

MONTANA STATE EVALUATION REPORT



21st
Century

Community Learning Centers

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2017-18 Annual Report

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JEM & R, LLC

Montana State Evaluation Report

2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) Grant is a federally funded program supporting out-of-school-time community learning centers that operate primarily on school campuses statewide. Targeting students who attend high-poverty schools, these programs help students meet core standards in academic subjects such as language arts and math while also offering a broad array of youth development and enrichment opportunities.

The following report presents results from the 21st CCLC grant in Montana between June 1, 2017 and May 31, 2018. This document provides: (a) a state evaluation background and methodology; (b) a description of the participants, staff and partnerships that constitute the grant; (c) program implementation information, including the services that are offered through 21st CCLC programming; d) results for process and outcome measures; and (e) conclusion and recommendations. Key findings, organized by the evaluation questions, include:

What are the characteristics of Montana 21st CCLC programs? What students and families do these programs serve? Are programs reaching the target populations? What is the extent and nature of partnerships between programs and local community organizations?

A total of 79 grantees with 142 centers offered 21st CCLC programming to approximately 13,915 Montana students during the school year and 6,110 during the summer. Compared to the 2016-17 grant year, participation fell slightly, with programs serving 4% fewer students during the school year and 8% fewer students the summer. On average, centers served 98 youth. However, when center populations are categorized, there is some variability evident. For example, only 10% of centers served over 200 students, whereas over half (57%) served 100 or less. This is consistent with the rural nature of Montana and has remained stable from the prior year. Across all Montana 21st CCLC programs, 80% of the targeted capacity was served; however, at the grantee level only 65% of grantees met their capacity goals.

A total of 2,020 staff provided services and supports to students in these programs during the school year, which represents a 2% increase from last year. Of these staff members, 62% were paid staff and 38% were volunteers. Over half were teachers or other non-teaching school staff (57%). Grantees also reported establishing partnerships with 740 organizations to support the grant

work, with the majority of these being community organization, non-profits, government entities, public schools, and for-profit entities. Partners primarily supported the grant by providing activities or programming.

Most students participating in 21st CCLC programs were White (70%), followed by American Indian (23%). As is to be expected given that the 21st CCLC grant targets low-income students and high-poverty schools, students receiving free or reduced lunch were over-represented among center attendees (65%) compared to statewide proportions (45%). In contrast, special education students were under-represented (9%) compared to the state as a whole (13%). Attendees ranged from pre-Kindergarteners to 12th graders, with most students coming from elementary grades.

Students attending a center for 30 days or more during a reporting period are considered to be “regular attendees.” Forty-four percent of the school-year students were regular attendees, which is approximately 10 points below the national average. Data on retention show that approximately 64% of 21st CCLC students had attended the prior year.

What are the characteristics of Montana 21st CCLC programming?

21st CCLC centers offered a wide range of activities during the 2017-18 program year. The most frequent activities (measured by days per week and hours per session) offered during summer programming included: physical fitness, STEM-related activities, arts and music, literacy, and community or service learning. The most frequent activities offered during the school year were similar, including: STEM-related activities, arts and music, physical fitness, literacy, community or service learning, and homework help. The least-offered activities were ELL supports, counseling services, and programming related to preventing truancy or violence. Taken altogether, these findings show that while there is a clear focus on academics at 21st CCLC centers, there is also a strong emphasis on enrichment via arts and music and physical activity. Programs are doing well in providing diverse and complementary activities for a well-rounded experience among program participants.

Consistent with the goals surrounding the provision of family services, a total of 1969 adults/family members were served which represents a 114% increase from the prior year. Almost half of centers (46%) offered parent or family programming. This represents a substantial increase from the previous year, when this programming was only offered at 31% of centers. Adult and family offerings primarily included family social events, activities to increase parental involvement or engagement, information on supporting youth academics and postsecondary education, and career and job training services to adults.

During the school year, centers typically were open for 32 weeks total for approximately 4 days per week, primarily after school, and typically for between 2 and 3 hours per day. The average staff to student ratio during the school year was 1:10. Only 70% of centers offered summer

programming which typically lasted for 6 weeks (26 days), 4 days per week, and approximately 3 hours per day

How well are Montana 21st CCLC centers meeting quality standards?

Grantees completed the Montana Monitoring and Quality Improvement Self-Assessment (MMQI-SA) tool, allowing centers to take a critical look at their programs by evaluating them against standards of best practices for afterschool programs. Results showed that the top self-rated areas for Montana 21st CCLC centers were: Health and Safety; Center Operations; and Staffing and Professional Development. The weakest area was Partnerships, followed by Evaluation and Measuring Outcomes. These findings are comparable to those observed during prior grant years.

Statistical analyses also show that grantees who have more experience (five or more years) with the 21st CCLC grant self-report a higher level of compliance with quality indicators as compared to those who have less experience (3-4 years), particularly in the areas of Staffing and Professional Development and Organizational Structure and Management.

Analysis of MMQI-SA items that constitute key areas of practice for after school programs indicate that while rates of compliance were generally high, none of the indicators were met for 2017-18. Given that these rates of compliance were generally high, further efforts should be made to target low performing programs including increasing collaboration with center administration and staff.

What SEA- and grantee-level supports are available to Montana 21st CCLC program staff? How effective are these resources? To what degree are recipients satisfied with the support they receive?

In order to obtain information about the resources and opportunities available to 21st CCLC program staff, staff members and administrators completed questionnaires about staff supports and communication. Responses indicated that 78% program administrators met with staff at least once per month. As well, 74% of staff indicated they interacted with the site administrator at least weekly.

Administrators were also asked the frequency in which they offered professional development activities during the 2017-18 grant year. The most common response was between 4 and 5 offerings (35%). This indicates that administrators are providing more training and professional development opportunities than were offered during the 2016-17 program year, when the modal response was 2 or 3 offerings.

According to staff surveys, 62% of staff members were satisfied with the types of opportunities available and 66% were satisfied with the quality of the trainings that they participated in. While, in general, most staff were satisfied, a substantial proportion were neutral in their ratings of the

professional development offered by their programs. With regards to satisfaction with staff supports, 89% indicated that they received adequate support from their site supervisors. Eighty-three percent of staff felt they had sufficient resources to conduct their activities and 70% were satisfied with the quality of resources.

When asked specifically about state-provided trainings, staff and administrators were most satisfied with trainings on the E-grant application, supports related to data collection, and assistance with program development. When asked about the areas where they would like to see additional training offerings, program staff and administrators agreed that the top priorities were trainings to better connect afterschool programming with the school day, develop ideas for programming, and improve behavior management.

What is the impact of Montana 21st CCLC programs on student academic performance, student behaviors and positive youth assets? In what other ways have programs affected participants?

The following tables show the state performance indicators as specified in the Montana 21st CCLC logic model, and results from the current and prior grant year for each indicator. Goals and objectives addressed by each indicator are also provided.

Montana State Evaluation Report

TABLE I. GOAL 1 | 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS WILL SEE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THEIR STUDENTS.

OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	RESULTS ¹		
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
1.1. Students in 21 st CCLC programs will improve performance in core academics.	GPRA 1.1.1. The percentage of 21 st CCLC participants that meet or exceed the Proficient level on state assessments in reading or ELA will increase by 5% annually.	Not available	Baseline: 43.9% Reading Proficiency	45.1% Reading Proficiency (2.7% increase)
	GPRA 1.1.2. The percentage of 21 st CCLC participants that meet or exceed the Proficient level on state assessments in mathematics will increase by 5% annually.	Not available	Baseline: 36.9% Math Proficiency	39.3% Math Proficiency (6.5% increase)
1.2. Students in 21 st CCLC programs will increase homework completion and class participation.	GPRA 1.2.1. At least 70% of 21 st CCLC participants will improve homework completion and class participation, annually, as measured by school day teacher surveys.	64.3% improved Homework Completion	60.6% improved Homework Completion	58.9% improved Homework Completion
		63.8% improved Class Participation	58.1% improved Class Participation	61.7% improved Class Participation
1.3. Students in 21 st CCLC programs will maintain or improve class grades for core subjects and demonstrate on-time advancement to the next grade level.	GPRA 1.3.1. At least 70% of 21 st CCLC participants will maintain or improve math and reading grades (academics), annually, as measured by school day teacher surveys.	96.3% improved or maintained Math Performance 96.7% improved or maintained Reading Performance	93.3% improved or maintained Academic Performance ²	95.4% improved or maintained Academic Performance
	1.3.2. At least 90% of 21 st CCLC participants will advance to the next grade level or graduate, as measured by OPI data.	Not available	96.1% Advanced or Graduated	97.8% Advanced or Graduated

¹ Results, when available, are color-coded. Red font results did not meet indicator and green results met indicator.

² Subject-area data were not available for 2016-17 or 2017-18 grant years.

Montana State Evaluation Report

TABLE II. GOAL 2 | 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS WILL PROVIDE A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE, AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH.

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	RESULTS		
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
2.1. Students in 21 st CCLC programs increase their perceptions of support, connectedness, and safety.	2.1.1. At least 90% of 21 st CCLC students will report that they are supported by and connected to staff in their program, annually, as measured by student surveys.	Not available	87.5% felt Supported	89.9% felt Supported
	2.1.2. At least 90% of 21 st CCLC students will report that they feel physically safe in their program, annually, as measured by student surveys.	Not available	85.9% felt Safe	86.2% felt Safe
	2.1.3. At least 75% of 21 st CCLC students will report that they feel connected to peers (including having a sense of belonging), annually, as measured by student surveys.	Not available	75.4% felt Connected	79.2% felt Connected
2.2. Students in 21 st CCLC programs will be provided healthy eating opportunities.	2.2.1. 100% of 21 st CCLC centers who meet eligibility criteria will enroll in the USDA Healthy Snack Program (NSLP or CACFP), as measured by School Nutrition Program and DPHHS enrollment records.	72.9% of eligible centers (105 of 144) were enrolled in the Healthy Snack Program	71.2% of eligible centers (104 of 146) were enrolled in the Healthy Snack Program	72.5% of eligible centers (74 of 102) were enrolled in the Healthy Snack Program

Montana State Evaluation Report

TABLE III. GOAL 3 | 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS WILL WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES TO PROMOTE POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND PARENT SKILLS.

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	RESULTS		
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
3.1. Parents of students in 21 st CCLC programs will increase parental involvement, support, and knowledge of students.	3.1.1. At least 65% of 21 st CCLC parents and caregivers will report that they are satisfied with communication from center staff, annually, as measured by parent surveys.	Not available	82.1% were Satisfied	81.1% were Satisfied
	3.1.2. At least 65% of parents will report that they have knowledge and awareness of student progress and activities in the 21 st CCLC program and school, annually, as measured by parent surveys.	Not available	87.2% were Knowledgeable and Aware	85.2% were Knowledgeable and Aware
3.2. Students in 21 st CCLC programs will increase community and civic engagement and career development.	3.2.1. At least 50% of 21 st CCLC middle- and high-school students will report that they participate in community service or service learning opportunities, annually, as measured by student surveys.	Not available	52.5% participated in Community Service Learning	87.6% participated in Community Service Learning
	3.2.2. At least 80% of 21 st CCLC centers will offer community or service learning activities in their programs, annually, as measured by data system records.	49.7% of centers (73 of 147) offered Community-Service Learning activities	50.3% of centers (75 of 149) offered Community-Service Learning activities	78.2% of centers (111 of 142) offered Community-Service Learning activities
	3.2.3. At least 75% of 21 st CCLC high-school students will report that they are exposed to career development opportunities, annually, as measured by student surveys.	Not available	62.4% participated in Career Development opportunities	59.0% participated in Career Development opportunities

Montana State Evaluation Report

TABLE IV. GOAL 4 | 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS WILL SEE AN INCREASE IN THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS OF THEIR STUDENTS.

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	RESULTS		
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
4.1. Students in 21 st CCLC programs will improve their perceptions of self-control and conflict resolution skills.	4.1.1. At least 50% of 21 st CCLC students will improve conflict resolution skills, annually, as measured by school day teacher surveys.	69.0% improved Conflict Resolution Skills	66.9% improved Conflict Resolution Skills	59.4% improved Conflict Resolution Skills
	4.1.2. At least 75% of 21 st CCLC students will report that they have personal control (over their behavior and future), annually, as measured by student surveys.	Not available	75.4% reported Personal Control	71.7% reported Personal Control
4.2. Students in 21 st CCLC programs will improve their behavior.	4.2.1. 21 st CCLC students will demonstrate personal control over their behavior, through a 25% decrease in formal behavior referrals to administrators during the school day, annually, as measured by school discipline records.	Not available	Not available	Not available
	GPRA 4.2.2. At least 60% of 21 st CCLC students will improve behavior, annually, as measured by school day teacher surveys.	64.3% improved Behaving Well in Class	62.9% improved Behaving Well in Class	52.2% improved Behaving Well in Class

TABLE V. GOAL 5 | 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS WILL PROMOTE THE ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF ENROLLED PARTICIPANTS.

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	RESULTS		
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
5.1. 21 st CCLC programs will offer engaging activities that promote participation, retention, and active learning experiences.	5.1.1. The number enrolled students participating in 21 st CCLC programs will increase by 5% annually, as measured by state attendance spreadsheets.	Total Enrollment increased from 16,688 to 18,438 (10.5%) ³	School Year Enrollment increased from 12,559 to 14,447 (15.3%) Summer Enrollment increased from 5,879 to 6,637 (12.9%)	School Year Enrollment decreased from 14,447 to 13,915 (-3.7%) Summer Enrollment decreased from 6,637 to 6,110 (-7.9%).
	5.1.2. The percentage of students who are retained in 21 st CCLC programs will increase by 5% annually, as measured by state attendance spreadsheets.	Not available	Baseline: 62.5% were Retained	Retention increased from 62.5% (9,582 of 15,339 students) to 64.4% (8,041 of 12,482 students; 3.1%)
	5.1.3. At least 80% of 21 st CCLC students will report that they are actively engaged in their learning experience at their local afterschool program, annually, as measured by student surveys.	Not available	80.5% were Actively Engaged	82.7% were Actively Engaged

³ These may contain duplicates (students attended summer and SY programs). Unfortunately, we are unable to calculate unduplicated counts for this year as student level data was not provided.

Montana State Evaluation Report

TABLE VI. GOAL 6 | 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS WILL PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY OPERATIONS.

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	RESULTS		
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
6.1. 21 st CCLC programs will be perceived as valuable by parents, school teachers, and school administrators.	6.1.1. At least 85% of 21 st CCLC parents will report satisfaction with their students' afterschool program, annually, as measured by parent surveys.	Not available	97.5% were Satisfied	97.7% were Satisfied
	6.1.2. At least 90% of school day teachers and principals will report that they perceive value in the 21 st CCLC program, annually, as measured by school day teacher surveys and school administrator surveys.	94.0% of school day teachers perceived the afterschool program to be valuable ⁴	96.4% of school day teachers and school administrators perceived the afterschool program to be valuable	97.5% of school day teachers and school administrators perceived the afterschool program to be valuable
6.2. 21 st CCLC programs will offer high-quality activities and operations that meet the needs of youth in the community.	6.2.1. 100% of 21 st CCLC grantees will serve at least 80% of their targeted capacity, annually, as measured by grantee reports.	77.2% of grantees (61 of 79) served 80% of their target capacity	64.5% of grantees (51 of 79) served 80% of their target capacity	64.5% of grantees (51 of 79) served 80% of their target capacity
	6.2.2. At least 80% of 21 st CCLC centers, school year programs will be available for a minimum of 60 hours per month, as measured by grantee reports.	Not available	30.4% of school-year centers (42 of 135) were open for 60 hours per month	30.8% of school-year centers (29 of 94) were open for 60 hours per month
	6.2.3. At least 75% of 21 st CCLC centers will have summer offerings every year, as measured by grantee reports.	74.0% of centers (111 of 150) offered Summer Programming	79.6% of centers (113 of 142) offered Summer Programming	69.7% of centers (99 of 142) offered Summer Programming
	6.2.4. 100% of 21 st CCLC centers will comply with at least 80% of quality indicators (10 of 12) for Organizational Structure and Management, annually, as measured by the OPI self-assessment tool.	80.0% of centers (112 of 140) met the compliance target for Organizational Structure and Management indicators	74.3% of centers (101 of 136) met the compliance target for Organizational Structure and Management indicators	88.3% of centers (120 of 136) met the compliance target for Organizational Structure and Management indicators

⁴ School administrator data were not available

Montana State Evaluation Report

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	RESULTS		
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
6.2.5. At least 75% of 21 st CCLC centers will offer health, physical fitness, or nutrition activities, annually, as measured by grantee reports.		84.9% of centers (124 of 146) offered Physical Fitness activities	76.5% of centers (114 of 149) offered Physical Fitness activities	90.8% of centers (129 of 142) offered Physical Fitness activities
6.2.6. 100% of 21 st CCLC centers will comply with at least 80% of quality indicators (4 of 5) for Partnerships, annually, as measured by the OPI self-assessment tool.		80.7% of centers (109 of 135) met the compliance target for Partnership indicators	83.8% of centers (114 of 136) met the compliance target for Partnership indicators	83.8% of centers (114 of 136) met the compliance target for Partnership indicators
6.2.7. By the end of the third year of grant funding, 100% of grantees will have a Sustainability Plan, as measured by OPI Self-Assessment tool..		Not available	81.0% of grantees (64 of 79) had a Sustainability Plan	79.4% of grantees (81 of 102) had a Sustainability Plan.
6.2.8. 100% of 21 st CCLC centers will comply with at least 80% of quality indicators (8 of 10) for Staffing and Professional Development, annually, as measured by the OPI self-assessment tool.		88.6% of centers (124 of 140) met the compliance target for Staffing and Professional Development indicators	93.4% of centers (127 of 136) met the compliance target for Staffing and Professional Development indicators	93.4% of centers (127 of 136) met the compliance target for Staffing and Professional Development indicators
6.2.9. 100% of 21 st CCLC centers will comply with at least 80% of quality indicators (11 of 13) for Grant Management and Sustainability, annually, as measured by OPI self-assessment tool.		88.4% of centers (122 of 138) met the compliance target for Management and Sustainability indicators	87.5% of centers (119 of 136) met the compliance target for Management and Sustainability indicators	87.5% of centers (119 of 136) met the compliance target for Management and Sustainability indicators
6.3.0. 100% of 21 st CCLC centers will comply with at least 80% of quality indicators (11 of 13) for Health and Safety, annually, as measured by OPI self-assessment tool.		88.6% of centers (124 of 140) met the compliance target for Health and Safety indicators	94.9% of centers (129 of 136) met the compliance target for Health and Safety indicators	94.9% of centers (129 of 136) met the compliance target for Health and Safety indicators

SUMMARY OF STATE OBJECTIVES RESULTS

Performance results are available for 32 indicators. Of those, grantees successfully met 13 (41%). Indicators that were met included:

- Improvement in math proficiency on state assessments
- Improvement or maintenance in teacher perceptions of math and reading performance and student engagement
- Student graduation or advancement to the next grade level
- Increased conflict resolution skills and perceptions of personal control among students
- Student engagement in community service
- Improvement in student feelings of peer connectedness and active engagement in the program
- Student perceptions of support from program staff
- Parent, teacher and school administrator satisfaction with 21st CCLC
- Increase in parental knowledge and awareness of their child's progress
- Health and fitness offerings

Compared to the 2016-17 program year, there was a slight decrease in the number and percentage of performance indicators met (when grantees met 15 of 30 indicators). In part, this decrease reflects a drop from 80% of centers offering programming in Summer 2016 to only 70% in Summer 2017, a decrease in student enrollment, and a lower percentage of students demonstrating improvements in behavior. Additionally, reading proficiency and student retention rates improved, but not to the extent specified by the state indicators. There was also positive change with regard to students' perceptions of staff support, such that the performance indicator was met for this program year but was not met in 2016-17. It is recommended that all indicators and targets be re-evaluated annually, especially given the significant number of new grants awarded for 2018-19.

Comparisons were also made to determine whether attendance (or "dosage") influenced outcomes. Specifically, students were categorized by attendance, with students who attended less than 30 days (i.e., on only a monthly or quarterly basis) classified as "non-regular attendees" and students who attended 30 or more days (i.e., on a weekly basis) were classified as "regular attendees." Results showed statistically significant relationships between dosage and student outcomes. Specifically, students who attended the program more frequently demonstrated higher performance on state math and reading assessments and rated themselves as having more personal control. Older students who attended regularly were more involved in community service and reported having more access to career development opportunities. In contrast, teacher reports of student behavior, homework completion, and class participation were less positive for regular attendees compared to non-regular attendees. However, this latter finding may be due to differences in the sample that were included for non-regular students; for the teacher survey, these students were defined as 15-30 days, not 1-30 days and this limited the sample.

Survey data reveals that positive progress is being made in other areas as well. For example, a high percentage of teachers and program staff reported that students improved their interpersonal skills. Students reported that 21st CCLC programs helped them feel happy and to help others, and parents reported that their students became interested in new areas and developed more positive attitudes towards school.

What is the level of student, parent, staff, and administration satisfaction concerning the implementation and impact of Montana 21st CCLC programs?

The vast majority of students and parents reported high levels of satisfaction with the 21st CCLC program. Over 75% of students agreed that they liked the program, would recommend it to friends, and would like to attend next year. Students who attended the program regularly (i.e., on a weekly basis) also had more favorable perceptions of the afterschool program with regard to feeling safe, feelings supported by adult staff, and feeling connected to their peers, and being interested in engaged in program activities.

Nearly all parents (98%) indicated that they were satisfied with the program. Nearly all reported that the program was welcoming and was a good value for their family. Parents reported the highest satisfaction with program safety and hours of operation. They were least satisfied with parent and family programming, which is consistent with the finding that adult programming is only offered at 46% of 21st CCLC centers. Of those who did participate in adult programs, 83% rated them to be worthwhile and 86% would recommend them to others. Additionally, most parents (81%) were satisfied with the communication they received from the program staff.

Ninety-eight percent of teachers and school administrators felt that the 21st CCLC program was valuable. Over 90% reported that they were satisfied with the variety and quality of academic and enrichment opportunities offered to students. Over two thirds of teachers reported being satisfied with communication and collaboration with program staff, and felt the afterschool program fit in with the school day. This is important given the emphasis of the new ESSA legislation on coordination and collaboration between afterschool and school day curricula.

What successes and challenges have been encountered in the delivery of Montana 21st CCLC programs?

Teachers, school administrators, program personnel, parents, and students were asked to respond to open-ended questions about the most successful aspects of 21st CCLC programming. According to responses, programs were most successful with regard to providing academic support to students, offering students opportunities to explore new interests and engage in a wide variety of activities, improving student behavior and interpersonal skills, and building strong relationships with program staff and the community members. Additionally,

respondents indicated that the provision of safe, supervised, and supportive environment for students after school fulfilled an important need in their communities, particularly in rural areas where most parents had long commutes to and from work.

Program staff and administrators were also asked to describe the most important challenges they encountered. Based on these reports, programs struggled with finding and retaining quality staff, dealing with challenging student behavior, fluctuations in daily attendance, communicating and coordinating with school day teachers, finding appropriate space for activities, and modifying programming due to inclement weather.

What have been lessons learned? What recommendations are available for improvement, and how can programs better achieve goals and grant objectives?

Overall, Montana 21st CCLC programs have developed a strong foundation for serving youth and families in their communities. However, continued progress will require sustained supports and assistance from grantees and ongoing monitoring of student outcomes and program quality. Based on the challenges reported by teachers, school administrators, parents and program staff and administrators as well as other data analyzed throughout this report, it is recommended that the state focus efforts, supports, and future professional development toward:

- ✚ Helping programs better understand and manage student behaviors (e.g., how to integrate MBI and/or social emotional learning activities in after school programming)
- ✚ Offering diverse, engaging and innovative activities for different age and ability levels in order to increase student attendance and participation
- ✚ Increasing alignment between afterschool programming and classroom learning by improving communication and collaboration with school day staff

Finding from the current report also indicate that improvements may be needed with regard to:

- ✚ Increasing the career development opportunities offered to high-school participants
- ✚ Increasing operating hours by setting a statewide minimum for every 21st CCLC school year program (e.g., 8 hours per week) and encouraging centers to provide summer programming (e.g., providing targeted funds)
- ✚ Building stronger relationships and better communication with parents, including expanding the number of centers that offer adult programming
- ✚ Continuing to direct efforts toward long-term retention of participants

Given that several programs have been quite successful in some of these activities, sharing of successes and lessons learned would also benefit 21st CCLC programs in Montana (e.g., via statewide meetings – online or in-person, regular communications on best practices (e.g.,

quarterly newsletter), establishing a Community of Practice, building an online resource library, etc.).

Based on state performance indicators, the following areas should be targeted for improvement. Recommendations for improving upon these areas are also noted.

- ✚ Centers need to increase student enrollment, regular student attendance, and participant retention. Programmatic strategies for maximizing student participation include: (a) design program features to meet the needs and preferences of students and parents, (b) promote awareness of the program within schools and to parents, and (c) use attendance data to identify students facing difficulties in attending the program.
- ✚ Centers should incorporate adult and family activities, opportunities for career exploration, and community-service learning activities into programming. For the 2017-18 program year, the proportion of centers providing these offerings was low (about 50% of centers) and among centers that did provide this programming, it was offered less frequently. It is important for centers, grantees, and state education agencies to collaborate to identify strategies that will help increase these offerings and offer professional development opportunities in related areas. Additionally, increased communication between different centers across the state will allow programs to adopt strategies that other centers have found to be successful.
- ✚ Centers reported the lowest ratings in the areas of Partnerships (as measured by the MT Monitoring and Quality Improvement Self-Assessment). This area could be targeted for additional training opportunities that could inform program personnel about strategies for establishing and collaborating with community partners. There should also be continuing focus on program evaluation trainings (webinars, online recordings, annual conference and regional meetings), as center ratings indicate that ongoing support is needed. However, given that many centers have made progress in this area, additional improvement efforts should use self-assessment data to identify centers that are struggling and specific areas where additional training is needed.
- ✚ Objectives associated with student motivation and school engagement (i.e. homework completion and class participation) were not met and were not impacted by participation levels. Grantees should encourage collaboration with school day teachers to determine ways to better align afterschool programming with classroom learning and to offer consistent motivational strategies across both school day and afterschool programming.

In sum, the Montana 21st CCLC state team is to be commended for its efforts in assisting grantees with their implementation of these much-needed out of school time programs. While it is evident that there is progress to be made with respect to outcomes, with continued support, technical assistance, and progress monitoring, it is also clear that Montana has a strong foundation from which to build on and achieve positive results for communities and their youth.

