relationships with all constituents. They were highly visible people who had open door policies and interacted daily with students, staff, school staff, and partners.

The program administrators of programs with the most probable sustainability strategically approached legislators, sat on boards of potential partners, built community buy-in, and implemented aggressive public relation strategies.

Sites ran the smoothest where the site coordinator had a good working relationship with the principal who strongly supported the program.

In reviewing the data, it appears some sites need more assistance in knowing how to develop relationships such as these described above. In addition, several program administrators voiced interest in establishing stronger relationships with their peers in other 21st CCLC projects. They want to know what is working at other places, often in terms of day-to-day logistical strategies.

**Recommendations**

1. Because the roles of program administrator and site coordinator are critical to the success of the program, changes in leadership in either of these two positions can affect the effectiveness of the 21st CCLC. When such changes occur, customized professional development activities may be needed. ISBE may wish to consider providing exemplary 21st CCLC programs with additional funding to help centers in transition.

2. The 21st CCLC programs should strategically select and maintain partnerships that enhance their capacity to provide specific programming and services needed to best serve their students and families.

3. ISBE should continue to focus on linking 21st CCLC projects together, especially for professional development that might be more cost-effective and as a way to build a network among the grantees. Peer visits should be encouraged and facilitated.

**Involving Parents**

The 21st CCLC projects that were most successful in engaging parents integrated them into planning processes and activities. In other words, activities and services were not provided for the parent—the parent was an integral partner in the program.

Involving parents in this way represents a different model than the traditional conference days, evening events, and referral services model. How did some programs make this model shift?

**Recommendations**

1. The 21st CCLC programs in which parent involvement is low should assess how they could involve parents as partners and an integral part of the program. ISBE could help in the documentation of best practices.

2. Only those family/parent programs that have a clear academic focus and outcomes should be counted in the Annual Performance Report.
Improving Sustainability Efforts

The reality is that end of the end of the five-year cycle many of the 21st CCLC projects may be greatly curtailed or die away. In fact, nearly two-thirds of the 2003 grants do not have any sustainable funding in place after the 2006-07 program year. Two major ramifications of such a scenario is that 1) students in need of service will no longer be served and 2) the progress made in identifying effective approaches of meeting the needs of individual students; implementing integrated, thematic approaches and newer pedagogical approaches; and engaging parents as partners can be lost as well.

Recommendations

1. At this juncture, exemplary sites need to be provided the resources to share what they have learned with newer sites to ensure the progress made so far will not be lost and to help newer sites build capacity quicker.

2. It would be appropriate in light of the findings of this formative evaluation to re-evaluate the continuation for funding request process and criteria. Some sites are cutting services as the funding decreases instead of building sustainability. Most projects are well into the grant cycle before energies are directed toward sustainability. Sites falling behind should be counseled through professional development, one-on-one assistance from an ISBE staff member, and/or through mentoring by an exemplary site administrator.

3. Annual requests for continuation for funding should request grantees to specify the professional development activities anticipated during the next year and how these activities will help build staff capacity and help realize the program’s goals and outcomes.

4. PPICS data are used in sustainability efforts; however, the accuracy, reliability, and validity of the data have not been established. For example, the methodology used in collecting survey data, steps taken to prevent selection bias, and the confidence intervals for interpretation are not reported.

5. The U.S. Department of Education and state boards of education should help 21st CCLC programs become sustainable through entrepreneurial or innovative approaches and/or additional funding.

In closing, the impact of the 21st CCLC program is difficult to measure but is palatable to those observing students in the program and watching them grow over time. Countless testimonial and documented “life changing” stories come from each of the awarded projects. History can be used to predict what the outcome would have been for many of these students if they had not been in the program. The 21st CCLC program is creating a future of change, hope, and opportunity.
Appendices

Appendix A: Active 21st CCLC Awards in Program Year 2005-2006

The following table displays the 96 active 21st CCLC awards in program year 2006-2006. As noted, some grantees hold awards from more than one of the competitions awarded in 2003, 2004, and 2005; the total number of different entities with at least one award is 76. Three awards awarded prior to program year 2005-2006 are no longer active.