Table of Contents

PROJECT OVERVIEW	1
Background.....	1
Evaluation Design and Methodology	2
<i>Evaluation Framework</i>	2
<i>Summary of Progress</i>	5
Organization of the Report.....	6
DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS	7
What are the Characteristics of Montana 21st CCLC Programs?	7
<i>Grantees and Program Centers</i>	7
<i>Program Staff</i>	12
What Students and Families do Montana 21st CCLC Programs Serve? Are Programs Reaching the Target Populations?.....	12
<i>Student Participants</i>	12
<i>Adult and Family Participants</i>	16
<i>Student Attendance</i>	17
<i>Recruitment and Retention</i>	20
<i>Meeting Capacity</i>	21
What is the Extent and Nature of Partnerships Between Montana 21st CCLC Programs and Local Community Organizations?	23
<i>Partner Types</i>	23
<i>Partner Supports</i>	23
What are the Characteristics of 21 st CCLC Programming?	24
<i>Types and Frequency of Program Offerings for Students</i>	24
<i>Types and Frequency of Program Offerings for Adults and Families</i>	30
<i>Center Operations</i>	32
How Well are Montana 21 st CCLC Centers Meeting Quality Standards?.....	34
<i>Self-Assessment Ratings of Program Implementation and Practices</i>	34
Ratings in Overall Sample.....	34
Ratings by Cohort	36
<i>Self-Assessment Ratings for Performance in Specific Areas</i>	38
What SEA- and Grantee-Level Supports are Available to Montana 21 st CCLC Program Staff?.....	48
<i>Perceived Effectiveness</i>	52
<i>Staff Satisfaction</i>	52
<i>Training and Support Needs</i>	54
OUTCOME RESULTS	55
What is the Impact of Montana 21 st CCLC Programs on Student Academic Performance, Student Behaviors and Positive Youth Assets? In What Other Ways Have Programs Affected Participants?.....	55
<i>Success Stories</i>	55
<i>Academic Achievement</i>	56
Student Achievement	56

Student Engagement.....	60
Academic Impacts by Participation Level	62
<i>Behavioral Impacts</i>	64
Classroom Behavior.....	64
Interpersonal Relations.....	66
Personal Control.....	68
<i>Positive Youth Assets</i>	70
Organizational Skills, Assistance Seeking, and Engagement in School Activities.....	70
Staff Support, Safety, and Peer Connectedness	71
Engagement in Community Service and Career Development Opportunities.....	74
<i>Other Program Impacts</i>	77
Student Impacts.....	77
Parent Impacts	79
What is the Level of Student, Parent, Staff, and Administration Satisfaction Concerning the Implementation and Impact of Montana 21 st CCLC Programs?	81
<i>Student Satisfaction</i>	81
Student Enjoyment.....	83
<i>Parent Satisfaction</i>	84
Program Satisfaction.....	84
Satisfaction with Adult and Family Programming	87
Satisfaction with Communication.....	88
<i>Teacher and Administrator Satisfaction</i>	90
Perceived Value.....	90
Satisfaction with Communication.....	93
What Successes and Challenges Were Encountered in the Delivery of Programs?	98
<i>Successes</i>	98
What Are Your Greatest Successes in The Afterschool Program This Year? In What Ways Does the Afterschool Program Benefit Students and The School Community?	98
What Things Do You Like Best About the Afterschool Program?	100
In Your Opinion, What Has Been the Most Positive Result Of Your Child’s Participation In The Afterschool Program This Year?	102
What Has Been the Most Successful Outcome Of The Partnership Between The 21 st CCLC Afterschool And School Day Programs?	103
<i>Challenges</i>	104
What Have Been the Greatest Challenges In The Afterschool Program This Year?.....	104
What Are the Lessons That Have Been Learned? What Recommendations are Available for Improvement, and How Can Programs Better Achieve Goals and Grant Objectives?.....	108
<i>Lessons Learned and Areas for Improvement</i>	108
Are There Any Areas of The Afterschool Program That You Believe Could Improve?	108
CONCLUSION	111
RECOMMENDATIONS	112

TABLE OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figures

Figure 1: Montana 21 st CCLC Logic Model – High-Level Overview.....	6
Figure 2: Types of Grantee Organizations.....	11
Figure 3. Student Ethnic Distribution by Grant Year.....	13
Figure 4. Student and Statewide Special Population Distributions.....	14
Figure 5. Grade Level Distribution, All Students and Regular Attendees.....	16
Figure 6. Adult Participation by Grant Year.....	17
Figure 7. Total and Regular Students Served by Timing.....	18
Figure 8. Total Students Served by Grant Year.....	19
Figure 9. Total Days Attended During the School Year by Grant Year.....	19
Figure 10. School Administrator Satisfaction with Recruitment and Retention Efforts.....	20
Figure 11. Student Retention by Grant Year.....	21
Figure 12. Grantees Meeting Capacity Targets By Grant Year.....	22
Figure 13. Programming Activities During 2017-18 Grant Year.....	27
Figure 14. Programming Activities by Grant Year.....	28
Figure 15. Community-Service Learning Activities by Grant Year.....	29
Figure 16. Physical Fitness Activities by Grant Year.....	30
Figure 17. Parent and Family Programming Activities.....	31
Figure 18. Centers Offering Summer Programming.....	32
Figure 19. 2017 Self-Rating of Best Practices By Grant Year.....	35
Figure 20. 2017 Self-Rating of Implementation of Afterschool Programming Best Practices by Years in Grant.....	37
Figure 21. Program Administrator Communication with Program Staff.....	48
Figure 22. Frequency of Program Administrator Communication with Program Staff.....	49
Figure 23. Program Administrator Communication with Program Staff by Topic.....	50
Figure 24. Program Staff Communication with Program Administrators by Topic.....	50
Figure 25. Professional Development Offerings.....	51
Figure 26. Staff Support and Resources.....	52
Figure 27. Ratings of Professional Development Offered by Local 21 st CCLC Programs.....	53
Figure 28. Program Administrator and Staff Satisfaction with OPI Supports.....	53
Figure 29. Reading and Math Proficiency Rates.....	57
Figure 30. Teacher Perceptions of Changes in Student Academic Performance By Grant Year.....	59
Figure 31. Teacher Perceptions of Changes in Student Academic Performance by Grant Year.....	59
Figure 32. Student Advancement by Grant Year.....	60
Figure 33. Teacher Perceptions of Improvement in student Engagement By Grant Year.....	61
Figure 34. Teacher Perceptions of Changes in Student Engagement by Item.....	62
Figure 35. Program Staff Perceptions Of changes in Student Engagement.....	62
Figure 36. Academic Outcomes Among Regular and Non-Regular Attendees.....	63
Figure 37. Teacher Perceptions of Academic Performance and School Engagement Among Regular and Non-Regular Attendees.....	64

Figure 38. Teacher Perceptions of Changes in Student Behavior by Grant Year65

Figure 39. Teacher Perceptions of Changes in Student Behavior by Item65

Figure 40. Program Staff Perceptions of Changes in Student Behavior66

Figure 41. Teacher Perceptions of Changes in Student Conflict Resolution Skills by Grant Year.....66

Figure 42. Teacher Perceptions of Changes in Student Conflict Resolution Skills By Item.....67

Figure 43. Program Staff Perceptions of Changes in Student Interpersonal Skills.....67

Figure 44. Teacher Perceptions of Changes Interpersonal Skills Among Regular and Non-Regular Attendees68

Figure 45. Percent of Students who Perceive Personal Control By Grant Year69

Figure 46. Student Ratings of Personal Control by Item69

Figure 47. Student Perceptions of Personal Control by Program Participation.....70

Figure 48. Teacher Perceptions of Changes in Other Positive Youth Assets.....71

Figure 49. Program Staff Perceptions of Changes in Other Positive Youth Assets71

Figure 50. Student Perceptions of Staff Support, Program Safety, and Peer Connectedness By Grant Year72

Figure 51. Student Perceptions of Staff Support by Item73

Figure 52. Student Perceptions of Program Safety by Item73

Figure 53. Student Perceptions of Peer Connectedness by Item73

Figure 54. Student perceptions of Safety, Peer Connections, and Support Among Regular and Non-Regular Attendees74

Figure 55. Student Involvement in Community Service and Career Development Opportunities By Grant Year75

Figure 56. Student Involvement in Community Service and Career Development Opportunities By Item.....76

Figure 57. Involvement in Community Service and Career Development Opportunities Among Regular and Non-Regular Attendees.....76

Figure 58. Student Perceptions of Other Program Impacts77

Figure 59. Parent Perceptions of Other Program Impacts.....78

Figure 60. Teachers’ Perceptions of Whether Students Benefit from the Afterschool Program78

Figure 61. Parent Knowledge and Awareness of Student Progress by Grant Year.....79

Figure 62. Parent Knowledge and Awareness of Student Progress by Item80

Figure 63. Student Involvement and Interest by Grant Year.....81

Figure 64. Student Involvement and Interest by Item82

Figure 65. Student Involvement and Interest by Participation Level.....82

Figure 66. Student Enjoyment.....83

Figure 67. Program Staff and Administrator Perceptions of Student Involvement and Interest83

Figure 68. Student Desire for Additional Program Activities84

Figure 69. Parent satisfaction by Grant Year.....84

Figure 70. Parent Satisfaction by Item.....85

Figure 71. According to Parents, What are the Best Parts of the Afterschool Program?86

Figure 72. Parent Satisfaction with Program Components.....87

Figure 73. Parent Participation in Adult Programming.....88

Figure 74. Parent Satisfaction with Adult Programming.....88

Figure 75. Parent Satisfaction with Communication By Grant Year89

Figure 76. Parent Satisfaction with Communication by Item.....89

Figure 77. Teacher and School Administrator Perceptions of Program Value by Grant Year90

Figure 78. Teacher and School Administrator Satisfaction by Item.....91

Figure 79. According to School Administrators, How Does the Afterschool Program Benefit Students? ...92

Figure 80. According to School Day teachers, How Does the Afterschool Program Benefit Students?92

Figure 81. Teacher and School Administrator Satisfaction with After School Programming.....93

Figure 82. Staff Perceptions of Communication with Parents93

Figure 83. Program Staff and Administrator Satisfaction with Parent Involvement94

Figure 84. School and Program Administrator Communication95

Figure 85. School Day Teacher Visits to Afterschool Program.....95

Figure 86. School Day Teacher and Program Staff Communication96

Figure 87. School Day Teacher and Administrator Satisfaction with Program Collaboration and School Day Integration96

Tables

Table 1. Evaluation Questions, Goals, and Objectives.....3

Table 2. Grantees and Centers: 2017-20187

Table 3. Center size: Total Students Served11

Table 4. Program Staff12

Table 5. Student Demographic Characteristics.....13

Table 6. Total and Regular Attendees by Grade Level15

Table 7. Types of Partner Organizations23

Table 8. Partner Resources and Supports24

Table 9. Characteristics of Student Programming by Term25

Table 10. Staff to Student Ratio By Term33

Table 11. MMQI-SA Performance Levels35

Table 12. Item Ratings for Grant Management and Sustainability39

Table 13. Item Ratings for Organizational Structure and Management.....41

Table 14. Item Ratings for Staffing and Professional Development42

Table 15. Item Ratings for Partnerships.....43

Table 16. Item Ratings for Center Operations.....44

Table 17. Item Ratings for Programming and Activities45

Table 18. Item Ratings for Health and Safety.....46

Table 19. Item Ratings for Evaluation and Measuring Outcomes47

Table 20. Training Needs Among 21st CCLC Staff and Administrators.....54

Project Overview

BACKGROUND

“Turning “non-school hours” into “learning hours” requires us to provide learning opportunities that address a broader spectrum of interests and talents possessed by today’s youth. We need educators, community organizations, employers, and volunteers not simply to work better together but also to work in new and more productive ways that spark student interest in learning. Afterschool and summer programs throughout the country are, for example, helping schools better fulfill their responsibility to teach students in the most engaging fashion. They are also providing a logical means to bring new community resources to the learning enterprise and to position schools as a hub of learning beyond the typical school day and year. In addition, they are empowering educators and families as facilitators or “orchestrators” of learning—not only in and around the school but also in the broader community.” – T.K. Peterson⁵

In order to “support the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools”⁶ the U.S. Department of Education developed the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Program (21st CCLC). The program is largely focused on providing enrichment activities outside of school hours that help students meet state and local standards in core academic subjects. In addition, the 21st CCLC grant supports other educational services, including literacy, to the families of participating children.

Findings from afterschool evaluations indicate that afterschool programs can and do make a difference for children, families, and communities. Data shows these well designed out-of-school programs positively impact youth, such as increasing student performance, providing a safe haven for children and youth during non-school hours, and reducing school violence.⁷ The overarching mission of the 21st CCLC grant offers a unique opportunity to collect data at the local, state, and national levels in order to build on research regarding the structure and

⁵ Peterson, T. K. (ED., 2013). *Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success*. Retrieved from: <https://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds>

⁶ U.S. Department of Education (2016). *21st Century Community Learning Centers*. Retrieved from: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>

⁷ Harvard Family Research Project (2002). *Evaluation of 21st CCLC Programs*. Retrieved from: www.hfrp.org/content/download/1094/48599/file/issuebrief2

MONTANA 21ST CCLC GRANT GOALS

GOAL 1 | *Montana 21st CCLC programs will see improvements in the academic achievement of their students.*

GOAL 2 | *Montana 21st CCLC programs will provide a safe, supportive, and healthy environment for youth.*

GOAL 3 | *Montana 21st CCLC programs will work collaboratively with families and communities to promote positive youth development and parent skills.*

GOAL 4 | *Montana 21st CCLC programs will see an increase in the socio-emotional skills of their students.*

GOAL 5 | *Montana 21st CCLC programs will promote the active engagement of enrolled participants.*

GOAL 6 | *Montana 21st CCLC programs will provide high-quality operations.*

implementations of effective afterschool programs. It is critical that state education agencies administering 21st CCLC grants conduct evaluations to support these important programs and help them improve. To support this effort, the Montana Office of Public Instruction Health Enhancement and Safety Division (OPI), which awards, administers, and supervises the 21st CCLC grant programs, has contracted with an evaluation firm, JEM & R, to conduct annual evaluations of their programs.⁸ The present report provides results from the 2017-18 grant year.

EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

JEM & R, LLC has worked closely with OPI and key stakeholders to design an evaluation that addresses the needs of Montana 21st CCLC programs by determining their effectiveness related to meeting goals and objectives, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and providing recommendations to improve program planning and implementation.

The purposes of the current evaluation include: a) providing timely, useful feedback to stakeholders regarding the quality of program components, the extent to which they are implemented, and program outcomes; b) reviewing data and reporting infrastructure that will provide key stakeholders with important information to inform program status, planning and activities, and as needed, upgrading or further developing this infrastructure; c) evaluating the statewide impacts of Montana's 21st CCLC grant; and d) regularly providing technical assistance to the State regarding federal requirements and guidelines, evaluation and recent research about out-of-school programming.

Evaluation Framework

It is important that comprehensive evaluations, such as this one, include both process and outcome measures. ESSA requires the collection of annually monitored performance

⁸ JEM & R LLC was hired in December of 2016 for the 5-year evaluation project.

Montana State Evaluation Report

measures (GPRAs) in addition to an outcome or summative evaluation “tracks student success and performance over time.” Furthermore, ESSA requires that SEAs “monitor programs and activities assisted under this part” (process or formative evaluation). Accordingly, the present evaluation includes the investigation of the processes and outcomes associated with the Montana 21st CCLC overarching goals, objectives, and indicators. Examples of associated data elements are provided below:

- *Process measures* include measures of implementation, program quality, and program intensity or dosage. Examples of process measures include: program attendance, types of academic or enrichment activities, frequency of these activities, or student/parent/staff satisfaction with the program.
- *Outcome measures* are measures of behavior or performance (usually of students) that the program is designed to improve. Examples of outcome measures include: standardized test scores, grades, school attendance records, rates of suspension and other disciplinary actions based on district data.

JEM & R has designed an evaluation that combines these two types of measures so that we can explore why programs may be more successful in some areas than others and what strategies might be effective in addressing program weaknesses. Such an approach produces results that support program improvement, while at the same time addressing federal and state accountability requirements. Details on the questions we plan to address over the five-year evaluation⁹ are provided in Table 1. The table also shows the alignment of these evaluation questions with the six goals of the Montana 21st CCLC grant and the objectives. As shown, these evaluation questions address both student outcomes and program implementation, in addition to aligning with current statewide goals and objectives.

TABLE 1. EVALUATION QUESTIONS, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	GOALS	OBJECTIVES
What are the characteristics of students and families served, and are programs reaching the target populations? What are the characteristics of the staff that provide 21 st CCLC programming? What are the characteristics of 21 st CCLC programming (e.g., services offered, frequency) and how well are they meeting quality standards?	GOAL 5: 21 st CCLC programs will promote the active engagement of enrolled participants.	OBJECTIVE 5.1: 21 st CCLC programs will offer engaging programmatic activities that promote participation, retention and active learning experiences.
	GOAL 2: 21 st CCLC programs will provide a safe, supportive, and healthy environment for youth.	OBJECTIVE 2.2: Students participating in 21 st CCLC programs will be provided with healthy eating opportunities.
	GOAL 6: 21 st CCLC programs will provide high-quality operations.	OBJECTIVE 6.2: 21 st CCLC programs will offer high-quality program activities and operations that meet the needs of youth in the community.

⁹ Not all questions may be addressed each program year as the evaluation will evolve and be customized according to findings and lessons learned from prior years.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	GOALS	OBJECTIVES
<p>What is the extent and nature of local partnerships across programs and how does this influence implementation, sustainability and impacts?</p>	<p>GOAL 6: 21st CCLC Programs will provide high-quality operations.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE 6.2: 21st CCLC programs will offer high-quality program activities and operations that meet the needs of youth in the community.</p>
<p>What is the impact of 21st CCLC programs on the academic performance of participating students? Does participation in 21st CCLC programs appear to contribute to improved academic outcomes and related indicators (e.g., classroom grades, on-time advancement to the next grade level, homework completion)?</p>	<p>GOAL 1: 21st CCLC programs will see improvements in the academic achievement of their students.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE 1.1: 21st CCLC programs will increase students' performance in math and reading.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 1.2: Students in 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate increases in measures of engagement such as homework completion and class participation.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 1.3: Students in 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate increases in class grades for core subjects and on-time advancement to the next grade level.</p>
<p>Does participation in 21st CCLC programs affect other behaviors and positive youth assets such as: regular school and program attendance, positive behavior, skill development (including career development or work-based learning for high school students), and healthy youth development?</p>	<p>GOAL 4: 21st CCLC programs will see an increase in the socio-emotional skills of their students.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE 4.1: Students participating in 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate improvements in perceptions of self-control and conflict resolution skills.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 4.2: Students participating in 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate improvements in behavior, including attendance.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 4.3: High-school students participating in 21st CCLC programs will participate in career development opportunities.</p>
<p>What other effects and/or unintended consequences have resulted from the implementation of out of school programs?</p>	<p>GOAL 2: 21st CCLC programs will provide a safe, supportive, and healthy environment for youth.</p> <p>GOAL 3: 21st CCLC programs will work collaboratively with families and communities to promote positive youth development and parent skills.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE 2.1: Students participating in 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate increases in perceptions of support, connectedness, and safety.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 3.2: Students will demonstrate increases in community and civic engagement.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 3.1: Parents of students in 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate increases in parental communication and support/knowledge of student.</p>
<p>What is the level of student, parent, staff, and administration satisfaction concerning the</p>	<p>GOAL 6: 21st CCLC Programs will provide high-quality operations.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE 6.1: 21st CCLC programs will be perceived as valuable by parents and school teachers/administrators.</p>

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	GOALS	OBJECTIVES
implementation and impact of after school programs?		
What SEA and grantee level resources and technical assistance are available for support to program staff? How effective are these and to what degree are recipients satisfied? What lessons learned and recommendations are available for improvement and to achieve grant goals/objectives?	GOAL 6: 21 st CCLC Programs will provide high-quality operations.	OBJECTIVE 6.2: 21 st CCLC programs will offer high-quality program activities and operations that meet the needs of youth in the community.

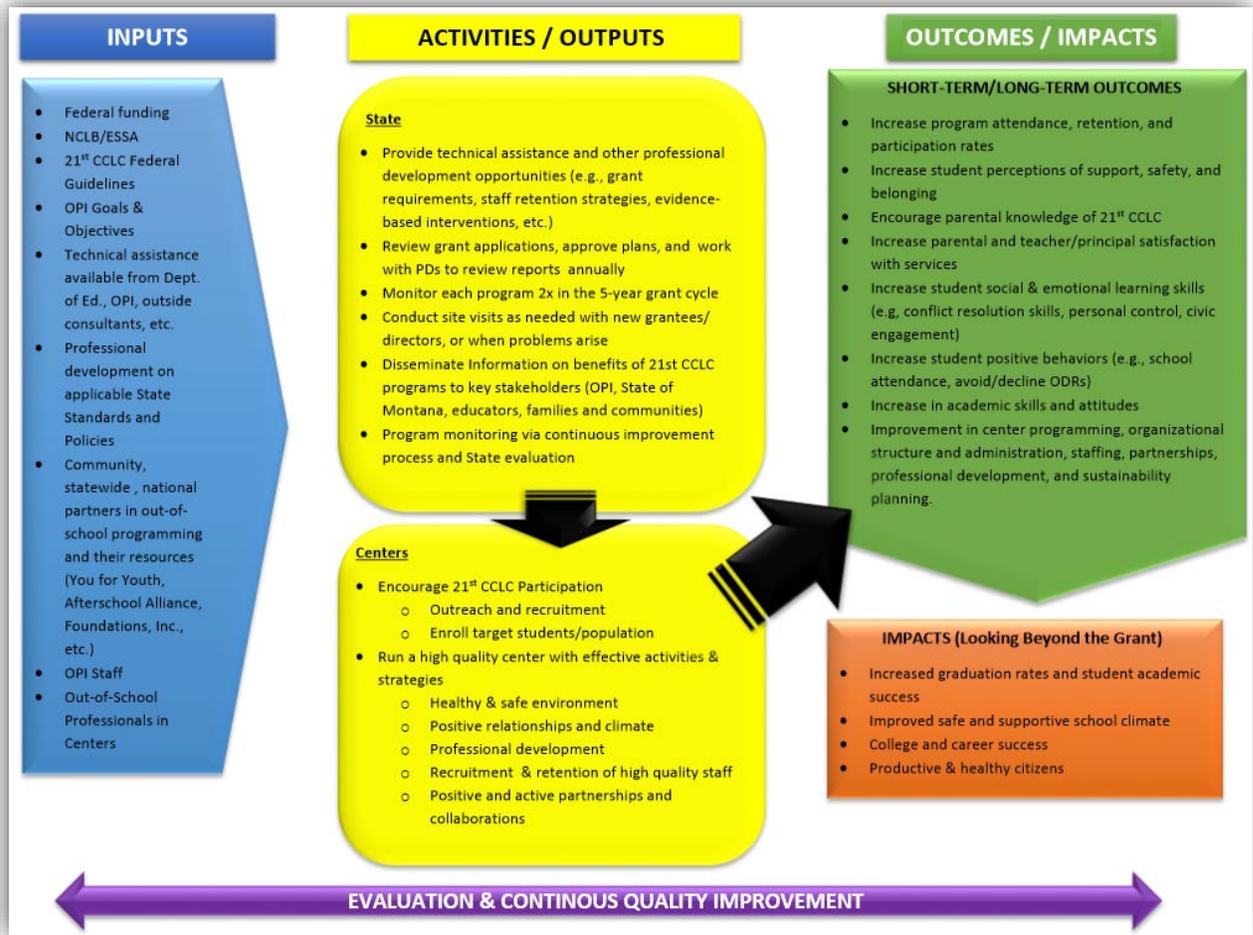
Summary of Progress

Over the course of the 2017-18 grant year, the evaluator has worked closely with grant staff to build an infrastructure that supports the data collection and reporting, The infrastructure aligns with the new evaluation plan to provide training and support to grantees in meeting the goals of the outlined in the new plan. Major activities included:

- ✚ Conducting meetings and trainings for local grantees on the evaluation plan, measures, and processes;
- ✚ Ensuring timely completion of all data collection and reporting activities;
- ✚ Working with the state team for submission of APR Federal Reporting requirements including but not limited to: attendance, activities, staffing, partners, etc.
- ✚ Provide local evaluation reports to grantees and reviewing and monitoring completion of all local evaluation reports;
- ✚ Administering all surveys in Spring 2018 and providing survey reports to individual grantees within two months of completion;
- ✚ Administering the OPI 21st CCLC Self-Assessment tool;
- ✚ Working with OPI data team to obtain student-level academic and attendance data; and
- ✚ Completing the present report.

In sum, JEM & R has worked closely with the state grant team and local grantees to ensure that their unique needs, priorities and goals are addressed, and to plan and conduct an evaluation that will help inform decisions and improve project activities and outcomes. This process is illustrated in the following logic model.

FIGURE 1: MONTANA 21ST CCLC LOGIC MODEL – HIGH-LEVEL OVERVIEW



ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The report begins with descriptive information about the grantees and centers, participating students and families, and the program offerings across centers. This is followed by data regarding outcomes observed during the 2017-18 grant year. When possible, historical comparisons are provided to contextualize the current data. The report closes with conclusions and recommendations for program improvement.

Descriptive Results

The Montana Office of Public Instruction manages the 21st CCLC grant funds. Through a competitive application process, the OPI sub-grants funds to communities across Montana to run effective before school, after school, and summer programs that adhere to the requirements of 21st CCLC. Across the state of Montana, much of which is rural, there were 79 grantees running 142 centers in 2017-18. While centers are open to all Montana students, 21st CCLC programs focused on serving student populations who are academically or economically disadvantaged. Indeed, in order to be awarded funds, they had to demonstrate that they would primarily serve students attending schools where at least forty percent (40%) of students are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch. In addition, Federal regulations also required that a priority be given to applications that serve students attending schools with a 'school in need of improvement' designation under Title I and that are submitted jointly by a school district and a community-based organization.

Prior to presenting descriptive findings, it should be noted that counts throughout the report vary due to missing data. Unfortunately, not all grantees or centers reported on every data point. The percentages presented are always based on the number of respondents.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MONTANA 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS?

Grantees and Program Centers

Table 2 shows all grantees ($N = 79$) and centers ($N = 142$) that had 21st CCLC funding for the 2017-18 program year. Most grantees ($n = 45$, or 57%) had one center. There were 21 grantees (27%) with two centers and 13 (16%) that had three or more. The largest number of centers operated by a single grantee was nine ($n = 1$, Greater Gallatin United Way - Bozeman).

TABLE 2. GRANTEES AND CENTERS: 2017-2018

GRANTEE		CENTER	
1	Arlee Elementary	1	Arlee
2	Ashland Elementary	2	Ashland
3	Belfry K-12 Schools	3	Belfry
4	Belt Elementary	4	Belt
5	Bigfork ACES, Inc.	5	Bigfork ACES, Inc.
5	Bigfork ACES, Inc.	6	Deer Park School
5	Bigfork ACES, Inc.	7	Kila School
5	Bigfork ACES, Inc.	8	Marion School
6	Boulder Elementary	9	Boulder Elementary
7	Box Elder Elementary	10	Box Elder K-12

GRANTEE		CENTER	
8	Boys & Girls Club of Glacier County	11	Boys & Girls Glacier - COLFLS
9	Boys & Girls Club of Red Lodge	12	Boys & Girls Club of Red Lodge
9	Boys & Girls Club of Red Lodge	13	Roberts
10	Boys & Girls Club of Yellowstone County - Lockwood	14	Lockwood
11	Boys & Girls Club of Yellowstone County - McKinley	15	McKinley/Teen
12	Boys & Girls Club of Yellowstone County - Castle Rock	16	Bair Family Clubhouse
12	Boys & Girls Club of Yellowstone County - Castle Rock	17	Bench Extension
13	Boys & Girls Clubs of North Central Montana	18	Boys & Girls Club of Cascade County
14	Boys & Girls Clubs of Lewistown	19	Boys & Girls of Club of Lewistown
15	Bridger K-12 Schools	20	Bridger
16	Browning Elementary	21	Browning Elementary 2-3
16	Browning Elementary	22	Browning High School 9-12
16	Browning Elementary	23	Browning Middle 7-8
16	Browning Elementary	24	Browning Summer Center
16	Browning Elementary	25	Browning Vina Chattin
16	Browning Elementary	26	Napi Elementary 4-6
17	Butte Elementary	27	Emerson
17	Butte Elementary	28	Kennedy
17	Butte Elementary	29	Margaret Leary
17	Butte Elementary	30	Summer Program - East Middle
17	Butte Elementary	31	West Elementary
17	Butte Elementary	32	Whittier School
18	Cascade Elementary	33	Cascade
19	Centerville Elementary	34	Centerville LEAP
20	Charlo Elementary	35	Charlo
21	Conrad Elementary	36	Conrad High School 7-12
21	Conrad Elementary	37	Meadowlark School K-3
21	Conrad Elementary	38	Utterback School 4-6
22	Corvallis K-12 Schools	39	Corvallis 7-8
23	Dixon Elementary	40	Dixon School
24	Drummond Elementary	41	Drummond 7-12
24	Drummond Elementary	42	Drummond K-6
25	Dutton/Brady K-12 Schools	43	Dutton-Brady Schools
25	Dutton/Brady K-12 Schools	44	Dutton/Brady Pondera Colony
26	East Glacier Park Elementary	45	East Glacier
27	East Helena Elementary	46	Eastgate K-1
27	East Helena Elementary	47	Radley 2-8
28	Eureka Elementary	48	Eureka Elementary
29	Fairview Elementary	49	Circle School
29	Fairview Elementary	50	Fairview School
29	Fairview Elementary	51	Frontier School
30	Frazer High School	52	Frazer High School

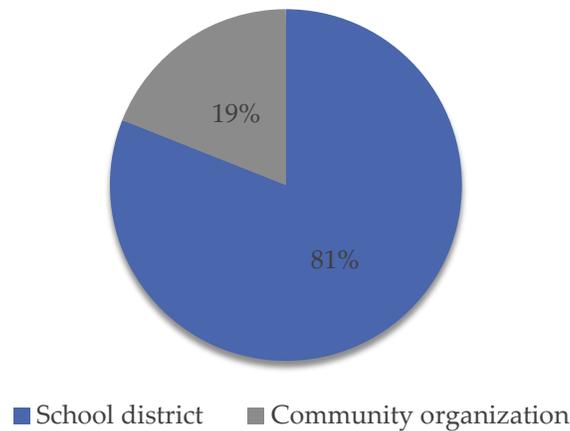
GRANTEE		CENTER	
30	Frazer High School	53	Plenty Coups High School
31	Frenchtown K-12 Schools	54	Frenchtown Elementary
32	Friendship Montana	55	Friendship House
33	Greater Gallatin United Way Belgrade	56	Belgrade Middle 5-8
33	Greater Gallatin United Way Belgrade	57	Heck/Quaw Elementary
33	Greater Gallatin United Way Belgrade	58	Ridge View Elementary
33	Greater Gallatin United Way Belgrade	59	Saddle Peak Elementary
34	Greater Gallatin United Way Bozeman	60	Chief Joseph
34	Greater Gallatin United Way Bozeman	61	Emily Dickinson
34	Greater Gallatin United Way Bozeman	62	Hawthorne School - HAWKS
34	Greater Gallatin United Way Bozeman	63	Hyalite Center
34	Greater Gallatin United Way Bozeman	64	Irving Tigers
34	Greater Gallatin United Way Bozeman	65	Longfellow CARES
34	Greater Gallatin United Way Bozeman	66	Lucky Stars - Morning Star
34	Greater Gallatin United Way Bozeman	67	Meadowlark SOAR
34	Greater Gallatin United Way Bozeman	68	Whittier Wildcats
35	Hamilton	69	Hamilton High School 9-12
35	Hamilton	70	Hamilton Middle 6-8
36	Hamilton K-12 Schools	71	Keystone K-5
37	Hardin Elementary	72	Crow Agency
37	Hardin Elementary	73	Fort Smith
37	Hardin Elementary	74	Hardin Intermediate 3-5
37	Hardin Elementary	75	Hardin Primary PreK-2
38	Harlem High School	76	Harlem Elementary
38	Harlem High School	77	Harlem High School
39	Harlowton Elementary	78	Harlowton Elementary
39	Harlowton Elementary	79	Harlowton High School
40	Hays-Lodge Pole K-12 Schools	80	Hays-High School
40	Hays-Lodge Pole K-12 Schools	81	Lodge Pole Elementary
40	Hays-Lodge Pole K-12 Schools	82	Mission Grade School
41	Heart Butte K-12 Schools	83	Heart Butte K-12 Center
42	Helena Family YMCA	84	Bryant
42	Helena Family YMCA	85	Helena Middle
43	HELP Committee and Boys & Girls Club	86	Boys & Girls of the Hi-Line - HAVRE
44	Highwood K-12	87	Fort Benton
44	Highwood K-12	88	Geraldine
44	Highwood K-12	89	Highwood
45	Hot Springs	90	Hot Springs High School
45	Hot Springs	91	Plains High School
46	Hot Springs K-12	92	Dayton
46	Hot Springs K-12	93	Hot Springs
46	Hot Springs K-12	94	Valley View

GRANTEE		CENTER	
47	Huntley Project K-12 Schools	95	Huntley Elementary
48	Irwin & Florence Rosten Foundation	96	MAPS
49	Lame Deer Elementary	97	Lame Deer 7-12
49	Lame Deer Elementary	98	Lame Deer Elementary
50	Libby K-12 Schools	99	Libby Elementary
50	Libby K-12 Schools	100	Libby Middle/High School
51	Lincoln K-12 Schools	101	Augusta Public Schools
51	Lincoln K-12 Schools	102	Helmville K-8
51	Lincoln K-12 Schools	103	Lincoln K-12 Schools
51	Lincoln K-12 Schools	104	Ovando K-8
52	Livingston Elementary	105	Livingston East Side Elementary
53	Lone Rock Elementary	106	Lone Rock
54	Melstone Elementary	107	Melstone School
55	Missoula	108	Missoula-Porter Middle
56	Missoula Elementary	109	Missoula-Franklin
56	Missoula Elementary	110	Missoula-Hawthorne
57	Noxon Elementary	111	Noxon Elementary/Junior High/High School
58	Philipsburg K-12 Schools	112	Philipsburg
59	Phillips County Coalition for Healthy Choices	113	Boys & Girls Club of Malta
60	Polson Elementary	114	Cherry Valley
60	Polson Elementary	115	Linderman
61	Potomac Elementary	116	Potomac
62	Rocky Boy High School	117	Rocky Boy
63	Ronan Elementary	118	Ronan/Pablo-K. William Harvey
63	Ronan Elementary	119	Ronan/Pablo-Pablo Elementary
64	Ronan High School	120	Ronan Middle/High School
65	Seeley Lake Elementary	121	Clinton Elementary
65	Seeley Lake Elementary	122	Seeley Lake Elementary
65	Seeley Lake Elementary	123	Swan Valley School
66	Shelby Elementary	124	Shelby
67	Sheridan Elementary	125	Sheridan Elementary
67	Sheridan Elementary	126	Sheridan Junior High/High School
68	St. Ignatius K-12 Schools	127	St. Ignatius Schools
69	St. Regis K-12 Schools	128	St. Regis K-12 Schools
70	Sun River Valley Elementary	129	Sun River - Fort Shaw School
71	Superior K-12 Schools	130	Alberton
71	Superior K-12 Schools	131	Superior
72	Terry K-12 Schools	132	Terry
73	Thompson Falls/Plains Elementary	133	Plains Elementary
73	Thompson Falls/Plains Elementary	134	Thompson Falls Elementary
74	Townsend K-12 Schools	135	Stevens Youth Center
74	Townsend K-12 Schools	136	Townsend Schools

GRANTEE		CENTER	
75	Trout Creek Elementary	137	Trout Creek Elementary
76	Troy Elementary	138	Troy Elementary K-6
77	Twin Bridges K-12 Schools	139	Twin Bridges
78	Vaughn Elementary	140	Fairfield Elementary and Middle
78	Vaughn Elementary	141	Vaughn Elementary and Middle
79	Whitehall High School	142	Whitehall Elementary and Middle

As shown in Figure 2, grantees consisted primarily of school districts ($n = 64$) with the remaining being community-based organizations (e.g., Boys and Girls Club, United Way, YMCA).

FIGURE 2: TYPES OF GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS



On average, centers served 98 students during the 2017-18 school year; however, this number varies substantially across different centers. Table 3 categorizes centers by size, based on the number of attendees served during the school year. Only 13% percent of centers served over 200 total attendees, whereas approximately half (47%) served 100 students or fewer. Given that much of Montana is rural, variability in center size is expected, and the present findings are consistent with the school populations.

TABLE 3. CENTER SIZE: TOTAL STUDENTS SERVED

TOTAL ATTENDEES	CENTERS	
1-50	21	19.0%
51-100	46	32.4%
101-200	51	35.9%
201-300	14	9.9%
301-400	2	1.4%
401-500	1	0.7%
501-600	1	0.7%
Total	142	

Program Staff

Table 4 shows staff characteristics for the school year and summer programs respectively ($N = 99$ centers provided data for Summer 2017; $N = 138$ centers provided school-year data). Total staff for the 2017-2018 school year was 2,020, which represents 2% increase from the prior year ($N = 1,983$). Of these, 62% were paid staff and 38% were volunteers. As expected, there were fewer staff for summer programs ($N = 1,056$); however, this represents a 15% increase from Summer 2016. Compared to school-year programs, summer programs relied more on paid staff, with 83% of staff in paid positions. Across both school year and summer programs, among the paid staff the majority were teachers or other non-teaching school staff. Community members were the largest source of volunteers for summer programs, whereas the majority of school-year volunteers were college students.

TABLE 4. PROGRAM STAFF

STAFF TYPE	SUMMER 2017				SCHOOL YEAR 2017-18			
	PAID STAFF		VOLUNTEER STAFF		PAID STAFF		VOLUNTEER STAFF	
Administrators	110	12.6%	4	2.2%	120	9.6%	5	0.6%
College Students	60	6.9%	10	5.4%	57	4.6%	406	52.7%
Community Members	108	12.4%	66	35.9%	235	18.8%	174	22.6%
High School Students	103	11.8%	28	15.2%	103	8.2%	35	4.5%
Other Non-Teaching School Staff	149	17.1%	8	4.3%	272	21.8%	23	3.0%
Parents	20	2.3%	15	8.2%	25	2.0%	52	6.8%
School Day Teachers	273	31.3%	10	5.4%	372	29.8%	47	6.1%
Other	49	5.6%	43	23.4%	66	5.3%	28	3.6%
Total	872		184		1,250		770	

WHAT STUDENTS AND FAMILIES DO MONTANA 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS SERVE? ARE PROGRAMS REACHING THE TARGET POPULATIONS?

Student Participants

The majority of students participating in Montana 21st CCLC programs in the 2017-18 school year identified as White (70%), followed by American Indian (23%). As would be expected given the federal and state guidance that 21st CCLC programs target students from low-income families, economically disadvantaged students were overrepresented in 21st CCLC programs compared to statewide data. Specifically, 65% of 21st CCLC participants are eligible for free or reduced lunch, compared to 45% across all Montana students. Students in summer programs were similar to school-year participants with regard to demographics (see Table 5). American Indian students were also overrepresented compared to statewide demographics (23% of 21st CCLC students versus 11% statewide). In turn, the proportion of White students was somewhat lower than in the

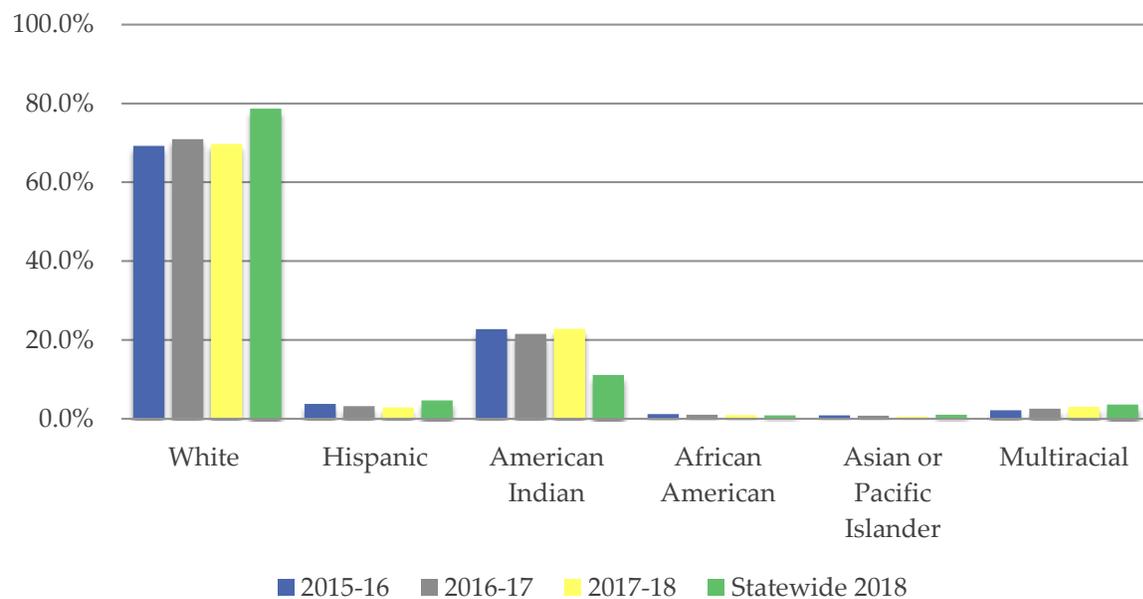
Montana State Evaluation Report

statewide profile. Students in special education classes were slightly underrepresented compared to statewide data, indicating that more outreach efforts should be devoted to this special population. As shown in Figure 3, the demographic characteristics of Montana 21st CCLC programs have been highly consistent over time.

TABLE 5. STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP	SUMMER 2017		SCHOOL YEAR 2017-18		STATEWIDE
GENDER					
Male	3,145	51.5%	6,949	50.0%	--
Female	2,959	48.5%	6,944	50.0%	--
RACE/ETHNICITY					
White	3,945	65.2%	9,584	69.7%	78.7%
Hispanic	173	2.9%	396	2.9%	4.7%
American Indian	1,624	26.8%	3,140	22.8%	11.1%
African American	56	0.9%	134	1.0%	0.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	38	0.6%	79	0.6%	1.0%
Multiracial	219	3.6%	414	3.0%	3.6%
SPECIAL POPULATIONS					
LEP	79	1.4%	295	2.2%	--
Free/Reduced Lunch	3,927	69.6%	8,550	64.8%	45.3%
Special Education	424	8.6%	1,087	9.0%	12.8%

FIGURE 3. STUDENT ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION BY GRANT YEAR



Montana State Evaluation Report

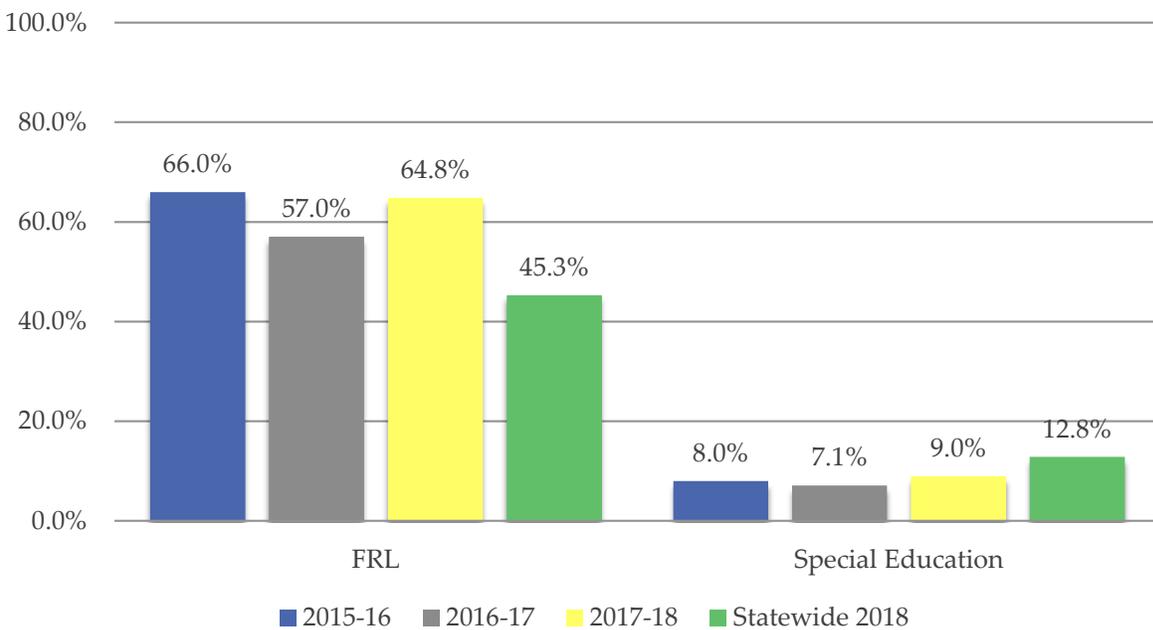
As previously noted, 21st CCLC programs have been designed to target students of low socioeconomic status. Thus, it is important that these programs offer nutritional support to students by providing meals or snacks during programming. Offering nutritional snacks to youth constitutes a best practice. In order to monitor this, a state performance indicator was established, such that all eligible centers would enroll in a USDA Healthy Snack Program. In the 2017-18 grant year, 73% (74 out of 102) were enrolled in these programs. This did not reach the 100% target, and as such, this goal was not met.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 2.2.1. 100% of 21st CCLC centers who meet eligibility criteria will enroll in the USDA Healthy Snack Program (NSLP or CACFP), as measured by School Nutrition Program and DPHHS enrollment records.

RESULT: 72.5% of centers (74 of 102) enrolled in the Healthy Snack Program; goal was not met.



FIGURE 4. STUDENT AND STATEWIDE SPECIAL POPULATION DISTRIBUTIONS



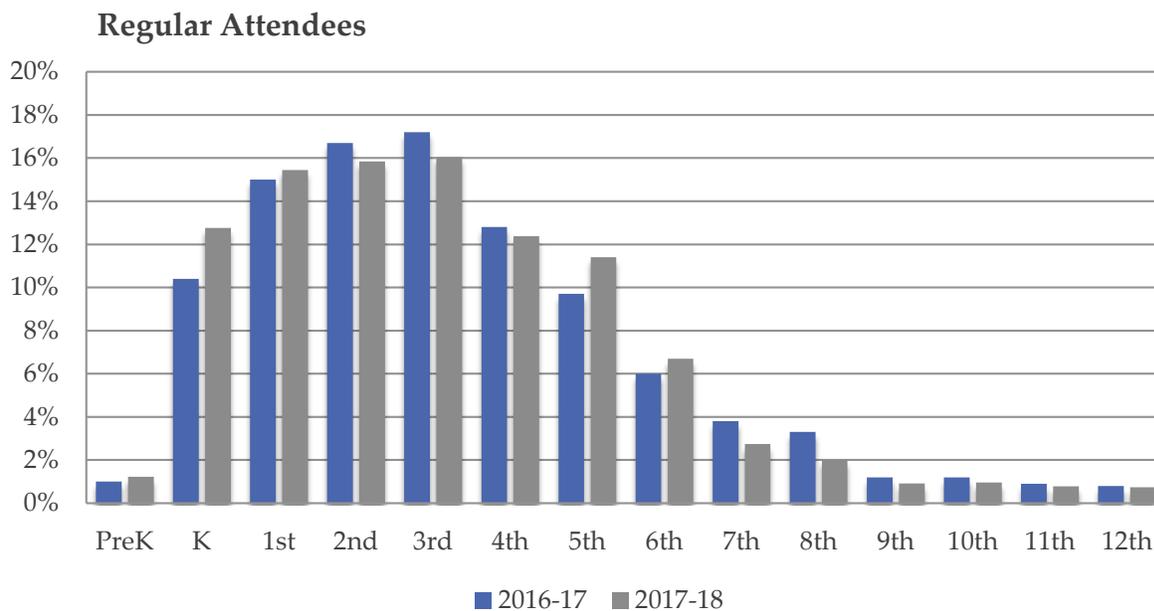
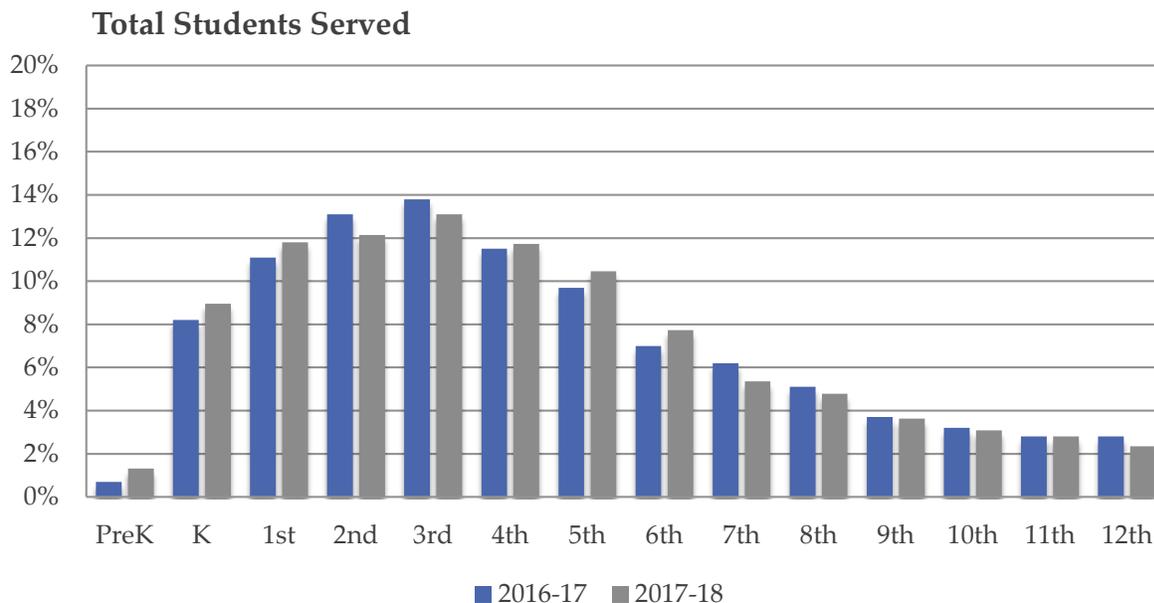
Montana 21st CCLC centers serve students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Table 6 shows the number and percentage of participants in each grade level during the 2017-18 school year. Across all participants, pre-Kindergarteners represent smallest group (1%). Grades K through five were over-represented, accounting for more than half of the total (68%), with attendance rates peaking in 3rd grade (13%). As students got older, participation rates generally declined. High-school students (in grades 9-12) represent the smallest proportion of the attendees, together accounting for 12% of students.

TABLE 6. TOTAL AND REGULAR ATTENDEES BY GRADE LEVEL

GRADE	TOTAL SERVED		REGULAR ATTENDEES	
Pre-Kindergarten	216	1.3%	74	1.2%
Kindergarten	1,468	9.0%	775	12.8%
1 st grade	1,935	11.8%	938	15.4%
2 nd grade	1,990	12.1%	963	15.8%
3 rd grade	2,149	13.1%	975	16.0%
4 th grade	1,923	11.7%	752	12.4%
5 th grade	1,715	10.5%	693	11.4%
6 th grade	1,268	7.7%	407	6.7%
7 th grade	879	5.4%	167	2.7%
8 th grade	784	4.8%	123	2.0%
9 th grade	596	3.6%	56	0.9%
10 th grade	506	3.1%	58	1.0%
11 th grade	461	2.8%	48	0.8%
12 th grade	386	2.4%	45	0.7%
Unknown	121	0.7%	2	0.0%
Total	16,397		6,076	

When considering only regular attendees (students who attended the program for at least 30 days), a similar, but more distinct pattern emerges, with starker differences between older and younger students. Specifically, elementary students make up 84% of regular attendees compared 3% for high-school students. Such findings are not surprising given that parents and caregivers use after school programming to a greater extent for their younger students, as older students tend to have less need for after school supervision. Additionally, older students are more likely to have other commitments that conflict with afterschool, such as extracurricular activities, sports, or a part-time job. As shown in Figure 5, the pattern of participation across grades is consistent across the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years.

FIGURE 5. GRADE LEVEL DISTRIBUTION, ALL STUDENTS AND REGULAR ATTENDEES

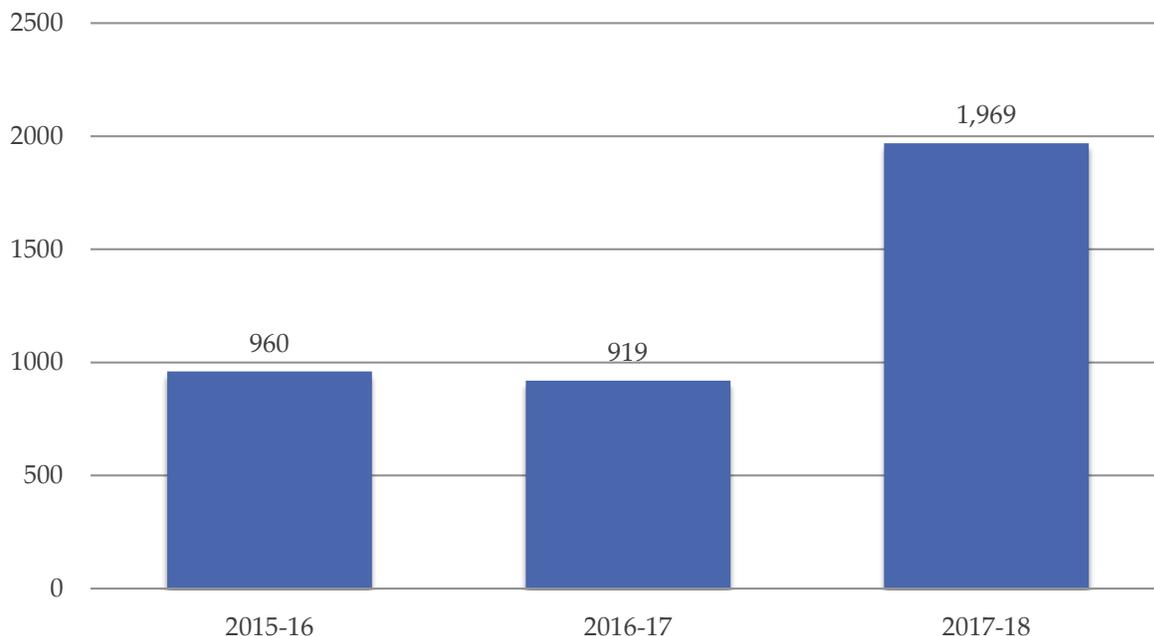


Adult and Family Participants

The following figure shows the number of adult or family participants in 21st CCLC programming for the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 grant years. As shown, centers made significant progress in this area. There were more than twice as many adults and family participants in 2017-18 than there were in previous years, with family participation *increasing by 114%* from the previous grant

year. Centers will continue to monitor annual participation rates to determine if a similar pattern occurs in the upcoming years.

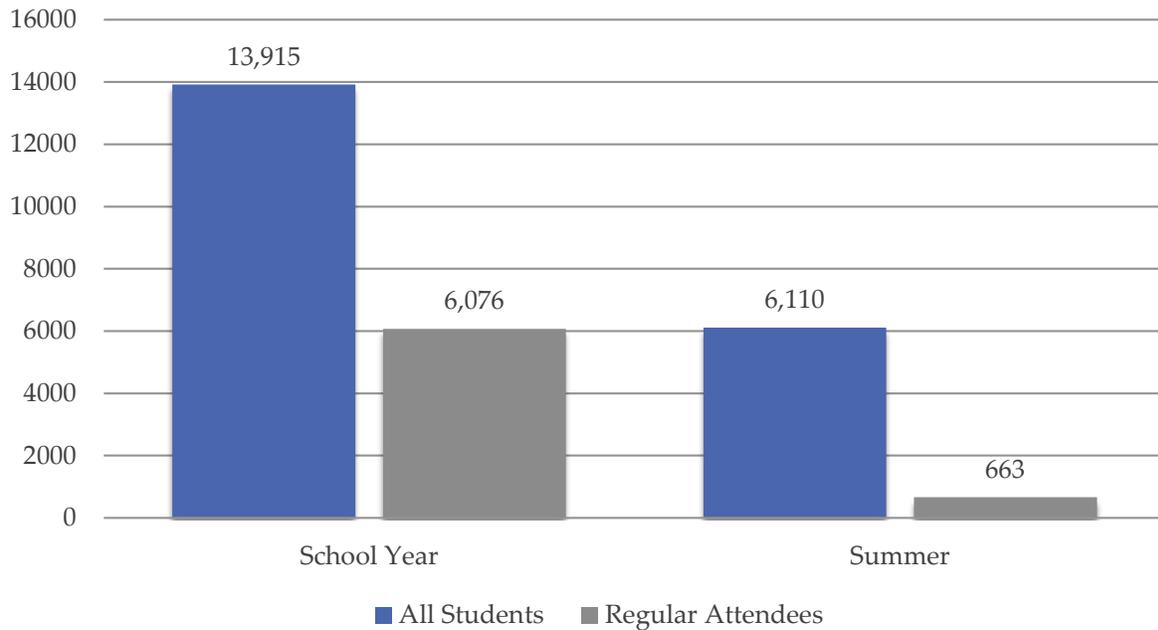
FIGURE 6. ADULT PARTICIPATION BY GRANT YEAR



Student Attendance

There are two classifications of student attendee data. The first classification includes all students who attended a center at least once during the reporting period (total students). The second group includes the subset of students who attended a center for at least 30 days during the reporting period (regular attendees). In Figure 7, total students are shown in blue, regular students are shown in grey. A grand total of 13,915 students were served over the school year programming and 6,110 were served during summer programming. **The total unduplicated student count (across both summer and school year programming) was 16,397.** Furthermore, a greater proportion of students attended for at least 30 days (i.e., regular students) during the school year as compared to the summer, as would be expected.

FIGURE 7. TOTAL AND REGULAR STUDENTS SERVED BY TIMING



Compared to the previous year, the number of students participating in 21st CCLC programs fell slightly in 2017-18. Between the 2016-17 and 2017-18 grant years, participation in summer programs *decreased by 8%* and there was a *4% decrease* in participation during the school year. The state performance indicator specifies that across programs, student enrollment should increase by 5% each year; thus, the annual target not was met.