Organizations visited for either a complete 21st CCLC on-site visit or a partial site visit are in bold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ada S McKinley Community Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Park Community Center, Inc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alton Community Unit School District 11</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspira Inc. of Illinois</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurora West Unit School District 129</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beacon Street Gallery and Performance Company</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berwyn South School District 100</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bloom Township High School District 206</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build, Inc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau/Henry/Stark ROE 28 (2 awards in 2003)</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Cahokia Unit School District 187</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calhoun Community Unit School District 40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calumet Public School District 132</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centers for New Horizons Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Baptist Family Services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central States SER, Jobs for Progress</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago Public Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago Youth Centers</td>
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<td>Christopher Unit School District 99</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cities (Communities) in Schools</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comer Science and Education Foundation</td>
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<td>Community Consolidated School District 65</td>
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<td>Country Club Hills 160</td>
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<td>Crete-Monee School District Unit 201</td>
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<td>Dolton West School District 148</td>
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<td>Egyptian Community Unit School District 5</td>
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<td>Elementary School District 159</td>
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<td>Elverado Community Unit School District 196</td>
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<td>Fairmont School District 89</td>
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<td>Grantee</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Focus, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Firman Community Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin/Williamson ROE 21</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Howard Area Community Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illinois Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iroquois/Kankakee Counties ROE</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J S Morton High School District 201</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joliet Township High School District 204</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jones Memorial Community Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kankakee Community College</td>
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<td>Little Village Community Development Corp.</td>
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<td>Logan Square Neighborhood Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maywood-Melrose Part-Broadview 89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Family Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moody Kids Club</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>National Puerto Rican Forum Inc.</td>
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<td>Nicasa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noble Street Charter High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeastern Illinois University</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northwestern University Settlement</td>
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<td>Passages Alternative Living Programs, Inc.</td>
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<td>Prairie-Hills Elementary School District 144</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Success of Vermilion County, Inc.</td>
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<td>Proviso/Leyden Council</td>
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<td>Quincy School District 172</td>
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<td>Rock Island County ROE 49</td>
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<td>Rockford Public School District 205</td>
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<td>School District U-46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southwest Youth Collaborative</td>
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<td>Southwest Youth Service</td>
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<td>Springfield Public School District 186</td>
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<td>Thornton Township High School District 205</td>
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<td>Urban Solutions Association</td>
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<td>Urbana School District 116</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waukegan Community Unit School District 60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westside Health Authority</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will County ROE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zion Elementary School District 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Awards</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B: Research Matrix and Instrumentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Focus</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Source of Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective 1:</td>
<td>1. What effect does the program have on youth behaviors as measured</td>
<td>Ш Involvement in school activities</td>
<td>Program administrators interview/survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>by changes in classroom behavior, attendance rates, involvement in school</td>
<td>Ш Participation in other subject areas</td>
<td>School administrators focus group and survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>activities, attitudes toward school and learning, disciplinary referrals,</td>
<td>Ш Attendance rates</td>
<td>Classroom teacher survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and dropout and graduation rates?</td>
<td>Ш Graduation rates</td>
<td>Parent focus group and survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ш Dropout rates</td>