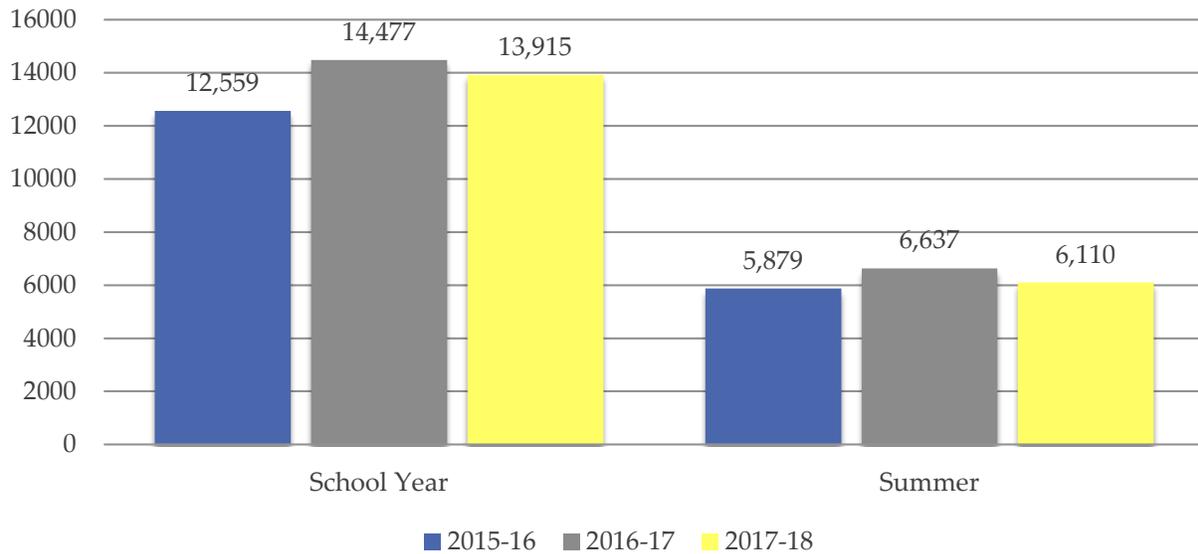
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 5.1.1. The number of Participants Enrolled in 21st CCLC programs will increase by 5% annually, as measured by state attendance spreadsheets.

RESULT: School Year Enrollment decreased by 3.7% from the previous year and Summer Enrollment decreased by 7.9%; goal was not met.



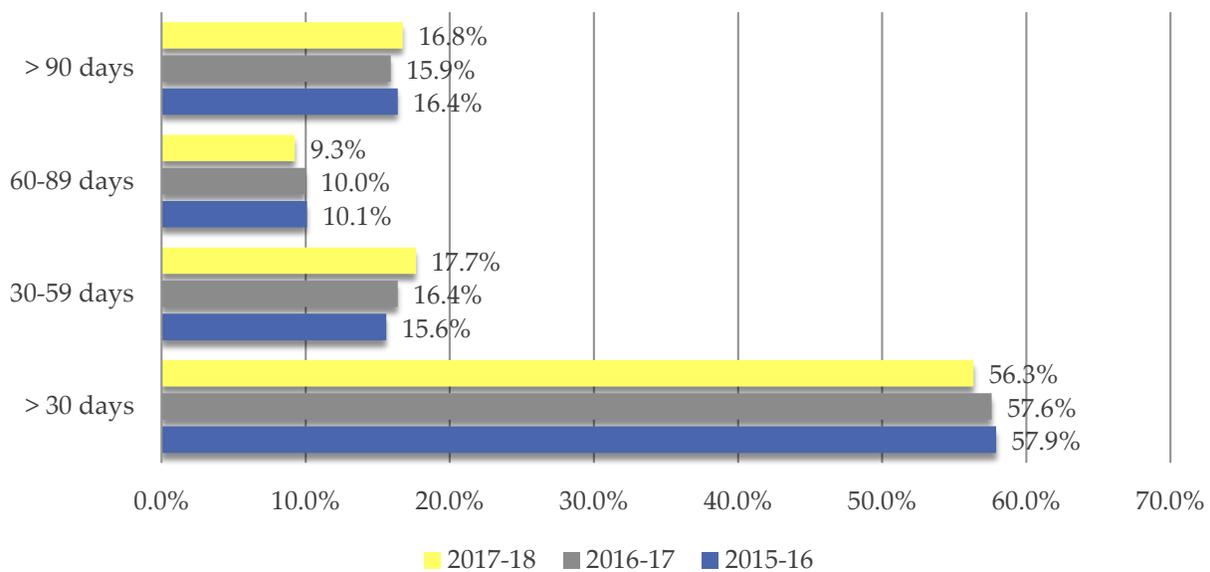
Figure 8 shows the number of students served over the course of three years. As shown, while there was a decline in participation from 2016-17 to 2017-18, there was a net gain over time. Of note, however, 2015-16 data was collected separately for Fall and Spring semesters, and there was no unduplicated aggregate count available. Given this, comparisons used counts from Spring 2016 (which was greater than Fall) to represent the 2015-16 school year. Results should be interpreted with this caveat in mind.

FIGURE 8. TOTAL STUDENTS SERVED BY GRANT YEAR



As indicated in Figure 9 most students participating in 21st CCLC programs attended for fewer than 30 days. **Approximately 44% of school-year participants were regular attendees.** In comparison, the most recent national data¹⁰ indicates that on average, regular attendees make up 54% of all students participating in afterschool programs. Moreover, the proportion of students who are regular attendees has not improved over time.

FIGURE 9. TOTAL DAYS ATTENDED DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR BY GRANT YEAR

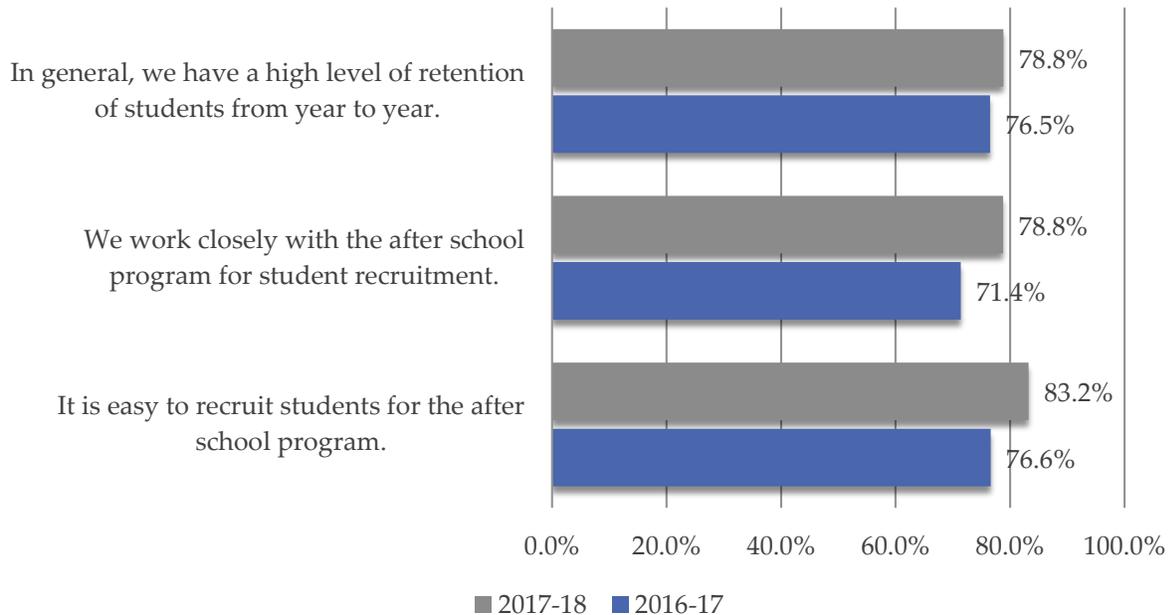


¹⁰ US Department of Education. (2017). 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) analytic support for evaluation and program monitoring: An overview of the 21st CCLC performance data: 2015-16. Washington, DC.

Recruitment and Retention

As one means of gathering information on student recruitment and retention in Montana 21st CCLC programs, school administrators were asked three items via the School Administrator Survey ($N = 180$). Results show that 83% of administrators agreed that it was easy to recruit students and 79% reported that they had high retention rates. As shown in Figure 10, these areas have improved since the previous year. In 2016-17, 77% of administrators reported that it was easy to recruit students (an increase of 6 percentage points), and 77% reported high levels of retention (a 2-percentage point increase). Most (71%) also agreed that they work closely with the afterschool program for student recruitment. This is consistent with reports from the previous year.

FIGURE 10. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SATISFACTION WITH RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION EFFORTS



Last year, Montana set a state performance indicator to increase retention of students by 5% annually. Although responses from school administrators suggest improvements in this area, retention rates were also measured empirically. For these purposes, retention was defined as the percentage of students from the current reporting year that attended during the prior program

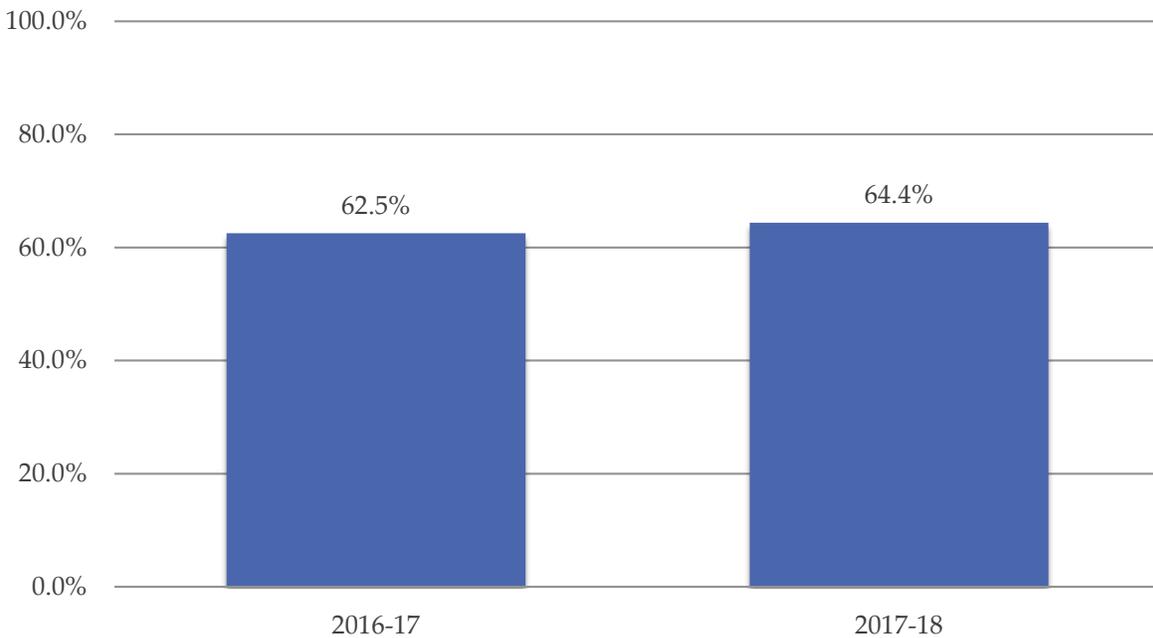
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 5.1.2. The percentage of Participants Retained by 21st CCLC programs will increase by 5% annually, as measured by state attendance spreadsheets.

RESULT: Retention rates improved by 3.1% from the previous year; goal was not met.



year.¹¹ As shown in Figure 11, 9,582 of 15,339 students (62.5%) of students were retained between the 2015-16 and 2016-17 program years, compared to 8,041 of 12,482 (64.4%) between 2016-17 and 2017-18. The reflects a 3% increase in retention rates since the previous grant year. Therefore, while retention rates did improve, the improvements fell short of the 5% benchmark, such that this goal was not met.

FIGURE 11. STUDENT RETENTION BY GRANT YEAR



Given the importance of student retention in maintaining 21st CCLC programs, it is necessary to continue efforts to support centers in this area. Improving retention may be a target area for future professional development opportunities.

Meeting Capacity

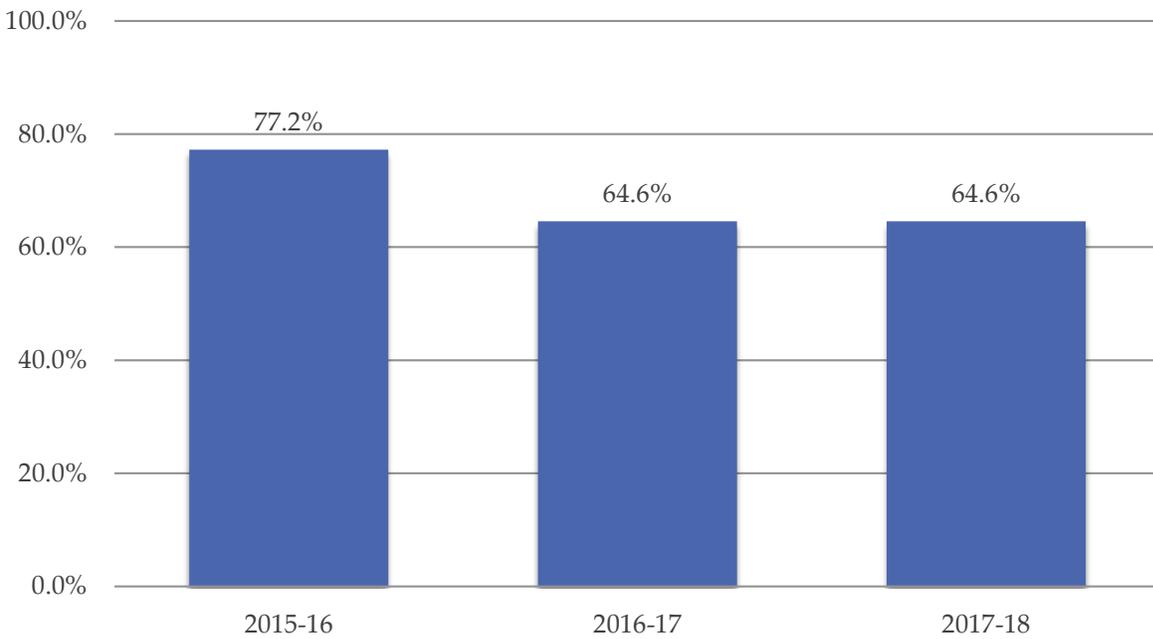
As part of the grant application process, potential grantees are asked to provide a target for the number of students that they have capacity to serve, and then one of the grant objectives is to reach these capacity goals. Across all grantees, this total was summed to determine the statewide target capacity (i.e., number of students that were *planned* to be served). Results for 2017-18 indicate that while grantees reported targeting 20,561 students, they fell short of this goal by 20% (N = 16,397). While reaching 80% of the total estimated capacity is encouraging, statewide enrollment decreased by 2 percentage points compared to the previous year.

¹¹ To determine retention, center staff indicate on their attendance spreadsheets the extent to which students attended during the prior year.

Montana State Evaluation Report

The state performance indicator specifies that at all grantees serve at least 80% of their target capacity. Given this, data were also examined at the grantee level. Results show 51 grantees (65%) reached their capacity goals, and as a result, the target was not met. Moreover, there was not improvement in the number of grantees reaching their capacity goals compared to the 2016-17 rates. As shown in Figure12, there was a net drop over the course of three years.

FIGURE 12. GRANTEES MEETING CAPACITY TARGETS BY GRANT YEAR



PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 6.2.1. 100% of 21st CCLC grantees will serve at least 80% of their Target Capacity, as measured by grantee reports.

RESULT: 64.5% of grantees (51 of 79) served 80% of their Target Capacity; goal was not met.



WHAT IS THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN MONTANA 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS?

Partner Types

In 2017-18, grantees reported having 740 local partners. This number was a decrease from the previous year, in which with grantees reported 894 partners. The majority of partner organizations were community-based organizations, non-profits, government entities, for-profit entities and public schools, which together accounted for 74% of all partnerships.

TABLE 7. TYPES OF PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION		
Community-based organization	142	19.19%
Non-profit organization	136	18.38%
Government	99	13.38%
For-profit entity	99	13.38%
Public school	70	9.46%
College or university	42	5.68%
Health-based organization	40	5.41%
Other	28	3.78%
Library	21	2.84%
Museum	15	2.03%
Faith-based organization	15	2.03%
City or municipal agency	15	2.03%
Parks and Recreation department	7	0.95%
Student/Parent Based Organization	5	0.68%
Tribal Based Organization	4	0.54%
Private school	2	0.27%
Total	740	

Partner Supports

Grantees were also asked to report the types of resources and supports that partners provided to their 21st CCLC programs. As shown in Table 8, the most commonly cited partner supports were the provision of programming activities (44%) and goods and materials (16%).

TABLE 8. PARTNER RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

TYPE OF SUPPORTS PROVIDED		
Programming activity	325	43.92%
Goods and materials	118	15.95%
Volunteer staffing	82	11.08%
Funding	79	10.68%
Paid staffing	22	2.97%
Evaluation services	6	0.81%
Other	108	14.59%

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF 21ST CCLC PROGRAMMING?

Types and Frequency of Program Offerings for Students

Montana 21st CCLC centers were required to report on the activities and services offered through their programs. Table 9 provides information about the type, duration, and availability of the activity opportunities offered during the 2017-18 grant year. As shown, centers offered a wide range of activities at their summer and school-year programs. Activities were similar across program terms. In summer programs, the most commonly offered activities (measured by the number of activities were offered) during summer programming were: physical fitness, STEM-related activities, arts and music, literacy, and community or service learning. Similarly, the most frequent activities offered during the school year (Fall and Spring semesters) were: STEM-related activities, arts and music, physical fitness, literacy, community or service learning, and homework help. On average, activities lasted approximately 2 hours and included 23 to 24 participants. These numbers were consistent across summer and school-year programming.

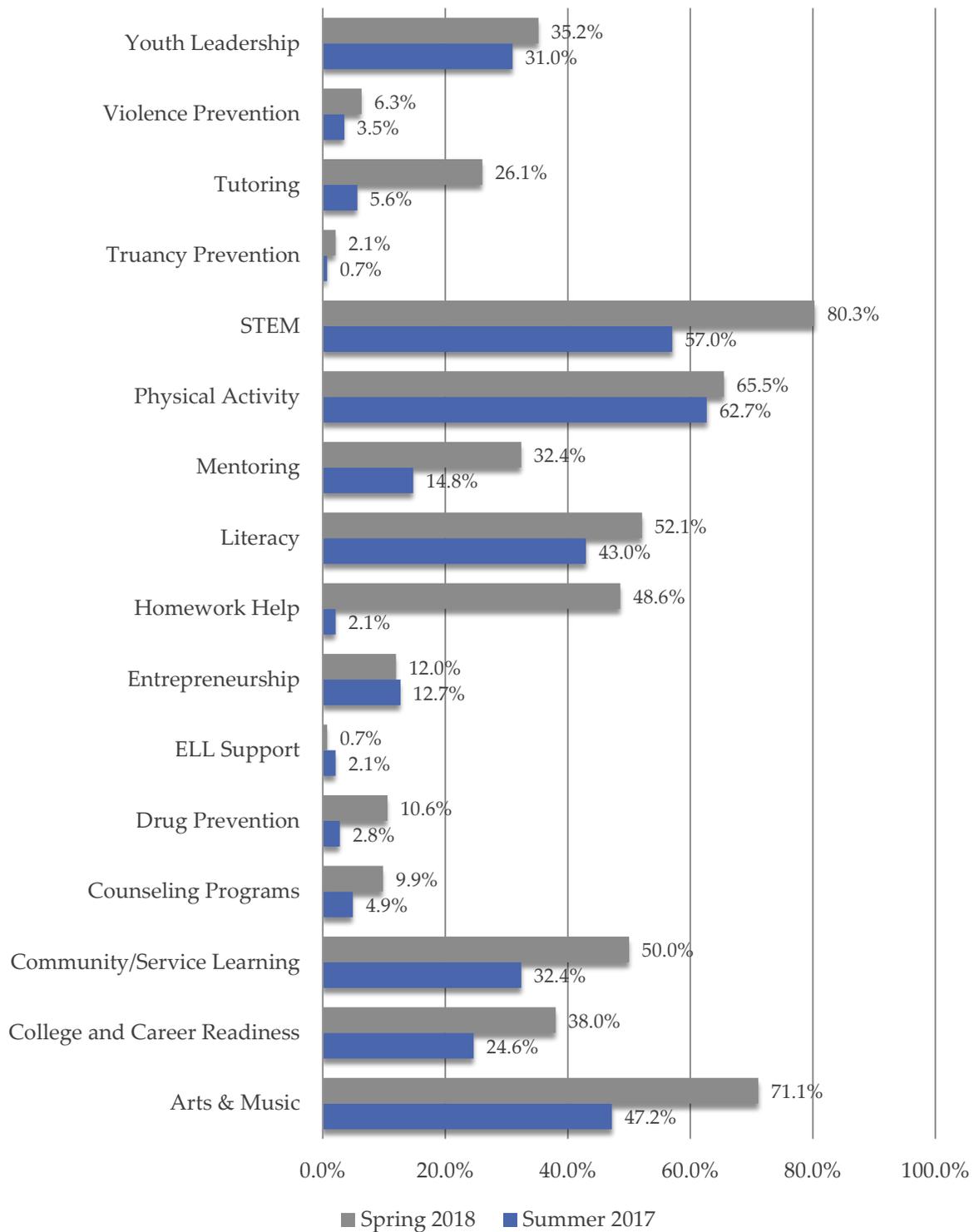
TABLE 9. CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENT PROGRAMMING BY TERM

ACTIVITY	SUMMER 2017			FALL 2017			SPRING 2018		
	MODAL FREQUENCY	AVERAGE TIME (HRS)	AVERAGE STUDENTS	MODAL FREQUENCY	AVERAGE TIME (HRS)	AVERAGE STUDENTS	MODAL FREQUENCY	AVERAGE TIME (HRS)	AVERAGE STUDENTS
Arts and music	1-3x/week	2.5	23	1-3x/week	1.4	19	1-3x/week	1.6	21
College and Career Readiness	1-3x/week	1.9	22	1-3x/week	2.0	33	1-3x/week	2.2	28
Community service learning	1x/term	3.6	22	1x/term	2.0	62	1-3x/month	1.9	23
Counseling	1-3x/week	1.3	54	1-3x/week	1.1	32	1-3x/month	1.1	27
Drug prevention	1-3x/week	1.0	16	1x/term	5.5	62	1-3x/week	1.6	25
ELL support	1-3x/month	3.7	16	1-3x/week	0.9	14	1-3x/month	1.0	4
Entrepreneurship	1-3x/week	2.3	16	1-3x/week	1.9	17	1-3x/week	1.9	19
Homework help	Daily	2.5	19	Daily	1.3	21	Daily	1.3	19
Literacy	1-3x/week	1.9	27	1-3x/week	1.1	22	1-3x/week	1.2	23
Mentoring	1-3x/week	3.1	19	1-3x/week	1.5	22	1-3x/week	1.3	20
Physical fitness	1-3x/week	2.5	24	1-3x/week	1.2	24	1-3x/week	1.4	24
STEM	1-3x/week	2.7	21	1-3x/week	1.3	20	1-3x/week	1.5	21
Truancy prevention	1-3x/week	1.0	15	1-3x/week	4.8	11	1-3x/week	1.3	26
Tutoring	Daily	2.3	30	1-3x/week	1.3	15	1-3x/week	1.3	15
Violence prevention	1-3x/week	1.3	15	1x/term	5.7	28	1-3x/month	4.2	27
Youth leadership	1-3x/week	2.7	23	1-3x/week	1.5	26	1-3x/month	1.5	27

Figure 13 shows the number and percentage of centers that provided each type of activity during Summer 2017 and Spring of 2018.¹² During the Summer 2017 term, most centers provided physical fitness (63%) and STEM-related activities (57%). The next most common offerings were arts and music (47%), literacy activities (43%), community or service learning (32%) and youth leadership programs (31%). Similarly, in Spring 2018, most centers offered STEM (80%), arts and music (71%) and physical activities (66%), followed by literacy supports (52%), community service learning (50%). As might be expected, homework help and tutoring were fairly common during the school year (by 49% and 26% of centers, respectively) but were not frequently offered during the summer (by 2% and 6% of centers). For both Summer and Spring terms, the least common offerings were ELL supports, counseling services, and programming related to truancy or violence prevention, all offered at less than 10% of centers.

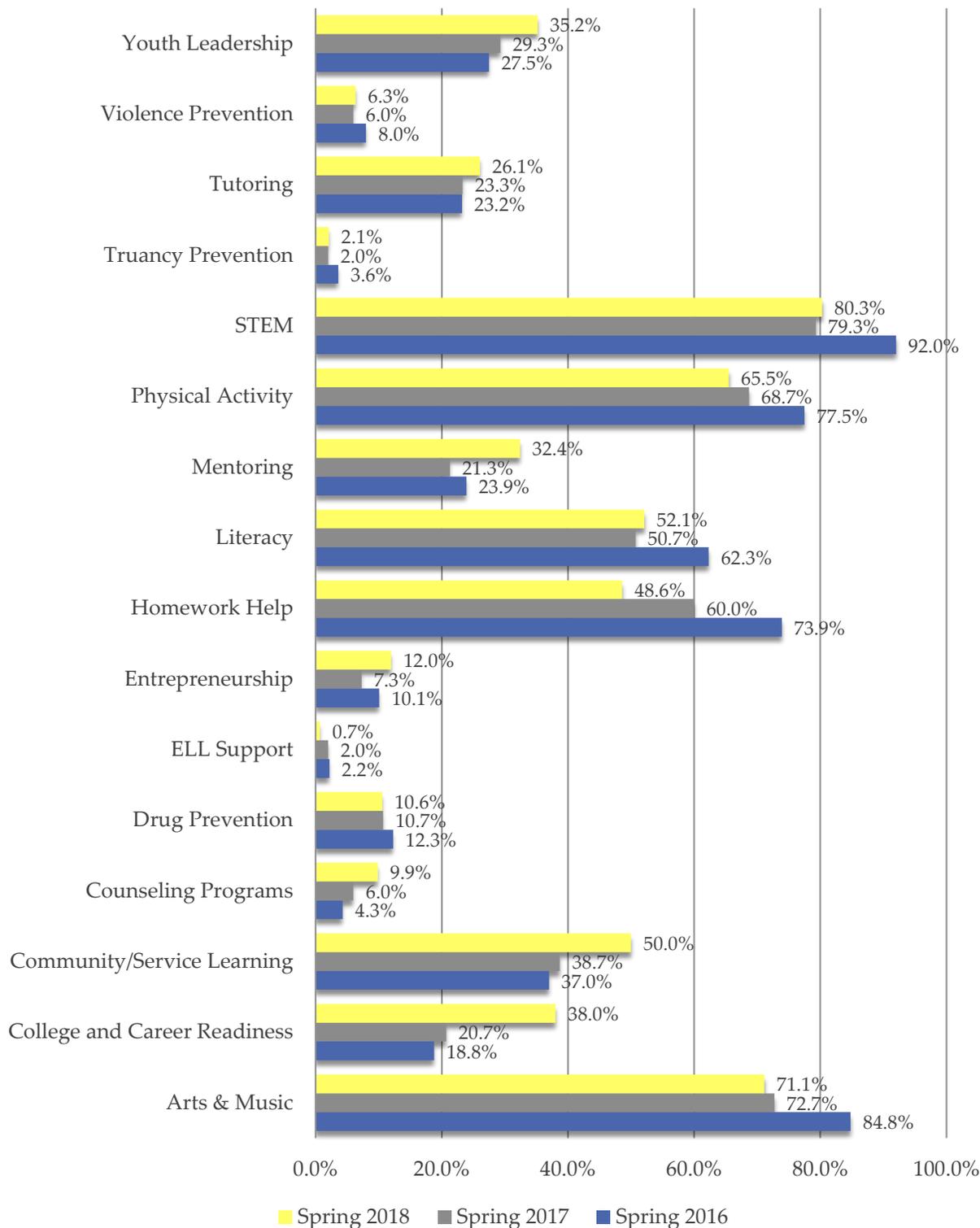
¹² Data from Spring 2018 was used as a proxy for the school year as there were more Spring participants than Fall participants.

FIGURE 13. PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES DURING 2017-18 GRANT YEAR



As shown in Figure 14, there was a notable increase in the percent of community-service learning, mentoring, and youth leadership opportunities offered to students from 2016-17 to 2017-18.