<td>PPICS Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2:</td>
<td>2. What impact does the program have on student achievement, including</td>
<td>Ш Academic performance on state assessments by grade and by subject matter</td>
<td>Program administrators interview/survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>homework completion, classroom grades, promotions, and performance on the</td>
<td>Ш Homework completion rates</td>
<td>School administrators focus group and survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>state assessments?</td>
<td>Ш Classroom grades</td>
<td>Classroom teacher survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ш Promotion/retention rates</td>
<td>Site teacher/tutor survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3:</td>
<td>3. In what ways does the program serve the parents of the program</td>
<td>Ш Evidence and quality of enrichment and support services for families of participants</td>
<td>Parent focus group and survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>participants? Is there increased involvement by participants’ parents in</td>
<td>Ш Parent involvement in regular school activities</td>
<td>PPICS Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>regular school activities?</td>
<td>Ш Parent attitude towards learning and school</td>
<td>Interactive Illinois Report Card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ш Parent satisfaction with program and services</td>
<td>State assessment data at individual level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 4:</td>
<td>4. What is the impact of the collaborations with other agencies and non-</td>
<td>Ш Type and extend of collaborations</td>
<td>Program administrators interview/survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>profit organizations?</td>
<td>Ш Parent satisfaction with referrals to other agencies and non-profit agencies</td>
<td>Parent focus group and survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 4:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ш Community partners perception of impact of program and</td>
<td>Community Partner survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PPICS Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Focus</td>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Performance Indicator</td>
<td>Source of Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Objective 5: These programs will serve children and community members with the greatest needs for expanded learning opportunities. | 5. Did the RFP award process result in programs being awarded to service the children and community members with the greatest need? | ■ Sites selected met the selection criteria based on free- and reduced-lunch eligibility, participants’ test scores, grades, and promotion rates. | ■ ISBE staff interview  
■ Grantees’ applications for funding  
■ ISBE Fiscal Program Reports  
■ PPICS Data  
■ Interactive Illinois Report Card |
| Objective 6: 21st CCLC program personnel will participate in professional development and training that will enable them to implement an effective program. Professional development activities must be aligned with the No Child Left Behind Act definitions and National Staff Development Council’s professional development standards. | 6. Did the professional development activities provided through the State of Illinois to 21st CCLC program personnel adhere to No Child Left Behind Act definitions and the National Staff Development Council’s professional development standards? | ■ Participation of programs in the professional development activities  
■ Review of satisfaction data collected on the professional development activities  
■ Adherence to NCLB and NSDC definition and standards | ■ ISBE staff interview  
■ Program administrators interview/survey  
■ Program documentation and professional development records from ISBE  
■ PPICS Data |
| Objective 7: 21st CCLC program projects will use the funding most efficiently by coordinating and collaborating with other and state funding sources, agencies and other community projects to supplement the program and not supplant the funds, and to eventually become self-sustaining. | 7. What are the current efforts toward providing for sustainability of the current programs, especially of the programs in their final year of funding? | ■ Implementation of sustainability plan  
■ Degree to which sustainability efforts are on-target to reach appropriate level of sustainability based on year in project | ■ ISBE staff interview to confirm sustainability requirements per year of grant  
■ Program administrators interview/survey  
■ Community Partner survey  
■ Grantees’ applications for funding |
| Quality of Evaluative Data                                                   | 8. Did the 21st CCLC program personnel find the data collection methods and evaluation resources, in particular PPICS, useful and relevant in documenting their programs and outcomes?  
9. Would additional data and/or data collection methods have helped document the outcomes of the programs and provided supplemental information for decision making? | ■ Ease of use of PPICS and data collection  
■ Relevancy of PPICS data and data collected  
■ Usefulness of PPICS data in decision making  
■ Satisfaction with data collection methods  
■ Satisfaction with types of data collected  
■ Gap analysis of reporting and undocumented outcomes | ■ ISBE staff interview  
■ Program administrators interview/survey  
■ PPICS Data |
<p>| Assessment of Overall                                                        | 10. To what extent are the Activities match | ■ ISBE staff interview                                                                 |                |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Focus</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Source of Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Implementation                     | grant recipients implementing the activities and evaluation plan proposed in their RFPs, as revised in their annual continuation requests? | program objectives and goals  
  ▪ Evidence of implementation and on-target progress of evaluation plan  
  ▪ Evidence of implementation and on-target progress of sustainability plan | Program administrators interview/survey  
  ▪ Direct observation site visit  
  ▪ Grantees’ applications for funding (RFPs and continuation requests)  
  ▪ ISBE Fiscal Program Reports  
  ▪ PPICS Data |
| Assessment of Overall Implementation | 11. What factors hinder and which factors facilitate reaching the objectives? | Identification of facilitating factors  
  ▪ Identification of barriers  
  ▪ Identification of strategies to overcome barriers | ISBE staff interview  
  ▪ Program administrators interview/survey  
  ▪ School administrators focus group and survey  
  ▪ Classroom teacher survey  
  ▪ Site teacher/tutor survey  
  ▪ Parent focus group and survey  
  ▪ Community Partner survey  
  ▪ Relevant research literature  
  ▪ PPICS Data |
Appendix C: Illinois 21st CCLC 2005 Annual Performance Report

Available as PDF file at www2.learningpt.org/ppics.  
A copy can be obtained from the authors of this report, also.
Addendum
21st Century Community Learning Centers
Special Topics
Program Year 2005-2006

One of the goals of this research project was to provide information that the grantees would find helpful in improving their programs. A question on the program administrator survey asked what the grantee would like to learn or know more about. The responses to this question are summarized below in the section Networking and Professional Development. Because significant numbers of program administrators wanted to know more about Instructional Programming, Evaluation, and Sustainability, these topics are also addressed in the addendum.

The information in the Addendum was collected via phone interviews with the program directors, perusal of the PPICS’ previous annual reports, and/or data collected through on-site evaluations of the program.

Networking and Professional Development

Over three-fourths of the program administrators (78.6%) requested more time at mandatory meetings and/or additional opportunities be available for grantees to network, share ideas, and learn from each other. Three administrators specifically requested a list serv be established for 21st CCLC grantees. Other ideas included peer presentations, searchable database of ideas from peers, and peer site visits.

The majority of program administrators were interested in learning how other sites are structured, how instruction is scheduled, how they overcame problems, and what is working. They are looking for innovative ideas for academic activities, use of community partners, tutoring, enrichment activities, and day-to-day operations.

In addition to learning about their peers in general, subgroups included those in rural programs, early childhood programs, high school programs, and summer programs. High school programmers were most interested in how to retain and motivate students.

The program administrators indicated interest in hearing more about the following specific instruction-related topics:

- What types of incentives are given to students?
- What are some best practices in the other 21st CCLC programs to recruit, motivate, and retain students?
- How are others handling classroom management and what works?
- Who is doing college tours, where to, and how?
- Who is using the Essential Knowledge - Pekin Model and how does it work?
- Are there benchmarks of best practices in providing arts instruction?
- How do others integrate arts instruction with the core academic instruction?
- In general, what have others found to be working for enrichment?
- What cultural enhancements are others using?
How are others integrating the social services and agencies into their program?
What resources are available for the social/emotional piece?
What are others doing that works to increase parent involvement and retention?
What types of programming are offered for parent training?

After programming issues, sustainability was the topic of most concern. About two-thirds of the program administrators wanted to know how to approach sustainability and what other sites are doing. Specific questions were raised concerning the use of grant writers, company sponsorships, private funding, and fees. Several grantees voiced a concern over the growing competition for the same students by competing after school programs and what impact this will have on sustainability.

The third topic of most interest concerned partnerships (36% of program directors), especially the communication between the site and school.

- How do other programs build relationships with the public schools?
- What are some strategies to integrate day and 21st CCLC programming?
- How are others aligning “day” school and after-school instruction?
- What are some successful ways of communicating with schools?
- How does the 21st CCLC site impact the school and the school day?
- How do others develop and maintain partners?
- How do others communicate with partners?

The fourth topic of interest involved program evaluation and planning (33% of program administrators). The following specific questions were raised:

- How well are other sites aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards?
- How are other sites keeping their records?
- Other than PPICS, what are other grants using to show success?
- A request to know more about the 4-step Community Schools process and who is using it.
- How do social workers evaluate 21st CCLC programs?
- Who is using portfolios successfully?
- Who is providing reports to parents?
- How have other sites implemented continuous improvement models?
- What is a cost effective way to conduct an evaluation?
- How are others evaluating their external evaluator?
- How are others collecting data and getting good responses to the surveys?
- Who is using the Kid Trax system?
- What are the retention rates of the other sites?

The fifth and final topic involved staffing and professional development issues (about 25% of the program administrators). Respondents were seeking information on the following topics:

- How can you avoid teacher burnout?
- What is a good development training program for a director?
- Who has conducted a good multicultural training program?
- How do others recruit staff and volunteers?
- How do others evaluate staff performance?
- What are some good recommendations for the following professional development topics: gang prevention, drug prevention, cultural awareness, mental health, behavioral health, first aid-CPR, rape and domestic violence,
learning disabilities, teaching skills for non-teachers, teaching reading and literacy, helping children of poverty, and implementing differentiated instruction?

Recommendation
In light of the requests for more information from the program administrators, the following recommendations are offered to ISBE:

1. Increase the amount of time at mandatory meetings dedicated to networking and sharing of best practices especially as they related to instructional programming.

2. Investigate ways to allow grantees to electronically share information, best practices, and ways problems were solved. Include information on the topics raised above.

3. Find ways to facilitate site visits among grantees with common concerns.

4. Provide dedicated development activities on sustainability, improving evaluations, communication, and addressing common staffing issues.