FIGURE 14. PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES BY GRANT YEAR

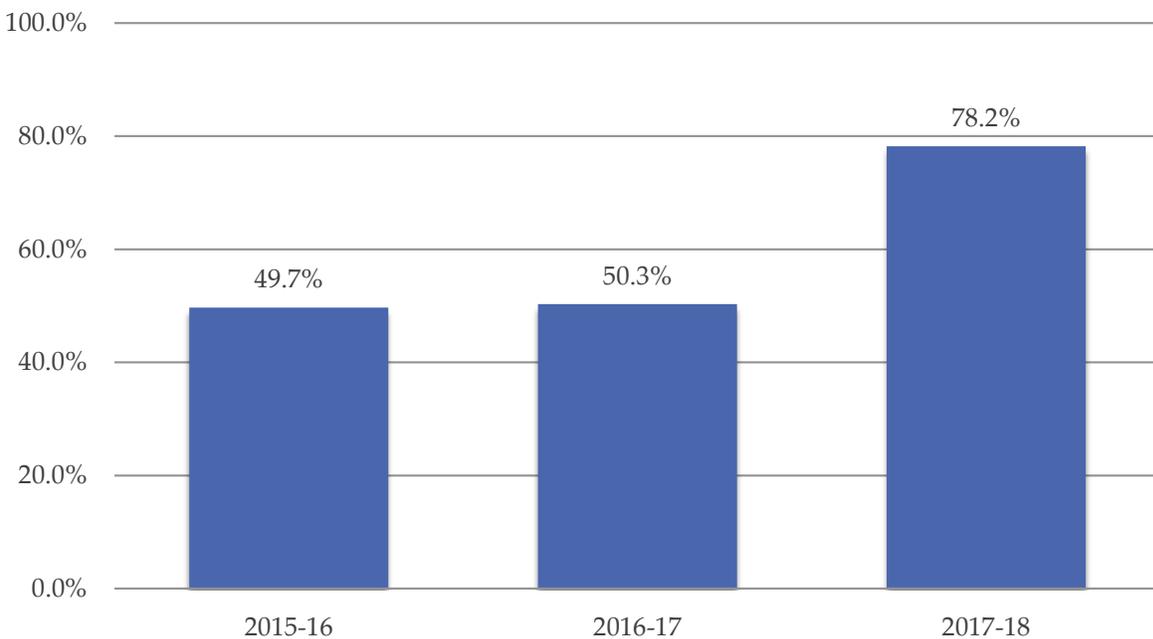


Findings clearly show that while there is a clear focus on academics at most Montana 21st CCLC centers, there is also a strong focus on enrichment through arts, music, and physical activity. Overall, programs are doing well in providing diverse and complementary activities for a well-rounded experience among program participants.

COMMUNITY-SERVICE LEARNING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

There are two state indicators associated with 21st CCLC activities offered to students. The first is associated with the delivery of community or service-learning activities. Results show that 111 of the 142 centers (78%) offered community- or service-learning opportunities during the 2017-18 grant year. This represents a 28-point increase from the previous years, when only half of programs included community service learning. Although this is substantial progress, it does not reach the goal specifying that at least 80% of centers would offer these activities. It is important to continue to support grantees in their efforts incorporate community service opportunities into their programs.

FIGURE 15. COMMUNITY-SERVICE LEARNING ACTIVITIES BY GRANT YEAR



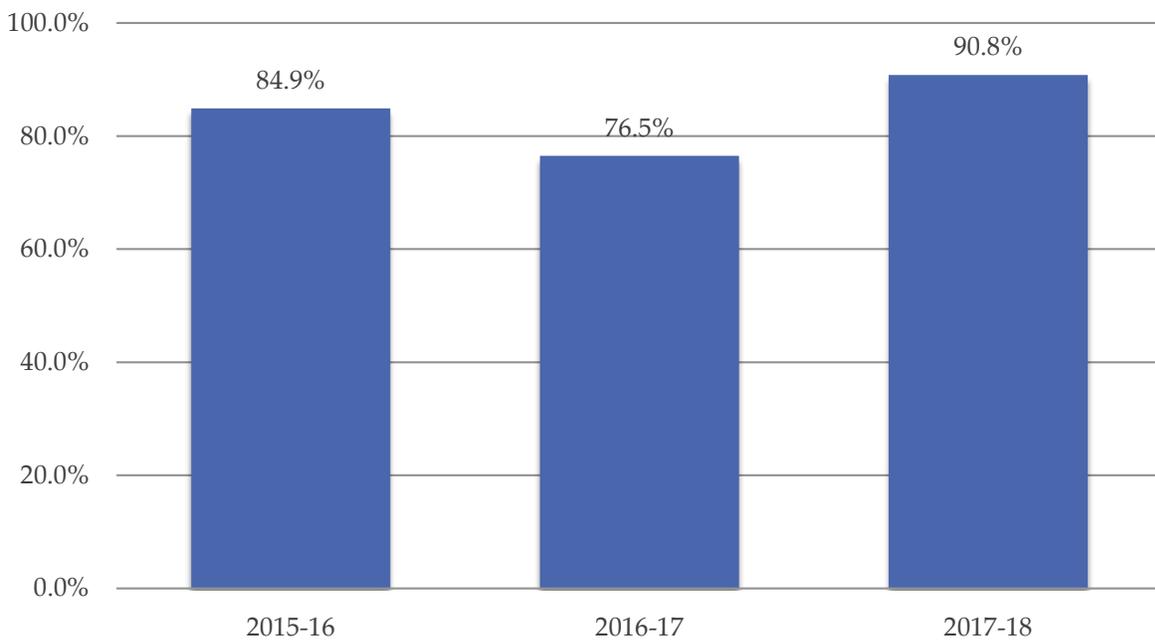
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 3.2.2. At least 80% of 21st CCLC centers will offer Community or Service Learning Programming, as measured by data system records.

RESULT: 78.2% of centers (111 of 142) offered Community-Service Learning Programming; goal not was met.



The other state indicator is associated with activities offered to students is the provision of physical fitness activities. Results show that 129 of the 142 centers (91%) offered fitness opportunities to students during the 2017-18 grant year; thus, the goal of 75% of centers offering this activity was met. Moreover, this is a 14-point increase from 2016-17, when 77% of centers offered fitness activities and a six-point increase from 2015-16.

FIGURE 16. PHYSICAL FITNESS ACTIVITIES BY GRANT YEAR



PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 6.2.5. At least 75% of 21st CCLC centers will offer Health, Physical Fitness, or Nutritional programming, as measured by grantee reports.



RESULT: 90.8% of centers (129 of 142) offer Health or Physical Fitness activities; goal was met.

Types and Frequency of Program Offerings for Adults and Families

Centers were also asked to report on any parent or family activities that they implemented. This information was provided by 42 grantees. Grantees indicated that, during the 2017-18 program year, 46% of centers (*N* = 66) provided parent or family programming. This represents a 15-percentage point increase from the previous grant year, when 31% of centers offered adult programs. Moreover, this continues a positive trend in which the percentage of centers offering adult programs has increased over time. Compared to the 2015-16 program year, when only 24% of centers provided adult programming, the percentage of centers offering these activities has nearly doubled (a 92% increase, or 22 percentage points). As shown in Figure 17A, the types of

programming offered has been consistent over time, with family social events being the most commonly offered activity and its occurrence increasing significantly over time.

FIGURE 17A. PARENT AND FAMILY PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES

Activity or Service	2015-16 Grant Year		2016-17 Grant Year		2017-18 Grant Year	
	# of Centers	% of Centers	# of Centers	# of Centers	# of Centers	# of Centers
Career or job training for adults	4	2.7%	5	3.3%	3	4.5%
Family social event(s)	35	24.0%	47	31.3%	39	59.1%
Parenting or family management	10	6.8%	12	8.0%	6	9.1%
Supporting their youth in academics	21	14.4%	17	11.3%	15	22.7%
Supporting their youth in postsec education/ career options	4	2.7%	5	3.3%	1	1.5%
Other	0	0%	12	8.0%	5	7.6%
Total	35	100%	47	100%	66	100%

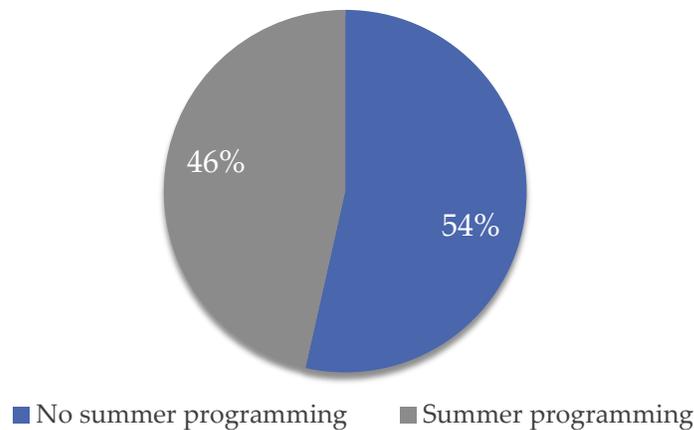
As shown in Figure 17B, more activities were offered during the Spring semester (proxy for school year) than were during the Summer term. On average, these activities had an average of 50 attendees and lasted for about 2.5 hours; however, the duration and number of participants varied based on the type and timing of the activity (see below).

Activity or Service	Summer 2017			Spring 2018		
	Frequency (mode)	Average hours per	Average number of participants	Frequency (mode)	Average hours per	Average number of participants
Career or job training for adults				Monthly	1.75	6
Family social event(s)	Once/term	2.9	39	Once/term	2.52	55
Parenting or family management	Once/term	3.4	16	Once/term	2.18	22
Supporting their youth in academics	Once/term	1.5	48	Once/term	2.49	42
Supporting their youth in postsec education/ career options	Once/term	4.0	5	Once/term	2.00	34
Other	Weekly	1.5	3	Monthly	1.84	10

Center Operations

The State would like to see growth in the number of Montana 21st CCLC centers that are open during the summer. This is especially important in rural communities, which typically do not have many opportunities for supervised summer activities for youth. To facilitate progress in this area, a state performance indicator was created, implementing a target in which 75% of centers will offer summer programming. Results for the 2017-18 grant year show that 99 of 142 centers (70%) offered programming during the summer. This does not reach the annual target of 75% and represents a 10-point decrease from the prior grant year, in which 113 of 142 (80%) centers had summer programs (see Figure 18).

FIGURE 18. CENTERS OFFERING SUMMER PROGRAMMING



PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 6.2.3. At least 70% of 21st CCLC centers will provide Summer Programming, as measured by grantee reports.

RESULT: 69.7% of centers (99 of 142) offered Summer Programming; goal was not met.



Table 10A provides information about the typical operating hours for Montana 21st CCLC centers during summer and school-year programming. On average, centers were open for 4 days per week. Summer programs were open for 6 weeks (26 days), and for approximately 3-4 hours per day. Centers open for an average of 32 weeks during the school year, primarily after school, and typically for between 2 and 3 hours per day daily Monday through Friday. Programs were closed on weekends.

TABLE 10A. TYPICAL OPERATIONS

	Average # of WEEKS centers open	Average # DAYS centers open	Typical number of hours per day
Summer	6	26	3-4
School Year	32	NA	3

An additional state performance indicator created to measure center operations designated that 80% centers should be open, at minimum, 60 hours per month during the school year. This data was captured for the first time during the 2016-17 grant year. Results for 2017-18 showed that only 31% (29 of 94 reporting centers) reached the 60-hours benchmark, and as such, this target was not met. On average, centers were open for 49 hours per month; however, the monthly operating hours for individual centers varied considerably, ranging from 12 to 124 hours. Additionally, compared to the previous year, this percentage has not improved (31% in 2016-17).

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 6.2.2. During the school year, at least 80% of 21st CCLC centers will provide at least 60 Hours of Programming per month, as measured by grantee reports.

RESULT: 30.8% of school-year centers (29 of 94) were open for 60 Hours per month; goal was not met.



Together, this indicates that additional efforts must be directed toward improving center operations. The state will need to continue to work proactively with grantee directors to set expectations regarding minimum operating hours and the availability of summer programming. Simultaneously, grantees must collaborate with centers to identify the types of supports that would facilitate these goals.

The final aspect of center operations that was examined was the average staff-to-student ratio across 21st CCLC centers. Table 10B presents the average ratios for summer and school-year programming. As shown, programs had higher staff-to-student ratios in the summer than during the school year. Compared to the 2016-17 grant year, the staff-to-student ratios for school-year programs have not changed, but summer programs have two additional students per staff member.

TABLE 10B. STAFF TO STUDENT RATIO BY TERM

SUMMER STAFF TO STUDENT RATIO	SCHOOL YEAR STAFF TO STUDENT RATIO
1:9	1:10

HOW WELL ARE MONTANA 21ST CCLC CENTERS MEETING QUALITY STANDARDS?

Self-Assessment Ratings of Program Implementation and Practices

Ratings in Overall Sample

In Summer 2018, grantees were asked to complete the Montana Monitoring and Quality Improvement Self-Assessment (MMQI-SA). The primary purpose of this assessment is to improve the quality of the Montana 21st CCLC programs by helping grantees take a critical look at their own programs by evaluating them against standards of best practice. This provides an opportunity for program leaders, key staff, and other stakeholders to examine their programs using a common set of quality indicators and collaborate to plan, design and implement strategies for ongoing improvement. Respondents complete a series of worksheets pertaining to each of categories below. Worksheets include rating scales and open-ended questions for respondents to note the strengths of their programs and indicate priorities for improvement. At the conclusion of the assessment process, program staff are asked to integrate, prioritize, and refine their identified goals, guided by the format of the 21st CCLC Quality Improvement Plan. In addition to promoting quality improvement, the self-assessment process provides a common structure for partners and collaborators to compare perceptions of the program and identify potential concerns.

The MMQI-SA comprises of eight categories, listed below. The first section targets compliance with the 21st CCLC grant program and the remaining seven sections inquire about key areas of practice in afterschool programs.

- ✦ Grant Management and Sustainability (21st CCLC Grant Compliance)
- ✦ Organizational Structure and Management
- ✦ Staffing and Professional Development
- ✦ Partnerships
- ✦ Center Operations
- ✦ Programming and Activities
- ✦ Health and Safety
- ✦ Evaluation and Measuring Outcomes

The rating system uses four Performance Levels, described below, which allow the grantee to assess the extent to which their program practices embody the eight quality indicators.

TABLE 11. MMQI-SA PERFORMANCE LEVELS

PERFORMANCE LEVEL		DESCRIPTOR
1	<i>Developing</i>	Standard not met; needs improvement in this area
2	<i>Operational</i>	Approaching standard; could use additional focused assistance in this area
3	<i>Advancing</i>	Meets standard; opportunities exist to refine practices to reach the <i>Excelling</i> level
4	<i>Excelling</i>	Exceeds standards through the use of exemplary practices

The following pages show the results across all centers that completed a self-assessment for the 2017-18 grant year (N = 136). As shown in Figure 19, ratings were consistency high across all eight quality indicators. The areas with the highest ratings were: Health and Safety; Center Operations; and Staffing and Professional Development. Although ratings indicated that Partnerships was the weakest category for programs, followed by Evaluation and Measuring Outcomes. However, the average ratings for these areas was 3.3 and 3.5, respectively, indicating that respondents generally perceived their programs to be *Advancing* or *Excelling* in this area. These findings are comparable to those of previous grant years.

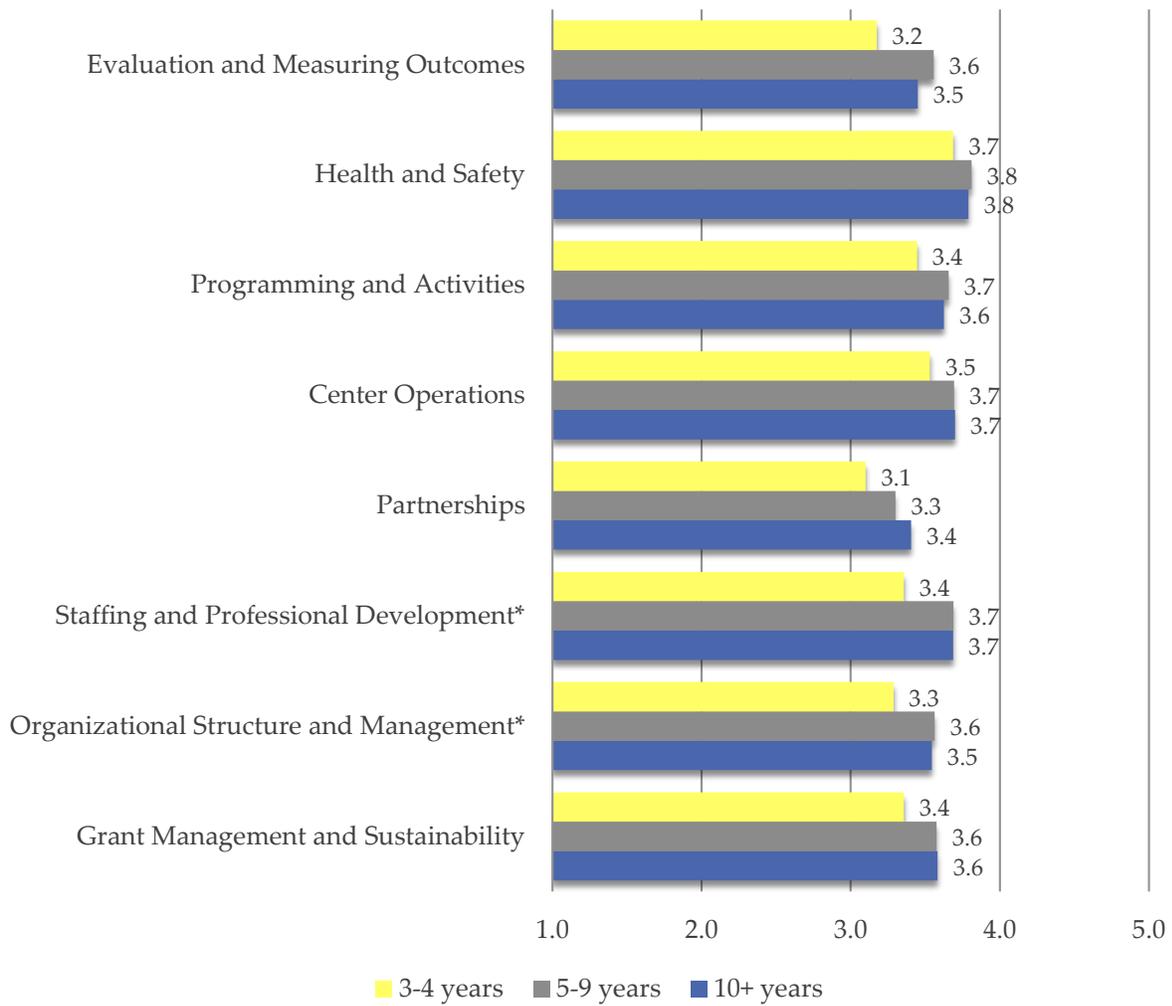
FIGURE 19. 2017 SELF-RATING OF BEST PRACTICES BY GRANT YEAR



Ratings by Cohort

In order to determine whether participation in the 21st CCLC grant is related to greater capacity to meet state-identified quality standards, analyses were conducted by cohort (i.e., participating in the 21st CCLC grant). More specifically, analyses tested the hypothesis that more experience with the 21st CCLC grant is associated with higher rates of standard achievement. To do this, centers were classified according to the number of years that they had received 21st CCLC funding (3-4 years, $n = 16$; 5-9 years, $n = 45$; and 10 or more years, $n = 77$). Statistical analyses indicated that there was a positive relationship between grant experience and meeting quality standards, $F(2, 132) = 3.16, p = .046$. As shown in Figure 20, pairwise comparisons revealed that **programs that had been involved with the 21st CCLC grant for either 5-9 years or more than 10 years reported significantly higher ratings on the MMQI quality indicators than programs with only 3-4 years of grant experience**, $ps < .05$. Examination by MMQI category showed specific relationships between grant experience and ratings pertaining to Staffing and Professional Development ($F[2, 131] = 6.33, p = .002$) and Organizational Structure and Management ($F[2, 131] = 3.69, p = .028$). Additionally, there was a marginally significant relationship between longer grant experience and higher ratings in the Evaluation and Measuring Outcomes category ($F[2, 131] = 2.84, p = .062$). While these were the only statistically significant differences, there was a generally pattern of higher quality ratings and longer grant participation (as shown by the larger blue and grey bars in Figure 20). It should be noted, however, that there were not substantial differences in the ratings of grantees participating for 5-9 and those participating for 10 years or more. This suggests that **after a single grant cycle, 21st CCLC centers gain a better understanding of best practices and set policies and procedures that align with quality standards.**

FIGURE 20. 2017 SELF-RATING OF IMPLEMENTATION OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMMING BEST PRACTICES BY YEARS IN GRANT



Self-Assessment Ratings for Performance in Specific Areas

On the following pages, Tables 12 -19 display the results for individual MMQI-SA items that constitute key areas of practice for afterschool programs.

Under **Grant Management and Sustainability**, the highest-rated item relates to the program being held in a safe and accessible facility (A7), with 87% of centers indicating that they are *Excelling* in this area. This was followed by an item pertaining to the appropriate use of program funds (A11) and another regarding compliance with mandated record retention policies (A13). For both of these items, 82% of centers reported they exceeded standards. The item with the lowest average rating relates to having a sustainability plan and making efforts to gain non-grant funding and resources (A9). This item also had the lowest overall rating across all MMQI assessment categories. Only 63% of centers reporting that they comply (i.e., *Excelling* or *Advancing*) with best practices, and 10% of centers indicated that their practices in this area were only *Developing*. **Given that these sustainability plans are necessary for extending the benefits of 21st CCLC programs to future students, improving in this area should be a high priority for grantees.**

TABLE 12. ITEM RATINGS FOR GRANT MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Grant Management and Sustainability (Grant Compliance)	Non-compliant at all	Partially Compliant	Compliant with recommendations	Compliant	Average (Based on scale 1-4)
A.1. The grantee has identified and is serving eligible students and their families consistent with the original grant application (or approved amendments).	0.0%	5.9%	34.6%	59.6%	3.5
A.2. The grantee is conducting outreach to eligible participants as described in the original grant application (or approved	1.5%	11.8%	37.5%	49.3%	3.3
A.3. The grantee is providing the number of hours of programming described in the original grant application (or approved amendments)	0.0%	7.4%	24.4%	68.1%	3.6
A. 4. The grantee offers AT LEAST three of the local activities listed below	0.7%	5.2%	20.7%	73.3%	3.7
A.5. The grantee is implementing the high quality academic and achievement activities described in the original grant application,	1.5%	7.4%	37.8%	53.3%	3.4
A.6. The grantee is addressing the transportation needs of children as described in the original grant application (or approved	5.5%	13.4%	29.1%	52.0%	3.3
A.7. The grantee houses the program in a safe and easily accessible facility,	0.0%	1.5%	11.2%	87.3%	3.9
A.8. The grantee demonstrates progress toward achieving the goals set out in the original grant application (or approved amendments) including adherence to the grant reporting deadlines and assurances provided in E-Grants as well	0.0%	6.7%	42.2%	51.1%	3.4
A.9. The grantee has developed a sustainability plan and has made efforts to gain other sources of funding or in-kind resources to maintain the level of program services as grant support decreases in the fifth year,	9.6%	27.2%	44.1%	19.1%	2.7
A.10. Grantee staff has attended the required state 21st CCLC meetings/trainings (at a minimum, one annual state conference, and two regional meetings)	0.0%	5.9%	19.1%	75.0%	3.7
A.11. The grantee expends 21st CCLC funds appropriately,	0.0%	4.4%	14.1%	81.5%	3.8
A.12. The grantee maintains documentation for materials and equipment purchased with 21st CCLC funds, as per the Uniformed Grant Guidance 2 CFR Part 200	0.0%	5.9%	17.8%	76.3%	3.7
A.13. The grantee retains grant records a minimum of three years or until any legal action concerning the records is settled, as per State and Federal Grants Handbook: 400.7 Records Retention	0.0%	8.1%	10.3%	81.6%	3.7
A.14. The grantee maintains appropriate documentation, including job descriptions for employees and volunteers of the grant program,	1.5%	11.1%	27.4%	60.0%	3.5
A.15. The grantee uses 21st CCLC funds to supplement rather than to supplant Federal, State, local, or non-federal funds,	1.5%	9.6%	19.3%	69.6%	3.6
A.16. The program works in active collaboration with the schools that participating students attend and any partnership entities,	0.7%	7.4%	20.6%	71.3%	3.6
A.17. The grantee participates in the state's data collection and evaluation in a timely and complete manner,	0.0%	3.7%	27.2%	69.1%	3.7

Montana State Evaluation Report

Establishing a sustainability plan for all grantees¹³ is also a specific state indicator. However, results from the 2017-18 program year indicate that only 79% of grantees had established such a plan. As a result, this goal was not met.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 6.2.7. By the end of the third year of grant funding, 100% of 21st CCLC grantees will have a Sustainability Plan, as measured by OPI Self Assessment.

RESULT: 79.4% of centers (81 of 102) had a Sustainability Plan; goal was not met.



Not
Yet

In order to promote more general compliance on grant-management related activities, Montana established a State performance indicator such that all centers should be compliant (i.e., *Advancing* or *Excelling*) with at least 80% of the MMQI items in this section (listed in Table 12 above). Results showed that during the 2017-18 grant year, the compliance rate among 21st CCLC centers was 88%, such that this goal was not met. Moreover, percentage of centers achieving this objective has not changed during the last two grant years (also 88% in 2015-16 and 2016-17).

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 6.2.9. 100% of 21st CCLC centers will comply with at least 80% for the quality indicators (11 of 13) for Grant Management and Sustainability, as measured by the OPI self-assessment tool.

RESULT: 87.5% of centers (119 of 136) met the compliance target for Grant Management and Sustainability; goal was not met.



Not
Yet

With respect to **Organizational Structure and Management**, centers overwhelmingly reported that all practices were at least *Operational*. The highest-rated items indicate that centers had well-developed organizational structures (B1, with 79% of centers reported to be *Excelling*), the administrative capacity and infrastructure to develop budgets, track expenses, and to collect and maintain program data (B9; 79% *Excelling*), and that programs communicated regularly with school administration (B8; 78% *Excelling*). The lowest-rated item pertained to employing a marketing strategy to publicize the program (B10); specifically, only 41% report that they are *Excelling* in this area, and 16% of programs had not fully implemented this practice (i.e., *Developing* or *Operational*).

¹³ The state indicator specifies that grantees with three or more years of funding must have an established sustainability plan; at this point, all grantees have at least three years of funding.

TABLE 13. ITEM RATINGS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

Organizational Structure and Management	Developing	Operational	Advancing	Excelling	Average (based on scale 1-4)
B.1. The organizational structure is well defined and sound. The organization has a program director (site coordinator(s) for multiple sites) to supervise and lead the daily program and personnel.	0.0%	1.5%	19.1%	79.4%	3.8
B.2. The organization has developed/adopted written policies and procedures to promote effective management.	0.7%	5.9%	43.4%	50.0%	3.4
B.3. The student/staff ratio is appropriate and safe for the specific activity conducted and meets student needs.	0.0%	3.7%	19.9%	76.5%	3.7
B.4. Staff is trained in program policies/procedures. Staff is aware of program goals and can explain the relationship of program activities to those goals.	0.0%	5.9%	44.1%	50.0%	3.4
B.5. Organization volunteers are recruited, screened, and trained.	2.2%	4.4%	35.3%	58.1%	3.5
B.6. Organizational staff communicates with school day staff to support individual student educational development.	0.7%	4.4%	41.5%	53.3%	3.5
B.7. Organizational staff collaborates with school-day personnel regarding use of facilities and resources.	1.5%	2.2%	19.9%	76.5%	3.7
B.8. The program director communicates regularly with the school principal and administration.	0.0%	2.9%	19.1%	77.9%	3.8
B.9. The organization has the administrative capacity and infrastructure to develop budgets, track expenses, and to collect and maintain program data.	0.7%	0.7%	19.9%	78.7%	3.8
B.10. The organization employs a marketing strategy to publicize the program and its achievements within the school(s) and broader community.	1.5%	15.6%	43.0%	40.0%	3.2
B.11. The organization maintains on-going documentation of contributions (in-kind or resources) from the public and partnering agencies.	3.7%	6.7%	32.6%	57.0%	3.4
B.12. The organization has an advisory board that meets regularly to provide advice/feedback about program policies and /or activities, quality improvement, sustainability and strategic planning.	6.0%	28.6%	34.6%	30.8%	2.9

A state performance indicator also specified that all centers should meet at least 80% of Organizational Structure and Management standards. During the 2017-18 program year, 88% of centers (120 of the total 136 that provided data) met at least 80% of the Organizational Structure and Management indicators. While the 100% target was not reached, this is an 8-percentage-point improvement from the previous grant year, when only 74% of centers met compliance targets for Organizational Structure and Management.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 6.2.4. 100% of 21st CCLC centers will comply with at least 80% for the quality indicators (10 of 12) for Organizational Structure and Management, as measured by the OPI self-assessment tool.