The following three sections: Instructional Programming, Evaluation and Planning, and Sustainability provide more information on the status of the 21st CCLC program and ideas for improvement.
**Instructional Programming**

Program administrators described the activities at their 21st CCLC sites during an interview in spring 2006. Based on these descriptions and the APR data, researchers categorized each site as follows:

- Mostly academic - primarily homework help or activities specifically targeting academic skills and very few enrichment activities
- Mostly enrichment - the majority of time spent in enrichment activities as opposed to tutoring, homework assistance, or academic skill building activities
- Academic and enrichment - a combination of both activities
- Extensive academic and enrichment - an extremely varied and rich combination of activities

As shown in the exhibit below, the majority of grants have a combination of academic and enrichment activities. About one-fifth of the grants are mostly homework assistance programs. Only 3 percent are more enrichment based than academic-based.

Exhibit 11  Types of Activities

In addition to the examples given in the text of this report, the following are selected instructional programming “successes” described by program administrators during the interviews and site visits in spring 2006.
Exhibit 12 Selected Programming Successes

- Arts as a way to integrate core subjects
- Career awareness and the need for post-secondary education
- Club atmosphere
- Computer-based instruction and tutorials
- Credit retrieval programs
- Drumming
- Etiquette training and eating out
- Evening programming for students
- Film and multimedia student projects
- Focus the year on the parent and family
- Free passes to school events
- Hands-on thematic units
- Home visits to parents and students
- Interdisciplinary teaming of teachers and instruction
- Intergenerational activities, such as seniors reading to students
- Manual for parents and students
- Manual for partners
- Readers Theatre
- Small schools format
- Snowboarding for students
- Student, teacher, and tutor conferences
- Students do community service projects
- Students publish their own work
- Summer “jump start” program
- Team training for students
- Teaming with a bilingual resource center
- Truancy prevention program

Recommendation
The data collected during the formative evaluation was confidential information. Sites could be asked to formally provide examples of best practices to be made available to all 21st CCLC projects and to include contact information to facilitate site visits and follow-up by other sites interested in learning more about the best practice.

Evaluation and Planning
As described in the text of the report, program administrators described wide variations in the implementation of their evaluation plans. Over one-fourth use external evaluators and over 15 percent use grant writer/evaluators to document the outcomes of their project. About 10 percent described a comprehensive, integrated evaluation process in which data is used for substantive project planning and improvement. On the other hand, over 10 percent of the awardees barely collect the minimum PPICS data and did not use it for program improvement. The majority of programs use the PPICS data combined with some form of pre-post testing of student achievement and additional surveying of parents and/or students.
Programs differed significantly in 1) their capacity to conduct research and 2) the quality of the research. Programs ranged from having access to complete research departments and comprehensive external evaluation services to having minimal internal resources dedicated to evaluation. The quality of the data reported on PPICS and the conclusions drawn from the data varied tremendously. The involvement of research departments and external evaluators did not always result in quality data, analyses, or conclusions.

Levels of Assessment and Evaluation
The evaluation plan of a 21st CCLC grant involves the collection, analysis, interpretation, and use of data for actions such as

1. Improve day-to-day instruction and programming at the student
2. Planning at the site level
3. Planning at the grant level
4. Making policy decisions at the state and federal level
5. Providing data for public relation campaigns.

The 21st CCLC program administrators most often described PPICS as a way of addressing #4 and #5. Unfortunately, the data in PPICS is not verified for accuracy, reliability, or validity, and there are strong selection bias validity concerns with the survey data.

The majority of grants have implemented some form of data collection to track the progress of individual students, especially those sites integrated into the school system, in which case the regular school assessments are used to track student performance. The majority of sites, however, do not use this information to substantially change instruction for individual students.

Level #2 and #3 assessment is apparent in about only 10 percent of the programs. The majority of grantees have not instituted a planning process based on wide-based assessment data. When data is used, it is most often self-report surveys of teachers, tutors, parents, and/or students.

Quality of Data
One external researcher described the data he was reporting to the grantee as “marginal.” Grantees, also, questioned the accuracy, reliability, and validity of the data reported for 21st CCLC programs.

Their concerns involved several issues including the methodology used in collecting survey data. The majority of the sites collect survey data by distributing the survey and receiving few returns. Some sites with large numbers of respondents did not control to ensure the survey was completed by the designated parent--a concern when incentives were provided to students to ensure parents completed the survey. For other sites, selection bias was an authentic concern.