RESULT: 88.3% of centers (120 of 136) met the compliance target for Organizational Structure and Management; goal was not met.



Montana State Evaluation Report

In the area of **Staffing and Professional Development**, the highest-rated items indicate that staff are competent (C5; 87% *Excelling*) and have undergone background checks and fingerprinting protocols (C3; 91% *Excelling*). The lowest rated item pertains to evaluating staff and providing feedback for improvement (C9). In this area, only 40% of centers are *Excelling*. Reports form the indicate that 17% of centers have not fully implemented best practices regarding staff evaluation. Compared to the previous year, there have been no improvements in this area (see Table 14).

TABLE 14. ITEM RATINGS FOR STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staffing and Professional Development	Developing	Operational	Advancing	Excelling	Average (based on scale 1-4)
C.1. The organizational director and organization staff are highly qualified, motivated, and demonstrate professionalism.	0.0%	0.7%	17.6%	81.6%	3.8
C.2. The organization selects staff members based on prior experience, qualifications, and where applicable specialized training and/or certification.	0.0%	2.9%	19.1%	77.9%	3.8
C.3. The organization completes appropriate fingerprinting and background checks for all staff.	0.0%	2.2%	6.6%	91.2%	3.9
C.4. Staff has the experience and background to address diverse needs of target population. Staff is sensitive to the culture and language of participants.	0.0%	2.2%	21.3%	76.5%	3.7
C.5. Staff has competence in their area of responsibility.	0.0%	0.7%	12.5%	86.8%	3.9
C.6. The organization assesses training needs of staff and provides relevant training and ongoing professional development experiences to build more effective program practices.	0.7%	5.9%	39.3%	54.1%	3.5
C.7. Professional development/training opportunities are designed to respond to staff interest and needs, to share best practices and align with program objectives.	0.7%	4.4%	39.0%	55.9%	3.5
C.8. The organization coordinates staff development activities with those of school and community partners.	1.5%	6.6%	34.6%	57.4%	3.5
C.9. Staff and volunteers are evaluated on a regular basis and given clear feedback for continuous performance improvement.	0.7%	16.2%	44.1%	39.0%	3.2
C.10. The organization works to retain quality staff, providing a consistent and stable staffing base for the program.	0.0%	3.0%	23.7%	73.3%	3.7

The state performance indicator set for Staffing and Professional Development that all centers meet at least 80% of the MMQI quality indicators for this area. Results showed that 93% of centers (127 of 136) met the compliance benchmark, such that the target for this indicator was not met. This percentage has not changed from 2016-17 reports, although both years constitute an improvement from 2015-16, when 89% of centers met compliance targets for staffing-related standards.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 6.2.8. 100% of 21st CCLC centers will comply with at least 80% for the quality indicators (8 of 10) for Staffing and Professional Development, as measured by the OPI self-assessment tool.



RESULT: 83.8% of centers (114 of 136) met the compliance target for Partnerships; goal was not met.

Ratings for items related to **Partnerships** were lower than those in other areas. Notably, responses for Partnership items still had high rates of overall compliance (84-93%) but showed a proportion of *Advancing* practices than did other sections of the MMQI assessment. The item with the highest average rating pertained to entering into formal written agreements with subcontractors (D5), with 57% of centers *Excelling* in this area. However, this item also had the highest percentage of centers indicating noncompliance, with 2% of centers reporting that that this practice was only *Developing*, and 15% reporting that it was *Operational*. Ratings in this area were consistent with those from the 2016-17 program year, when this item had the highest average rating, but also the highest rates of noncompliance. The lowest-rated item asked about regularly communicating with and seeking input from partners (D3). Only 35% of programs were *Excelling* in this area, and 15% were not fully implementing best practices.

TABLE 15. ITEM RATINGS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships	Developing	Operational	Advancing	Excelling	Average (based on scale 1-4)
D.1. The organization makes efforts to recruit new and retain established partners and collaborators to ensure long-term commitments of resources, including human capital.	0.7%	8.1%	38.2%	52.9%	3.4
D.2. Organization partners are aware of the program goals and objectives and how their activities support the achievement of those goals.	0.7%	6.6%	43.4%	49.3%	3.4
D.3. The organization regularly communicates with and seeks input from its partners.	2.2%	13.2%	50.0%	34.6%	3.2
D.4. The organization seeks additional collaborators using a variety of methods to address unmet needs, to expand and enhance services for all students.	1.5%	13.3%	40.7%	44.4%	3.3
D.5. The organization enters formal written agreements with subcontractors when applicable.	1.5%	14.9%	26.9%	56.7%	3.4

The state indicator related to Partnerships specified that all programs will meet at least 80% of the MMQI quality indicators in this area. Results showed that 84% of centers met this goal, such that the indicator target was not achieved. This percentage is consistent with reports from the previous year, but a slight improvement from 2015-16, when 81% of centers met this goal.

Montana State Evaluation Report

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 6.2.8. 100% of 21st CCLC centers will comply with at least 80% for the quality indicators (8 of 10) for Staffing and Professional Development, as measured by the OPI self-assessment tool.

Not
Yet

RESULT: 83.8% of centers (114 of 136) met the compliance target for Partnerships; goal was not met.

Under the category of **Center Operations**, the highest-rated item related to the staff being committed to the development of positive relationships with students and serving as role models (E8, 85% of centers *Excelling*). Centers also rated themselves highly on items pertaining to developing operating hours, activities, and locations to meet the needs of their target populations (E1; 82% *Excelling*) and adopting and applying clear and consistent standards for student behavior (E5; 81% *Excelling*). The item with the lowest ratings related to providing family activities and involving parents in program planning (E9). Only 42% of centers reported that they were *Excelling* in this area, while 15% reported these practices were *Operational* and 2% reported that they were only *Developing*. These findings are consistent with those from previous program years, and with the data describing adult and family participation.

TABLE 16. ITEM RATINGS FOR CENTER OPERATIONS

Center Operations	Developing	Operational	Advancing	Excelling	Average (based on scale 1-4)
E.1. The organization's hours, activities, schedules, and locations meet the needs of the target population.	0.0%	0.7%	16.2%	83.1%	3.8
E.2. Organization activities and services are promoted in the targeted schools and community	0.0%	1.5%	22.1%	76.5%	3.8
E.3. Reasonable/cost effective efforts are made to provide transportation to students who need it to participate in programming.	6.3%	5.5%	14.8%	73.4%	3.6
E.4. The organization implements retention strategies and maintains a waiting list as needed.	0.0%	4.5%	20.5%	75.0%	3.7
E.5. The organization has adopted clear standards for student behavior that are applied appropriately and consistently by staff.	0.0%	2.9%	16.2%	80.9%	3.8
E.6. The organization effectively communicates standards for student behavior to students and parents.	0.0%	4.4%	20.6%	75.0%	3.7
E.7. Organization staff uses appropriate techniques to guide the behavior of students.	0.0%	0.7%	20.7%	78.5%	3.8
E.8. Organization staff is committed to the development of positive student-adult relationships and serve as positive role models.	0.0%	0.7%	15.4%	83.8%	3.8
E.9. The organization seeks to involve parents in planning the organization's operations and provides activities for families of participating students.	1.5%	14.8%	41.5%	42.2%	3.2
E.10. The organization provides regular communication with and outreach to participants' families, including information regarding students' experiences, behavior, and achievements in the program.	0.7%	5.9%	33.8%	59.6%	3.5

Montana State Evaluation Report

Most centers had high self-ratings in the area of **Programming and Activities**. The item with the highest ratings was associated with having an appropriate schedule, flow, and duration of activities (F5; 81% of centers *Excelling*). Items related to choosing activities that address the program mission (F1) and the needs and interests of students (F3, F4, and F7) also had high rates of compliance (i.e., *Advancing* or *Excelling*; 97-99%). The lowest-rated items pertained to providing a range of opportunities to showcase participants' work (F9; 45% *Excelling* and 16% not fully compliant) and enabling youth to explore resources and issues in their community (F6; 54% *Excelling* and 11% not fully compliant). This pattern is generally consistent with reports from previous grant years.

TABLE 17. ITEM RATINGS FOR PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES

Program/Activities	Developing	Operational	Advancing	Excelling	Average (based on scale 1-4)
F.1. Organization activities reflect the goals and mission of the program.	0.0%	0.7%	25.4%	73.9%	3.7
F.2. The organization provides evidence-based academic support and enrichment activities, aligned with school day curricula and individualized to meet students' needs.	0.0%	7.4%	34.8%	57.8%	3.5
F.3. Organization activities address the physical, social and emotional needs of students by providing a majority of participants with diverse recreational, cultural, and youth development activities.	0.0%	3.0%	23.0%	74.1%	3.7
F.4. Organization activities are selected based on student needs and interests. Activities are commensurate with the age and skill level of the participants and enable participants to develop new skills during the program year	0.0%	2.2%	23.7%	74.1%	3.7
F.5. The organization has an appropriate schedule, flow, and duration of activities, including a balance of structured and unstructured time, and time for social connections and community building.	0.0%	1.5%	17.2%	81.3%	3.8
F.6. The organization enables youth to explore resources and issues in their community through projects and activities, including service learning and real world contexts.	0.0%	11.9%	35.1%	53.0%	3.4
F.7. The organization accommodates students with special needs and encourages their participation in the program within the means of the program.	0.0%	2.2%	23.7%	74.1%	3.7
F.8. The organization engages participants in the development and selection of program activities and the recruitment of others into the program.	0.0%	5.2%	31.1%	63.7%	3.6
F.9. The organization provides a range of opportunities to showcase participants' work.	1.5%	14.8%	38.5%	45.2%	3.3

Centers provided high ratings for items pertaining to **Health and Safety** practices. This is not surprising given that there are federal, state, and local health and safety regulations that must be adhered to by programs. Nearly all centers reported *Excelling* with regard to accessibility of basic safety equipment (G2; 90%), vehicle maintenance (G3; 90%), addressing unique student health needs (G5; 90%); adhering to state and federal regulations related to transmitting materials via the Internet (G11; 89%), provision of nutritional snacks (G4; 88%), maintenance of emergency

Montana State Evaluation Report

contact information (G7; 87%), and procedures for authorized student pick-up (G6; 84%). The lowest-rated items pertained to adopting an emergency plan (G8; 59 *Excelling* and 13% not fully compliant), conducting all required safety drills (G9; 65% *Excelling* and 12% not fully complaint), and staff being trained in CPR and First Aid (G12; 68% *Excelling*, but only 3% not fully complaint).

TABLE 18. ITEM RATINGS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and Safety	Developing	Operational	Advancing	Excelling	Average (based on scale 1-4)
G.1. Organization activities occur in spaces that are adequate, appropriate, and safe for the purpose used and are welcoming to young people.	0.0%	0.0%	13.2%	86.8%	3.9
G.2. The organization has access to basic safety equipment (i.e. First aid kits, gloves, fire extinguishers, etc).	0.0%	0.7%	8.9%	90.4%	3.9
G.3. The vehicles used for transportation are safely maintained and inspected on a regular basis.	0.0%	0.8%	9.6%	89.6%	3.9
G.4. The organization provides daily nutritional snacks during program operation within a sanitary environment and drinking water is readily available. Uses snack reimbursement program when appropriate.	0.0%	2.2%	9.6%	88.2%	3.9
G.5. The organization addresses any unique health needs of students that have been identified by the parents and/or the school.	0.0%	0.0%	10.3%	89.7%	3.9
G.6. The organization follows established procedures for authorized student pick-ups and has provided notice of these procedures to staff and families.	0.0%	0.7%	14.8%	84.4%	3.8
G.7. Emergency contact information for students and staff is maintained in an easily accessible, but secure central location.	0.0%	0.7%	12.5%	86.8%	3.9
G.8. The organization has adopted an emergency readiness plan and has provided notice of this plan to staff and families.	1.5%	11.0%	28.7%	58.8%	3.4
G.9. The organization conducts all required fire/safety drills.	1.5%	10.3%	23.5%	64.7%	3.5
G.10. The organization avoids transmitting any material via Internet that violates federal or state regulation. This includes copyrighted materials and threatening or obscene materials.	0.0%	0.0%	11.0%	89.0%	3.9
G.11. The organization has policies and training in place to assure safe and appropriate use of the Internet.	0.7%	0.7%	19.1%	79.4%	3.8
G.12. Staff is trained in first aid and CPR and is familiar with current health, safety, and nutrition standards.	0.7%	2.2%	28.7%	68.4%	3.6
G.13. The organization has security policies in place.	0.0%	2.2%	20.6%	77.2%	3.8

There was a state performance indicator specifying that all centers meet at least 80% of the Health and Safety quality indicators on this MMQI (listed in Table 18 above). Results showed that this goal was not met, with 95% programs meeting the 80% target. This percentage is consistent with reports from the 2016-17 program year, but a slight improvement over 2015-16 rates, 89% of centers met the target indicator.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 6.3.0. 100% of 21st CCLC centers will comply with at least 80% for the quality indicators (11 of 13) for Health and Safety, as measured by the OPI self-assessment tool.

RESULT: 94.9% of centers (129 of 136) met the compliance target for Health and Safety; goal was not met.

Not Yet

Montana State Evaluation Report

The final area that was assessed dealt with best practices related to **Evaluation and Measuring Outcomes**. Compared to most other sections, ratings in this area were relatively low. Ratings for most items (H1, H2, H3, H6, and H7; listed in Table 19, below) were similar, with between 59% and 64% of centers indicating that they were *Excelling*. Best practices were the least developed for communicating evaluation findings (H4; 40% *Excelling* and 18% not fully compliant) and collecting stories about program impacts outside of standard evaluations (H5; 49% *Excelling* and 20% not fully compliant). In general, these findings are consistent with previous program years.

TABLE 19. ITEM RATINGS FOR EVALUATION AND MEASURING OUTCOMES

Evaluation/Measuring Outcomes	Developing	Operational	Advancing	Excelling	Average (based on scale 1-4)
H1. The organization has adopted and applies an evaluation process to measure program goals and outcomes. This evaluation includes qualitative and quantitative program information and data on participation, performance, and outcomes.	0.7%	7.4%	33.3%	58.5%	3.5
H2. The evaluation process includes requesting feedback from stakeholders such as students, parents, and partners.	0.7%	6.7%	31.1%	61.5%	3.5
H3. The organization uses the information collected through this evaluation process in decision making, program refinement, and for purposes of quality improvement.	0.7%	4.4%	31.1%	63.7%	3.6
H4. Evaluation findings are regularly and effectively communicated to staff, community partners, parents, students, and other stakeholders.	0.7%	17.6%	41.2%	40.4%	3.2
H5. In addition to evaluation data, the organization collects stories about program impacts on students and their families.	2.2%	17.6%	30.1%	50.0%	3.3
H6. The organization demonstrates an understanding of the State Logic Model and the relation between their local activities and grant goal and performance measures.	0.7%	6.7%	31.1%	61.5%	3.5
H7. The organization identifies and shares promising practices internally and through afterschool networks.	0.7%	8.1%	27.9%	63.2%	3.5

In summary, data from the Montana Monitoring and Quality Improvement Self-Assessment (MMQI-SA) suggest that centers generally adhere to best practices for high-quality programming. **Ratings were lowest for items pertaining to Partnerships and Evaluation and Measuring Outcomes, indicating that these areas should target for future improvement.**

Results from MMQI-SA ratings also indicate that grantees who have more than five years of experience with the 21st CCLC grant report significantly higher levels of compliance with quality indicators as compared to those who have less experience, particularly in the areas of Staffing and Professional Development and Organizational Structure and Management. More experienced centers also report somewhat greater implementation of best practices pertaining to Evaluation and Measuring Outcomes.

Specific state indicators of quality programming have been established for practices related to Management and Sustainability, Health and Safety, Partnerships, Staffing and Professional

Development, and Organizational Management and Structure. These indicators stipulate that all grantees should meet at least 80% of the MMQI quality indicators in the sections above. An additional indicator requires all centers to establish a sustainability plan. Although rates of rates of compliance were generally high, none of these indicators were for the 2017-18 grant year. **Moreover, compared to the previous year, achievement of state performance indicators has not improved. Given that overall, compliance rates are generally high, further efforts should target low-performing programs. Collaboration with center administration and staff will allow struggling programs to communicate their unique needs so that supports can be tailored to better facilitate improvement in areas of difficulty.**

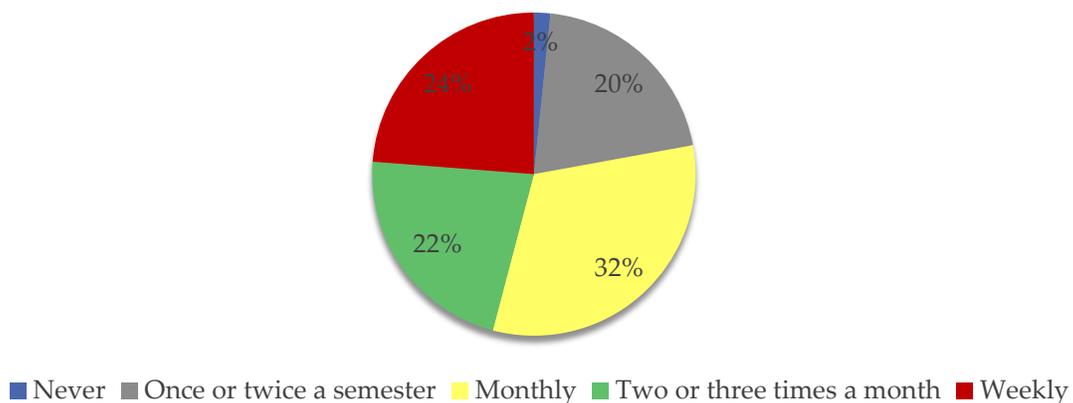
WHAT SEA- AND GRANTEE-LEVEL SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE TO MONTANA 21ST CCLC PROGRAM STAFF?

In order to obtain information about the resources and opportunities available Montana 21st CCLC program staff, staff members and program administrators were each asked to complete several survey questions about staff supports and communication. Survey data from 532 staff members and 122 administrators was available for analyses.

As shown in Figure 21 below, 78% of program administrators reported that they met with staff at least once per month, with 46% meeting multiple times each month. While, the remaining 22% of administrators could benefit from more frequent structured meetings to gather input from staff and share important program information, only 2 administrators (1.5%) reported that they never met with staff members. Compared to the 2016-17 grant year, there was a decrease in the percentage of administrators that did not meet with program staff at least monthly, including a specific decrease in the percentage that never held meetings with staff members.

FIGURE 21. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR COMMUNICATION WITH PROGRAM STAFF

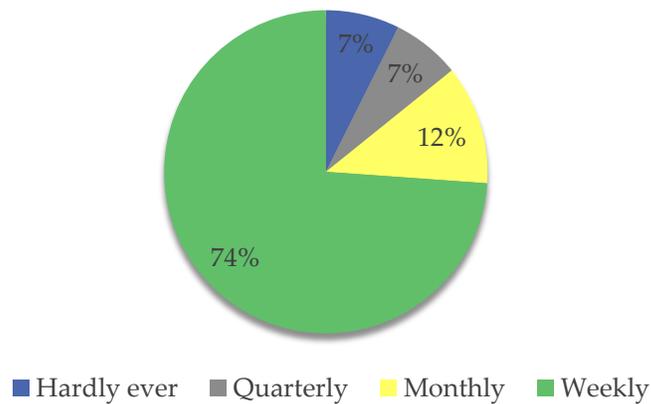
How often do you have meetings with your program staff?



Similarly, as shown in Figure 22, 74% of program staff reported interacting with the site administrator on weekly basis and 12% interacting on a monthly basis. Only 7% indicated they interacted with the administrator quarterly and 7% indicated hardly ever.

FIGURE 22. FREQUENCY OF PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR COMMUNICATION WITH PROGRAM STAFF

How often do you interact with the afterschool site administrator?



Administrators were further asked about specific areas of communication with program staff. These questions were also asked to program staff. Results are presented in Figure 23 and 24 below.

Results showed that they most frequently discussed program plans and strategies (with 86% of administrators reporting that they discussed this area at least once a month), followed by youth outcomes (approximately 68% discussed at least monthly). Program goals was the least frequently discussed, with the most common response (approximately 40%) indicating that this topic was discussed only once or twice each semester. However, most respondents (approximately 60%) indicated that they discussed program goals with staff on at least a monthly. This was generally consistent with reports from the 2016-17 grant year.

Staff responses demonstrated a similar pattern, with program activities being the most frequently discussed topic (83% talked about at least monthly). As with administrators, staff respondents indicated that youth outcomes were discussed somewhat more often (74% at least monthly), most staff members surveyed discussed program goals with administrators at least once a month (71%). Compared to the previous year, staff members indicate that they discuss both youth outcomes and program goals with administrators more frequently. Specifically, the percentage of staff that discuss youth outcomes at least monthly has increased by 8 percentage points (from

66% to 74%) and at-least-monthly discussions about program goals have increased by 13 percentage points (from 58% to 71%).

FIGURE 23. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR COMMUNICATION WITH PROGRAM STAFF BY TOPIC

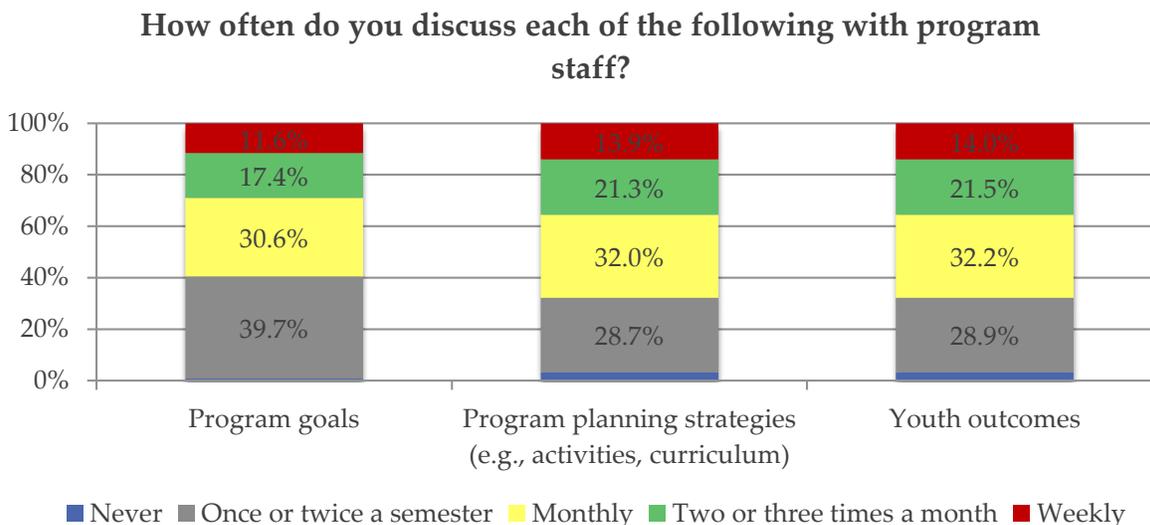
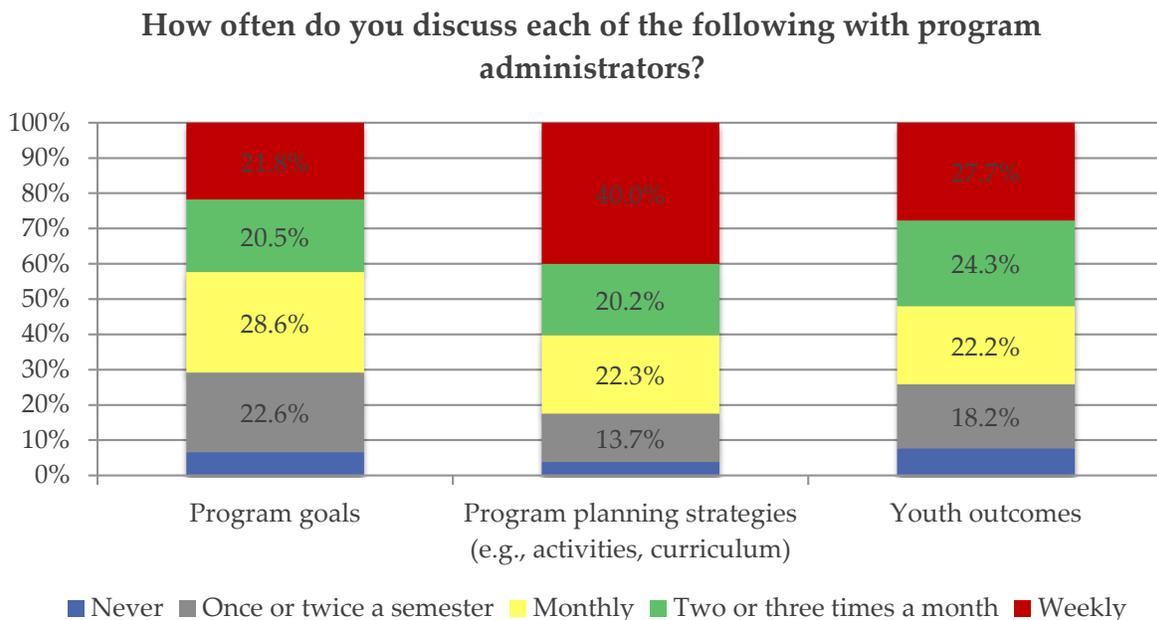


FIGURE 24. PROGRAM STAFF COMMUNICATION WITH PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS BY TOPIC



Administrators were also asked the frequency in which they offered professional development activities during the 2017-18 grant year. There were data available from 98 administrators. Notably, 20 administrators did not respond to this item (15% of overall sample) and 16 provided

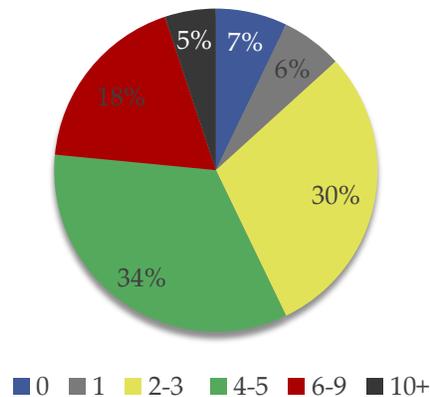
Montana State Evaluation Report

responses that could not be numerically interpreted (e.g., “as many as teachers;” 12% of the overall sample). Thus, the findings below may reflect over-reporting of positive responses (e.g., if a blank response was intended to indicate that no professional development opportunities were offered). Given this, the rank order of the different response categories may allow for more meaningful comparisons with data from previous years than would the raw percentages.

The most common response was that program administrators provided between four and five professional development opportunities (35% of all administrators, 34% of responding administrators). This was followed closely by two or three opportunities (22% of all administrators, 30% of those responding) and then six to nine opportunities (13% of all administrators, 18% of those responding). Even when non-responders are accounted for, this represents an increase in professional development opportunities from the 2016-17 grant year. In 2016-17, the modal response from administrators was that they offered two or three opportunities for training or professional development; in the current reporting year, the modal response was that four or five opportunities were offered. Additionally, the percentage of administrators offering six to nine opportunities has substantially increased, from 1% of surveyed administrators offering six to nine opportunities in 2016-17 surveyed to 13 in 2017-18%. Correspondingly, the percentage offering one or no professional development opportunities decreased from 20% in 2016-17 to 10% in 2017-18.

FIGURE 25. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS

How many professional development activities did you offer staff this year?

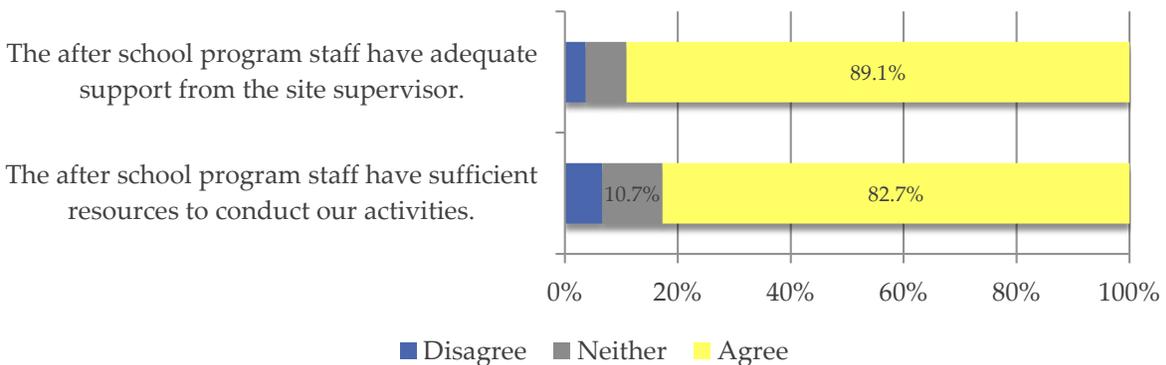


HOW EFFECTIVE ARE SUPPORTS OFFERED TO MONTANA 21ST CCLC STAFF? TO WHAT DEGREE ARE RECIPIENTS SATISFIED WITH SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE?

Perceived Effectiveness

Staff members at Montana 21st CCLC programs were also asked the extent to which they felt supported by their local administrators. As shown in Figure 26, a significant percentage (89%) indicated that they received adequate support from their site supervisors and 83% reported that they had sufficient resources to conduct program activities. However, despite feeling generally supported by program administration, material resources may be lacking for a small proportion of staff.

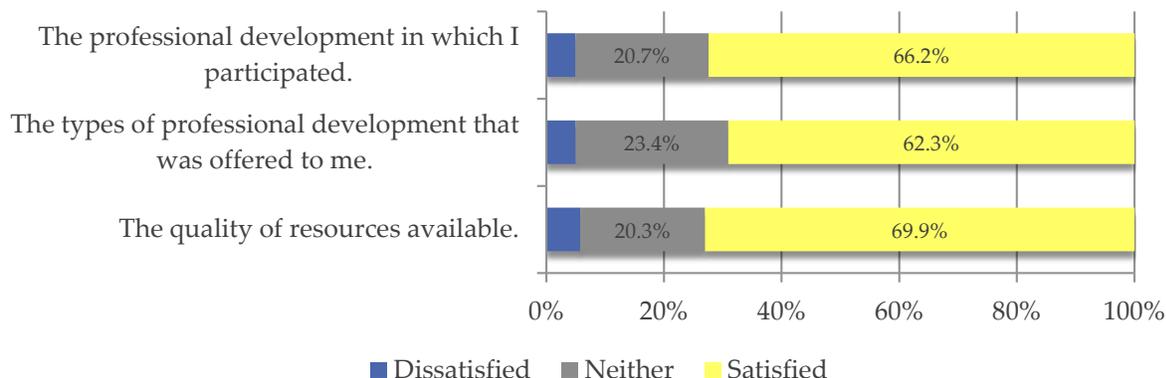
FIGURE 26. STAFF SUPPORT AND RESOURCES



Staff Satisfaction

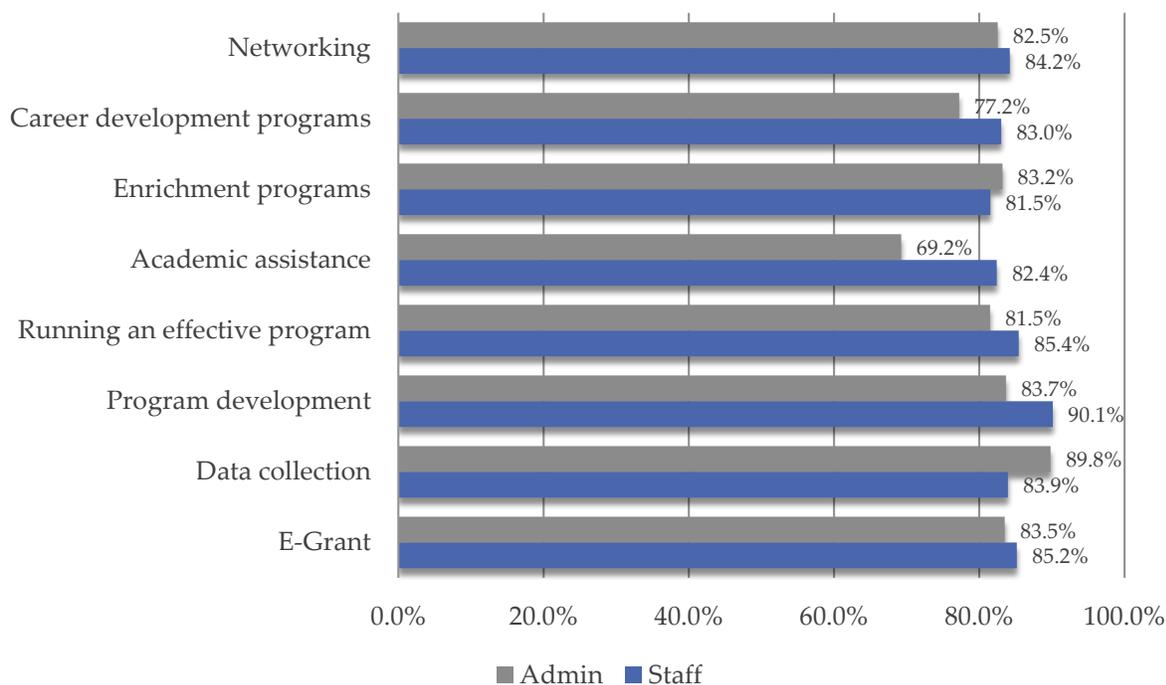
Program staff were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the professional development offered by their programs. As shown in Figure 27, 70% reported satisfaction with the quality of resources, while 66% were satisfied with the professional development opportunities in which they participated, and 62% with the types of professional development opportunities that were available. While the remaining staff generally indicated neutrality rather than dissatisfaction, between a third and a quarter of staff were not satisfied with the existing resources and professional development opportunities. Clearly, there is room for improvement in this area.

FIGURE 27. RATINGS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERED BY LOCAL 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS



Program staff and administrators were also asked to rate the training and supports offered by OPI. As shown in Figure 28, ratings were generally favorable. Overall, program administrators provided slightly higher ratings than did staff members. Among administrators, assistance with program development was highest-rated area, with 90% of respondents indicating that supports and trainings in this area were *Good* or *Excellent*. Among program staff, the highest-rated area was assistance with data collection, with 90% of respondents providing positive ratings. Staff ratings were lowest for training to assist students with academics, with only 69% of respondents providing positive ratings for support in this area.

FIGURE 28. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR AND STAFF SATISFACTION WITH OPI SUPPORTS



Training and Support Needs

Program staff and administrators were also asked about their support needs; that is, in which areas they would like additional training. As shown in Table 20 below, staff and administrators agreed that they would like additional training on: 1) ideas for programming, 2) behavior management, and 3) connecting afterschool programming with the school day. These were also the most-requested areas for additional training in 2016-17. Both staff and administrators indicated that they would like additional training for parent communication, but for the remaining items, training priorities differed. **Based on these findings, it is recommended that OPI focus on the top three identified training needs for future professional development opportunities.** Further recommendations are discussed in the final section of this report.

TABLE 20. TRAINING NEEDS AMONG 21ST CCLC STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS

RANK	PROGRAM STAFF		PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS	
1	Behavior management	39.9%	Programming ideas	45.5%
2	Programming ideas	37.8%	Connecting programming with school day	32.1%
3	Connecting programming with school day	35.6%	Behavior management	31.3%
4	Communicating with parents	21.0%	Communicating with parents	26.9%
5	Helping students with reading	18.6%	Program management	21.6%
6	Program management	18.2%	Working with partners	20.1%
7	Helping students with math	17.4%	How to evaluate the program	18.7%
8	Working with partners	12.5%	Working with volunteers	17.2%
9	How to evaluate the program	11.9%	Helping students with math	15.7%
10	Communicating with teachers	10.1%	Helping students with reading	13.4%
11	Working with volunteers	7.7%	Communicating with teachers	6.7%
	Other ¹	2.6%	Other ²	14.2%

¹ For staff, other areas for training included building community relations, engaging students, obtaining grant funding, communicating frustrations with colleagues, and increasing parent involvement, developing a stronger understanding about adolescent psychology

² For administrators, other areas for training included funding and sustainability, staff management, parent programming, special education resources, healthy snack ideas, service learning, engaging older students and finding activities suitable for a wide age range, and finding community partners to provide programming opportunities.

Program administrators were also asked via the survey how OPI can better support their program needs. The following is a summary of major themes shared.

- ✚ The primary request was that OPI offer more training opportunities. They indicated that beyond in-person trainings, there were many different modalities through which beneficial trainings could be offered, such as online courses or webinars.
- ✚ Program administrators would like OPI to be a resource for programming ideas, learning experiences, and projects that they can implement in their afterschool sites.

- ✦ Program administrators would like guidance from OPI specifically on sustainability plans.
- ✦ Some respondents also cited that the evaluation reporting processes have become complicated and expressed the desire for a more simplified, streamlined process.

Outcome Results

In order to evaluate the effects that 21st CCLC programs are having on Montana students, survey, academic, and program data were collected from students, parents, staff, administrators and teachers. Based on these data and the research questions of interest, state performance objectives were set, primarily in the form of annual target goals.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF MONTANA 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS ON STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, STUDENT BEHAVIORS AND POSITIVE YOUTH ASSETS? IN WHAT OTHER WAYS HAVE PROGRAMS AFFECTED PARTICIPANTS?

Success Stories

Prior to sharing to quantitative results, it is important to put a “face” on the children being affected by these programs. Below are two success stories shared by grantees about the impact that their programs are having on students. These success stories, which are provided annually by all grantees via their local evaluation reports, are useful tools for educating stakeholders about the outcomes of the work and the results that are being achieved.

Student A has attended MAPS since his freshman year. 2017/18 was the year he graduated from Hamilton High School. When this student first arrived at MAPS, it was obvious that he did not want to be there. He did not speak much, and when he did, it was an insecure whisper. He did not have any friends and chose a workstation in the back corner of the Apple Lab.

He was from a very solid and supportive family. However, they had serious financial challenges, including the threat of homelessness. There was always a sense of insecurity, fear from Student A. Bit by bit, MAPS staff and students chipped away at this wall of protection. He was a gifted artist with an intuitive skill and eye for design. He understood the roles of balance, color and layout without anyone ever discussing it with him. While he didn't actually know the correct “terms”, he deeply understood the concepts. The Design instructor would often show his work as a strong example. Over

time, this student learned the “design” language and began to participate in class dialogues and critiques.

Eventually, the student was hired to be part of a team assembled to create a website for a local nonprofit. He knocked this challenge out of the park and ended up garnering multiple other clients. MAPS invested in his skill and supported him through launching his own design business. MAPS also helped him and his family navigate the intimidating waters of financial aid and scholarships. MAPS instructors worked with him in creating a student portfolio that not only landed him a scholarship at MT State University, but they offered him a student teaching assistant job for Media Arts 101!

It is with utmost confidence that MAPS can assure none of these opportunities would have happened for him had it not been for our supportive staff, students and studios, MAPS not only helped him, “Find His Voice” but we helped him make it louder and stronger!

We had a young boy who desperately needed to come to the Club for the school year after being removed from his birth-family and home out of state. When he began at the club, he was extremely shy and would not interact, or if he did interact it was a very negative occurrence often resulting in another member being minorly injured. Rather than isolate the young man, we banded together as a team to utilize our conscious discipline training and patience to model appropriate behavior and offer guidance with compassion. He improved greatly in his interactions with peers and also became a club member other kiddos wanted to associate with. The positive change in this boy was most likely due to the compassion and patience of staff and utilizing the Conscious Discipline skills learned through presentations as a result of a partnership with Central Montana Head Start.

Academic Achievement

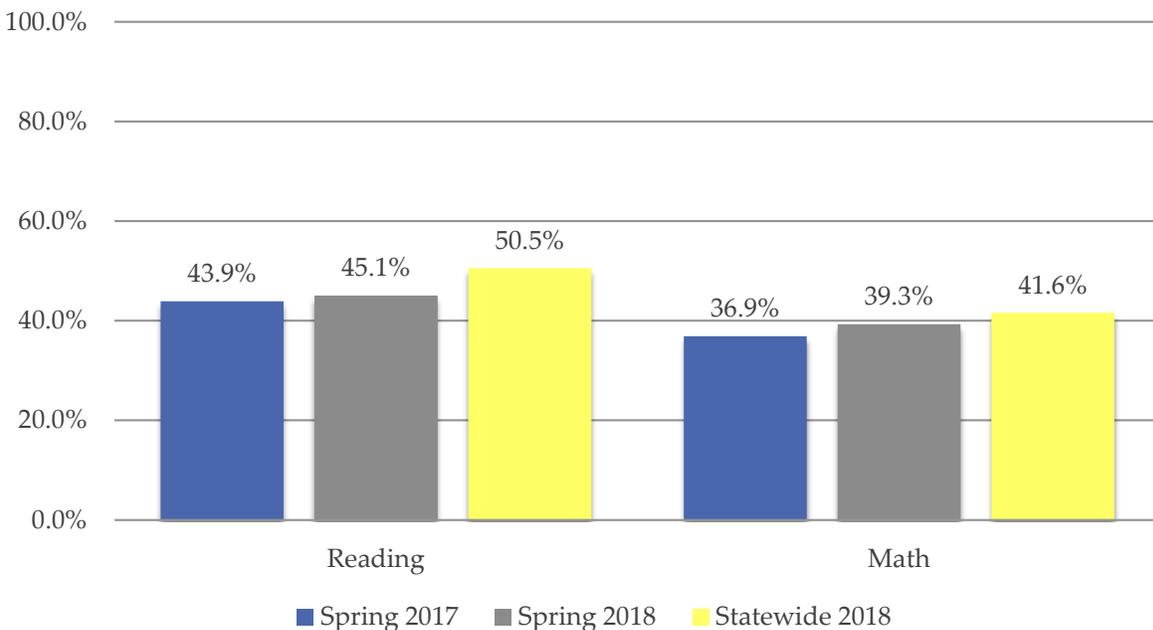
Student Achievement

As part of the federal grant, all grantees are required to report on student outcomes (i.e., “GPRA” measures). Outcomes can include achievement on state assessments, school grades, and teacher-reported performance. During the review of the Montana 21st CCLC Evaluation Plan, it was decided that the state would investigate collecting data from all three sources to determine the feasibility, reliability, and validity of these multiple sources of academic outcome data. Results from the 2016-17 program year showed that collecting and reporting of student grades was not

feasible nor was it done with a lot of reliability.¹⁴ As a result, student grades are not reported. Acquiring student assessment data was found to be feasible. Program attendance data was provided to OPI, who was able to pull this information from their statewide student information system (GEMS) and through a confidentiality and data sharing agreement, share this with the State Evaluator. Technical staff at OPI use an algorithm to match student program attendance data to state academic data. For Spring 2018 assessment data, this process had an 82.5% match rate, resulting in data from a total of 7,611 students. Thus, while data is not available on 100% of program attendees, the high match rate is deemed as highly representative of the 21st CCLC student population.

Results from the 2017-18 grant year show that 45% of student program participants were proficient on the state assessment in reading and 39% were proficient in math. As shown in Figure 29, rates are 5% and 2% below statewide averages, respectively.

FIGURE 29. READING AND MATH PROFICIENCY RATES



Two state objectives are associated with these data, indicating that proficiency rates should increase by 5% each year. As shown in Figure 29, rates from 2017-18 are higher than those in 2016-17. For reading, there was a 2.7% increase in proficiency, such that this target was not met. However, the state indicator for math was achieved, with rates increasing by 6.5%.

¹⁴ Specifically, local grantees reported many challenges in gathering this data from districts (from confidentiality issues to the district simply not having certain types of information to share). Furthermore, there was substantial variability across the state regarding the format and types of grade data that was provided (e.g., letter grades, standards-based grades, proficiency percentages).

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 1.1.1. The percentage of 21st CCLC students that meet or exceed the Proficient level on state reading assessments will increase by 5% annually.

RESULT: Reading proficiency rates increased by 2.7% from the prior year; goal was not met.



PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 1.1.2. The percentage of 21st CCLC students that meet or exceed the Proficient level on state mathematics assessments will increase by 5% annually.

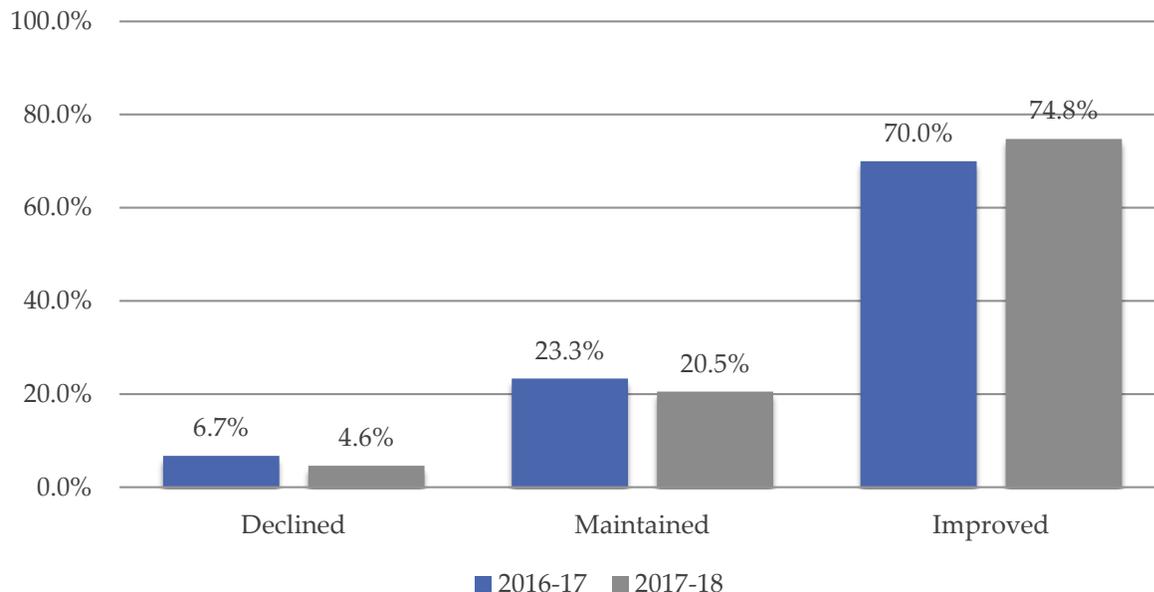
RESULT: Math proficiency rates increased by 6.5% from the prior year; goal was met.



As previously noted, another option for obtaining student academic data is to collect this information from teachers through surveys. That is, teachers can complete questionnaires to describe the extent to which program participants have demonstrated changes in their math and reading performance. In order to capture this information, grantees were asked to collect survey data from teachers of program attendees through their district partnerships during the Spring of 2018. In order to promote a high response rate, the State Evaluator and state team provided guidance on how to collect this information, held a webinar, and provided a detailed guidebook which included templates for communicating with their school partners. Multiple reminders were also sent to grantees. Despite these efforts, the data was only available for 34% of students (4,790 out of a possible 13,915). Thus, these findings have are not as reliable as the state academic outcome data and may not reflect the entire 21st CCLC student population. Given this, these findings should be interpreted with caution. With this caveat in mind, teachers reported that 95% of 21st CCLC students¹⁵ either improved or maintained their level of academic performance during the 2017-18 school year, and the state indicator goal (70% of more) was met (see Figure 30).

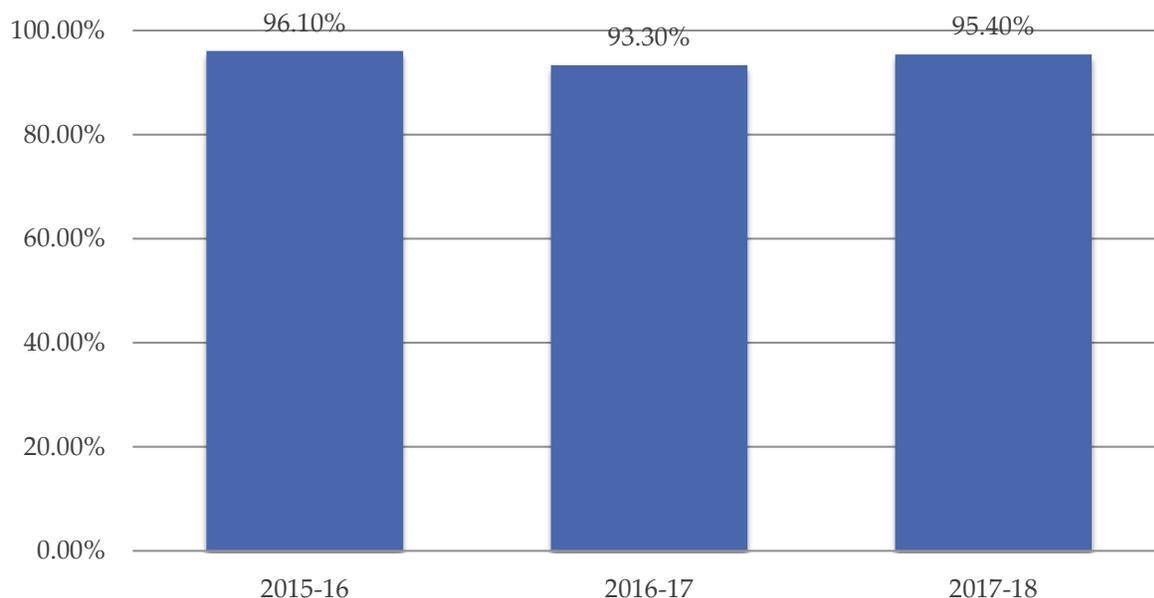
¹⁵ Students not requiring improvement are excluded.

FIGURE 30. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE BY GRANT YEAR



As shown, the overall rate of students who improved or maintained their academic performance level was generally consistent with previous years, although a slight increase from 2016-17 was observed (2-percentage points). However, the rate of students who improved increased by 5 percentage points compared to 2016-17, and the rate of students who declined decreased by 2 percentage points (see Figure 31).

FIGURE 31. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE BY GRANT YEAR



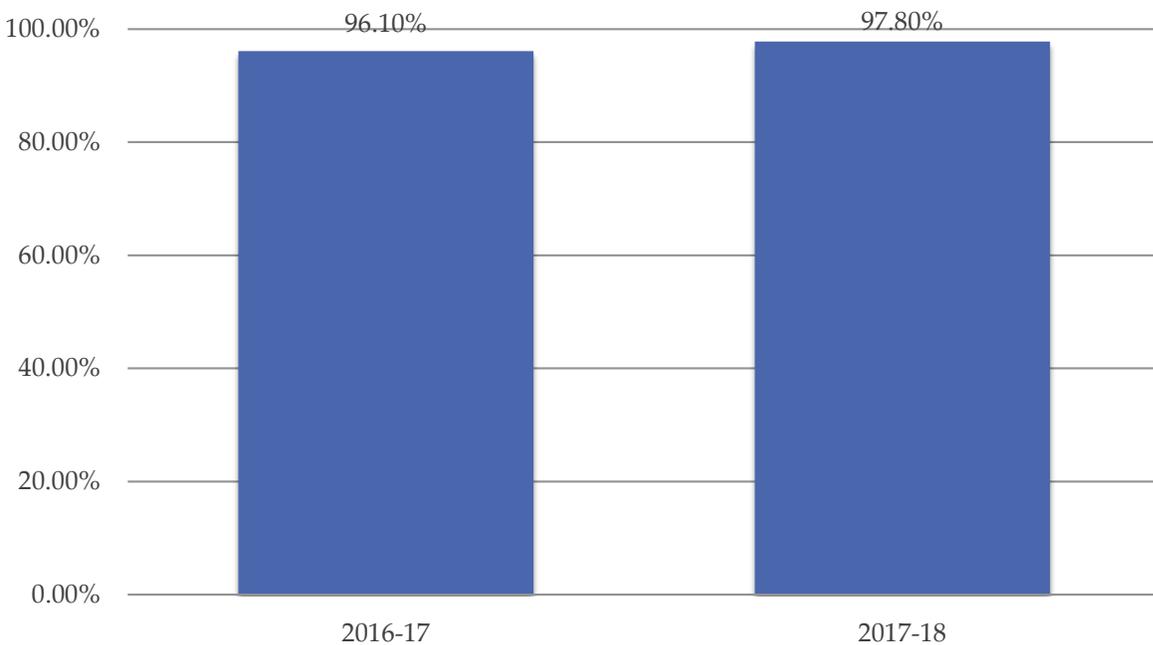
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 1.3.1. At least 70% of 21st CCLC students will maintain or improve Math and Reading Grades, as measured by teacher surveys.



RESULT: 95.4% of students maintained or improved Academic Performance; goal was met.

A related state indicator pertains to student advancement, which specified that at least 90% of 21st CCLC students will graduate or advance to the next grade level. According to teacher reports, 98% of students graduated or were promoted to the next grade level at the end of the 2017-18 school year, and thus the goal was met. As shown in Figure 32, this represents an increase from the previous year, when 96% of students advanced.

FIGURE 32. STUDENT ADVANCEMENT BY GRANT YEAR



PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 1.3.2. At least 90% of 21st CCLC students will Graduate or Advance to the next grade level, as measured by OPI data.



RESULT: 97.8% of students Advanced or Graduated; goal was met.

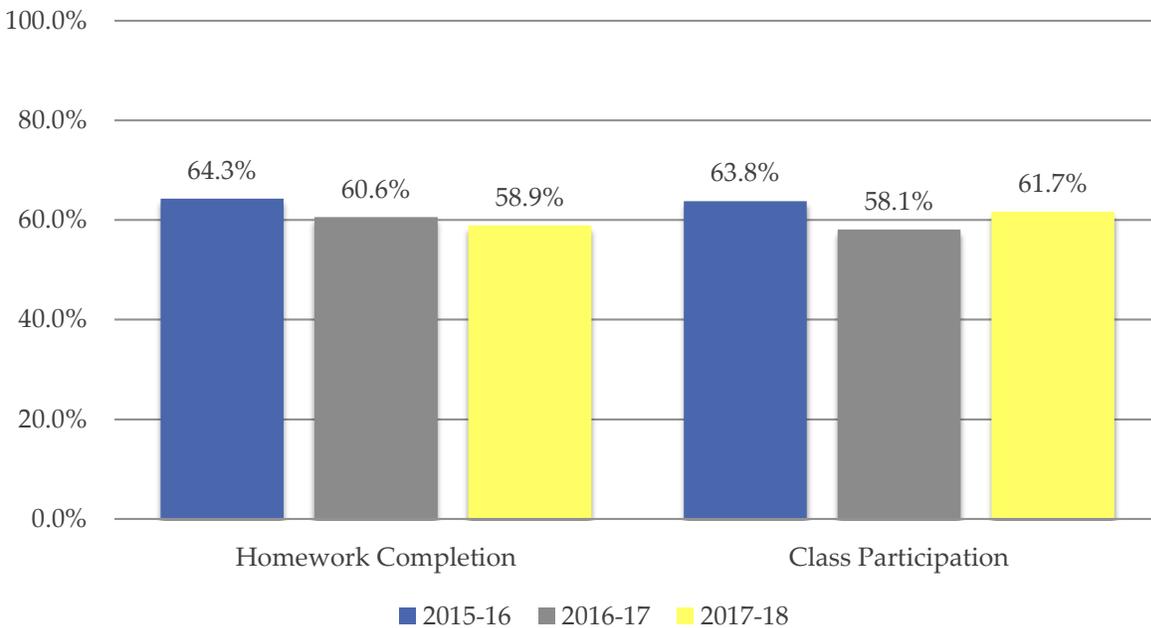
Student Engagement

Teachers were also asked to respond to two items that described homework completion and three items classroom participation (i.e., school engagement). Items required teachers to rate students on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating a *Significant Decline*, 3 indicating *No Change*, and 5 indicating a *Significant Improvement*. Ratings for each area were averaged across questions, and averages above 3.5 were designated as showing improvement. Responses showed that 59% of 21st

Montana State Evaluation Report

CCLC students as improved homework completion and 62% of students improved class participation over the course of the school year. Unfortunately, the state indicators of 70% were not met. Compared to previous years, the percentage of students improving homework completion declined (see Figure 33). The percentage of students improving class participation improved from the 2016-17 reporting year remained lower than 2015-16 observations.