Recommendations
Documenting the success of Illinois 21st CCLC programs could be improved in four ways.

First, standards of quality for the reporting of PPICS data should be established, especially in regards to survey data, counting of program participants, and counting of
active partners. Program administrators need to understand and employ good research practices that ensure accuracy, reliability, and validity of the reported data.

Second, programs such as 21st CCLC revolve around the premise that individual students will benefit from the program. The academic achievement of the targeted population is usually substantially lower than the average academic achievement of the peer population. Documenting program success involves looking at how far individual students progress. A student may not meet the state standards; however, he may significantly decrease his achievement gap. Pre- and post-data needs to be available for each student in the 21st CCLC program. The evaluation of this data should be in terms of the gains made on decreasing the achievement gap.

Third, frequent criterion-based assessments at the student level are used by exemplary sites to help identify small, but motivational, gains in achievement; provide information on how to better tailor instruction for the student; and to provide hope to the student that something can be done to help him grow even more. 21st CCLC programs could be required to show that such data is being used and that instruction is, indeed, modified as needed.

Fourth, one of the strengths of the 21st CCLC program is the social and emotional growth of the students. Pre- and post-tests of established reliability and validity should be considered as a means of documenting this growth. In addition, program administrators should receive professional development in how to use testimonial and case study data to effectively document this growth.

**Sustainability**

The 21st CCLC grant expires at the end of five years. Nearly two-thirds of the projects ending at the end of 2006-07 did not have any significant funding identified to continue the program after the termination of the grant. Only 3% appear to be completely sustainable.

Exhibit 13  Sustainability Status of 2003 Grants
The scope of the 21st CCLC program is large, and sustainability of the program will most likely not be through a single source of funding. Building the networks needed to ensure sustainability involves identifying partners, activating champions for the cause, and being entrepreneurial in seeking out the necessary resources.

Partners
Several Illinois 21st CCLC projects have involved stakeholders in ways to help them feel ownership and responsibility for the project. As described in the text of the report, one program involved not-for-profits in an RFP process to determine which ones would be included in the initial grant application and has maintained a working relationship with them during the grant. These not-for-profits, the mayor, and others compose a 21st CCLC sustainability committee.

Other 21st CCLC programs focused on improving the relationship with the school, to the point where the program is viewed as an integral part of the school and is included in the SIP planning process and plan.

Advisory Committees to several 21st CCLC programs include representatives from all stakeholders, especially parents and partners.

Other programs have established responsibilities and shared ownership through Memorandums of Understandings with partners and manuals for partners.

Champions for the Cause
The 21st CCLC program has a story to tell, and several projects have employed professional consultants to help tell the story. One site is using a marketing intern from a local university. These professionals most often began by creating a communication plan for the project through a broad-based input process.

The most successful public relation campaigns appear to begin at the grass roots and include parents, partners, teachers, and student testimonials to spread the word.

Multiple media venues have been used by the Illinois 21st CCLC projects; e.g., websites, newspaper articles, regular reports to the school board, and video clips on the news.

Some sites have been successful in inviting local, state, and U.S. politicians to the site to hear the stories from the individual students. Sustainability funding has been provided to some sites through city governments and state legislators. Press releases are used to thank the politician and further get the message into the media.

Entrepreneurial Approach to Resources
Because multiple funding sources will need to be coordinated, program administrators have found an entrepreneurial, “out of the box” approach to be most effective.

Some school districts are using the SIP to identify best uses of state and federal funding to continue the successful portions of the 21st CCLC program. Program administrators have mentioned the allocation of Title funds, Gear Up, juvenile justice, drug prevention, Weed and Seed, YouthBuild, bilingual funding, and food grants to help continue the 21st CCLC programming. Other school districts are seeking funding through a referendum for additional funding.
Other 21st CCLC programs are looking at becoming a SES provider, creating a foundation or federation, and/or seeking funding through United Way, corporate sponsors, Youth Net, and Teen REACH.

Local funding which has been helpful in providing sustainability include the school district, parks district, sheriff’s office, departments for youth services, chambers of commerce, and community centers.

Recommendation
The U.S. Department of Education and ISBE can be leaders in helping the 21st CCLC programs gain sustainability through providing additional funding and in helping individual programs find sustainability resources through professional development activities for program administrators and in creating a forum for current 21st CCLC programs to partner and share ideas.