FIGURE 33. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT BY GRANT YEAR



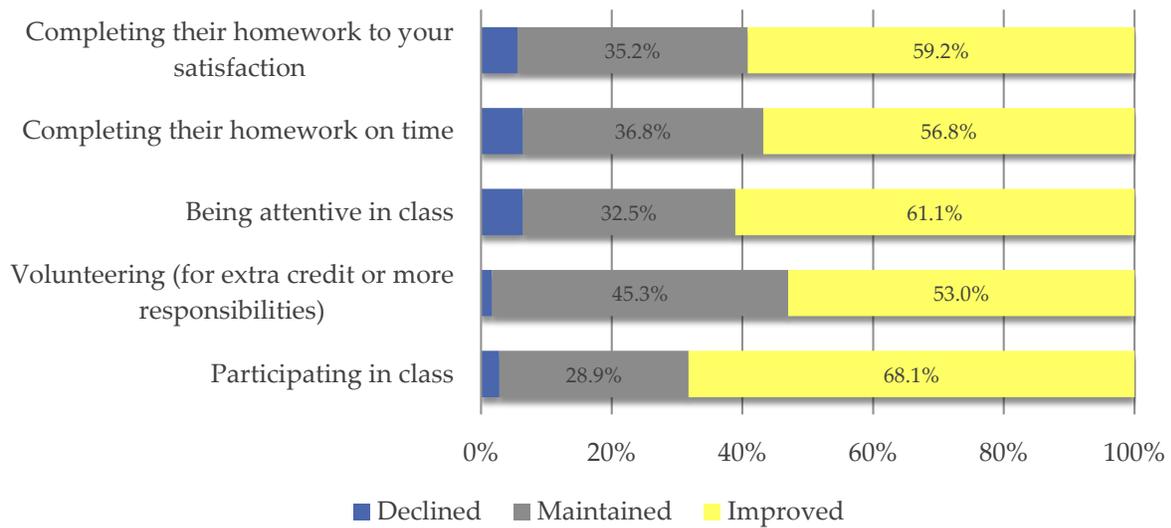
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 1.2.1. At least 70% of 21st CCLC students will improve Homework Completion and Class Participation, as measured by teacher surveys.

RESULT: 58.9% of students improved Homework Completion and 61.7% improved Class Participation; goal was not met.



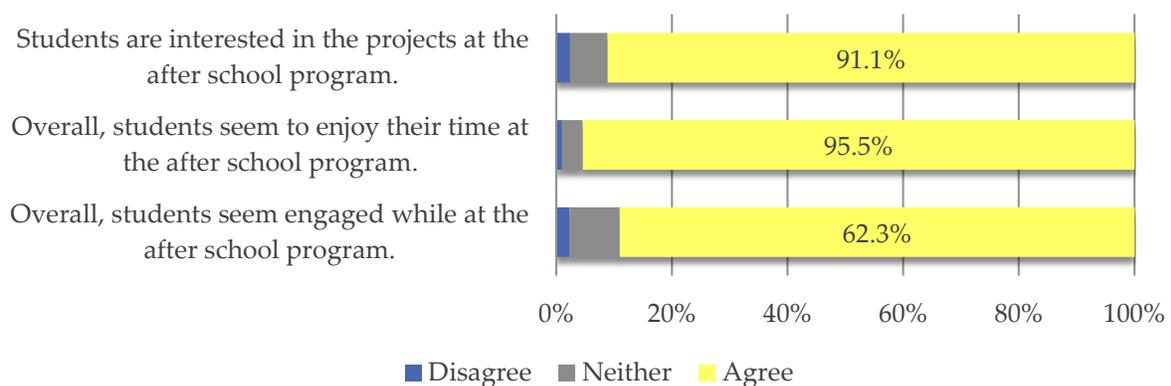
Analyses of the individual items are presented in Figure 34. Results show that the largest improvements were in classroom participation (69% of students improved) and attentiveness (62% improved). The least improved areas were volunteering for extra credit work (53% improved). It is also noteworthy that a very low percentage of students who declined in these areas.

FIGURE 34. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT BY ITEM



Program staff ($N = 492$) provided similar reports regarding their perceptions of student engagement in program and volunteer activities. Unlike teacher reports, which provided student-level ratings, staff survey data was aggregated across all 21st CCLC students at their center. Results show that most staff (82%) believed that, overall, their students improved or maintained a good level of engagement in program involvement in program activities, such as technology, arts, sports, and recreation. However, when asked about involvement in volunteer opportunities, there was less positive change (62%).

FIGURE 35. PROGRAM STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



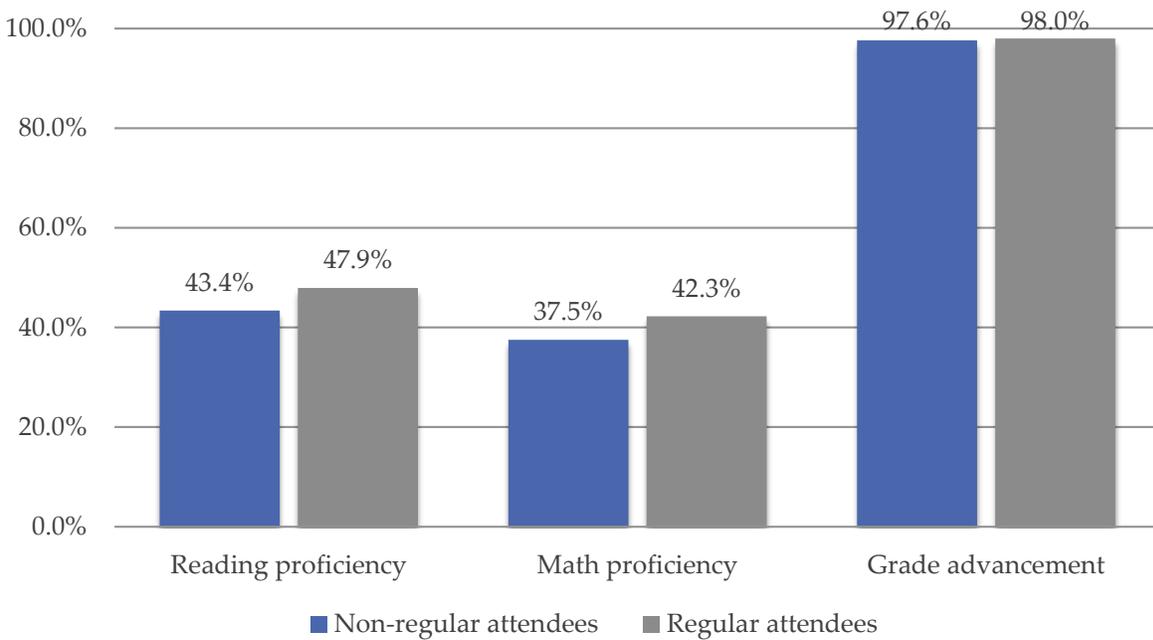
Academic Impacts by Participation Level

Analyses compared academic impacts among regular attendees (i.e., those who attended at least 30 days) and non-regular students. It was hypothesized that reading and math proficiency rates would be higher for students who attend the program to a more often ($n = 2,820$) compared to

those who attend less frequently ($n = 4,791$). Additionally, it was expected that teacher reports of grade advancement, academic improvement, classroom participation, and homework completion would be higher for better for regular attendees ($n = 3,577$) compared to non-regular attendees ($n = 1,106$), and that regular attendees would have higher rates of grade advancement. It should be noted that data from teachers is disproportionately higher for regular students given that teachers are only asked to survey students with 15 or more days of attendance.

Results show that students who attended the program for 30 or more days had significantly higher rates of reading and math proficiency¹⁶, but there was no significant difference on the likelihood of advancing to the next grade level (Figure 36). **This suggests that 21st CCLC programs have a stronger influence on students' performance on state assessments when they attend the program regularly.**

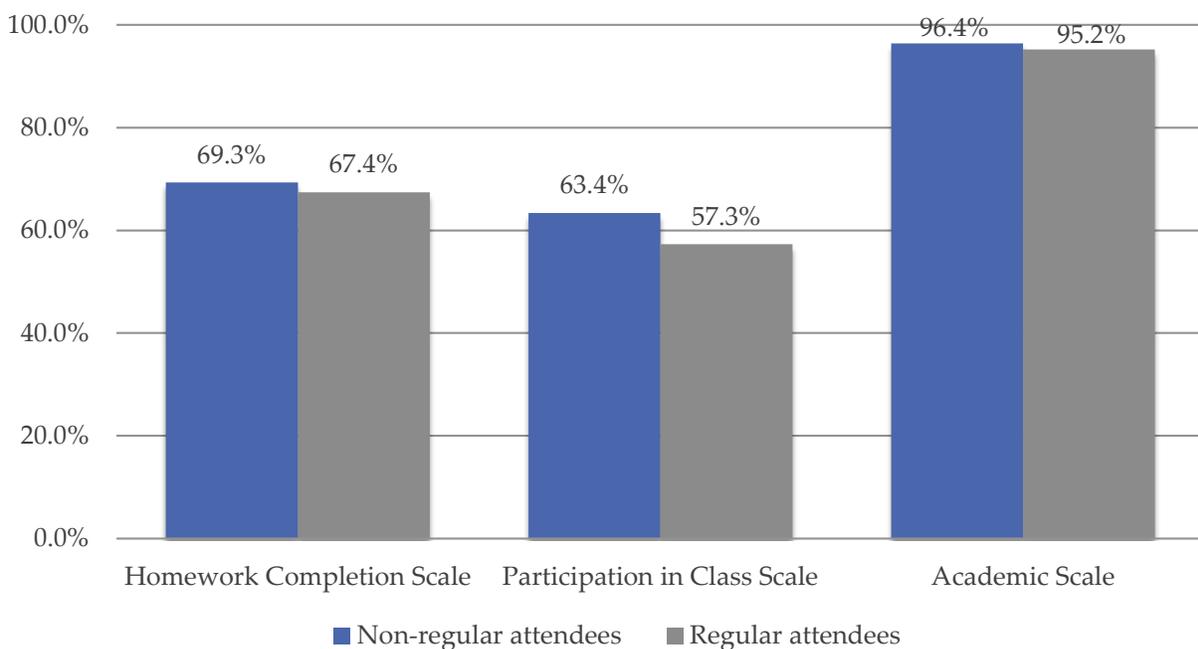
FIGURE 36. ACADEMIC OUTCOMES AMONG REGULAR AND NON-REGULAR ATTENDEES



¹⁶ Math proficiency, $t = 4.066, p < .001$; reading proficiency, $t = 3.873, p < .001$; grade advancement, $t=0.69, p=.62$.

In contrast, when teachers were asked for the level of improvement among 21st CCLC students in homework completion, class participation and overall academics, results showed that a significant difference in homework completion and class participation with non-regular students showing more improvement than regular students. No such significant differences were observed on the overall academic scale¹⁷. These findings may be due, in part, to the fact that surveys were not collected for students with less than 15 days of attendance and therefore do not reflect the full sample of non-regular attendees.

FIGURE 37. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT AMONG REGULAR AND NON-REGULAR ATTENDEES: PERCENT IMPROVEMENT



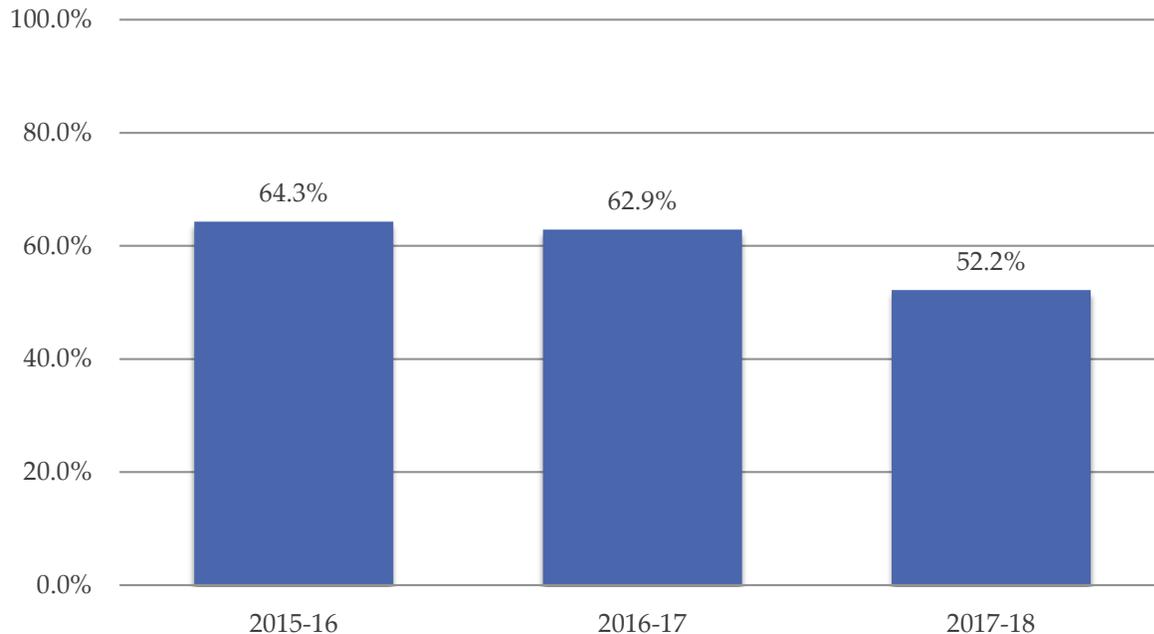
Behavioral Impacts

Classroom Behavior

Another state performance indicator measures the extent to which teachers perceive positive changes in student behavior, including behavior in class, school attendance, and being motivated to learn ($N = 4,054$). Teaching ratings show that, on average, 52% of students were rated as improving in their behavior and thus, the state indicator was not met. Additionally, this percentage is lower than those from previous years (see Figure 38).

¹⁷ Homework completion, $t = 2.95, p < .01$; class participation, $t = 3.06, p < .01$; academic scale, $t = 1.79, p = .07$.

FIGURE 38. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN STUDENT BEHAVIOR BY GRANT YEAR



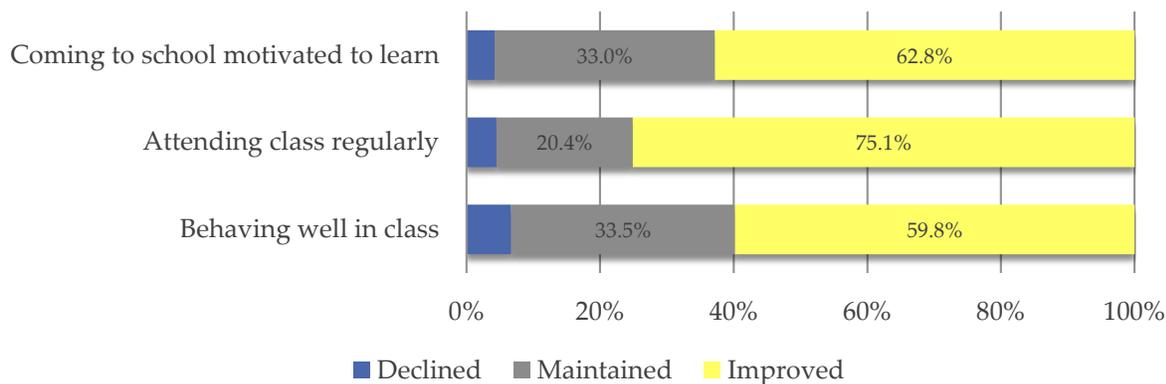
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 4.2.2. At least 60% of 21st CCLC students will improve Behaving Well in Class, as measured by teacher surveys.

RESULT: 52.2% of students improved Behaving Well in Class; goal was not met.



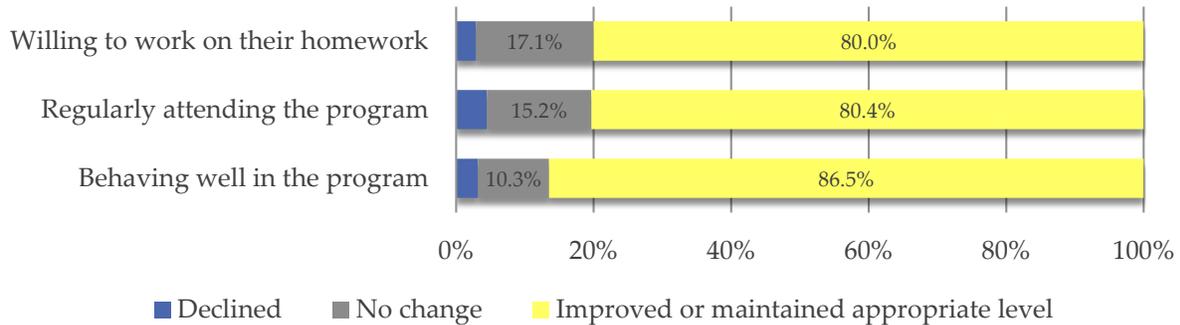
Examination by individual items that constitute this scale shows during the 2017-18, the greatest level of change was observed in attending class regularly (75% improved), followed by coming to school motivated to learn (63% improved; see Figure 39).

FIGURE 39. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN STUDENT BEHAVIOR BY ITEM



21st CCLC program staff were also asked to report on changes they observed in student behavior over the course of the program year ($N = 497$). Program staff indicated that students improved the most regarding their behavior at the program (87% improved; see Figure 40). Overall, ratings provided by program staff indicated more student improvement than did teacher ratings.

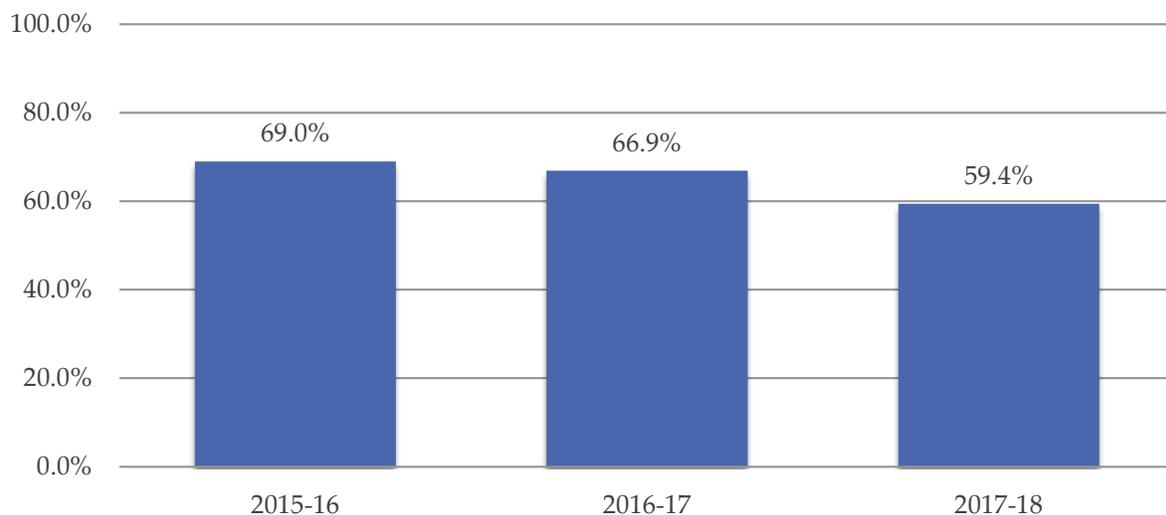
FIGURE 40. PROGRAM STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN STUDENT BEHAVIOR



Interpersonal Relations

High-quality out-of-school programming can also impact students’ interpersonal skills. To examine this, a state performance indicator was designed to measure the extent to which teachers perceived positive changes in these skills. Specifically, teachers rated improvements in students’ ability to get along with other students and with staff members, and their ability to handle conflicts in a positive manner. Data was available for 4,019 students. Responses indicate that 59% of teachers reported improvement among students during the 2017-18 grant year (see Figure 41). This represents a decline from the improvement rate in the 2016-17 year; however, the state goal of at least 50% of students demonstrating improvement was met.

FIGURE 41. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN STUDENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS BY GRANT YEAR



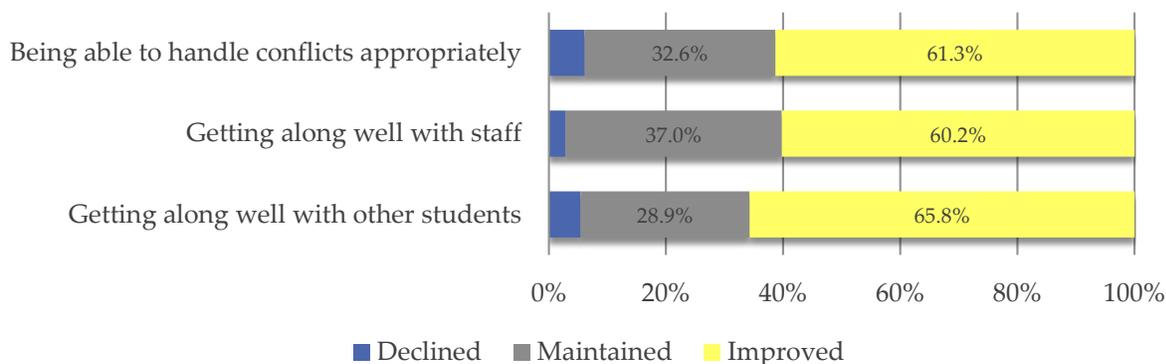
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 4.1.1. At least 50% of 21st CCLC students will improve Conflict Resolution Skills, as measured by teacher surveys.



RESULT: 59.4% of students improved Conflict Resolution Skills; goal was met.

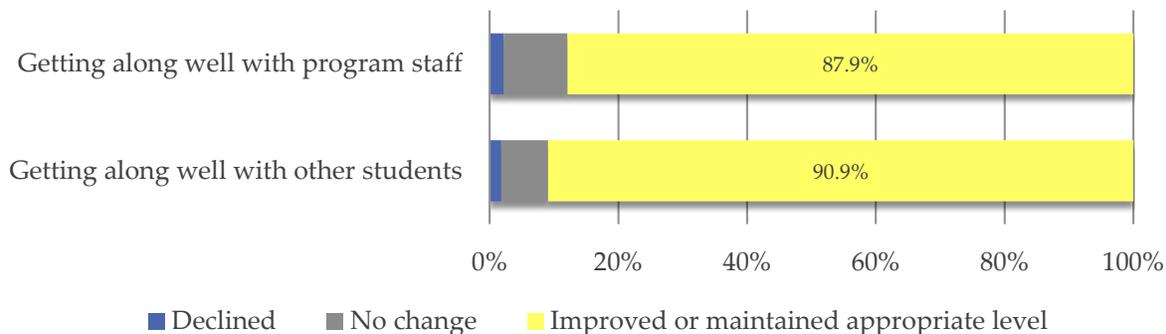
Analyses by the individual items that make up the conflict-resolution scale suggest that students have shown the greatest improvement in their abilities to get along with other students (66% of students improved; see Figure 42).

FIGURE 42. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN STUDENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS BY ITEM



Similarly, program staff were asked about changes in student interpersonal skills during 21st CCLC programming. Results from staff were significantly higher than those reported by school day teachers. As shown in Figure 43, over 90% of staff indicated that overall, students’ interpersonal skills improved over the course of the program year.

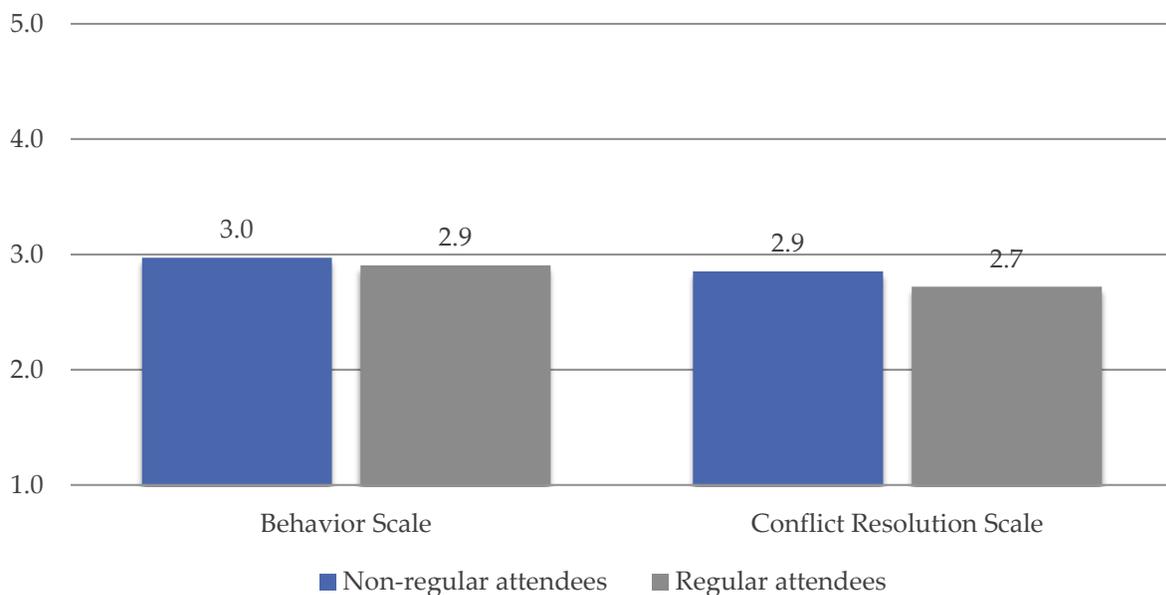
FIGURE 43. PROGRAM STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN STUDENT INTERPERSONAL SKILLS



RESULTS BY PARTICIPATION LEVEL

Analyses were also conducted to examine if regular versus non-regular participation was related to student behavior and conflict resolution skills. As shown in Figure 44, there was no relationship between student attendance at the 21st CCLC program and teacher-reported changes in conflict resolution skills. However, there was a significant relationship between program attendance and teacher-reported behavior, in which teacher ratings were significantly lower for regular attendees than for non-regular attendees.¹⁸ As previously noted, these findings may be due to the fact that surveys were not collected for students with less than 15 days of attendance and therefore do not reflect the full sample of non-regular attendees.

FIGURE 44. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AMONG REGULAR AND NON-REGULAR ATTENDEES



Personal Control

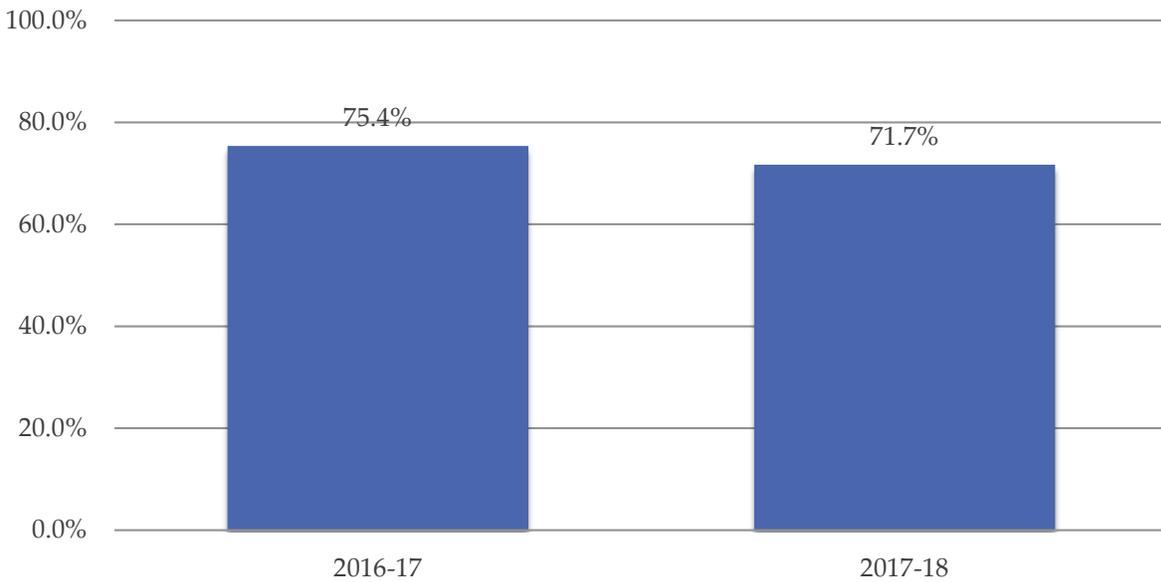
Student perceptions of personal control also may be influenced by participation in 21st CCLC programs. That is, the extent to which students perceive they have control over their actions and future. A state indicator was developed, specifying that 75% of attending students would report possessing personal control. In order to measure this construct, 4,072 students were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*, or for younger students, *NO!*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree* or *YES!*) on the following items:

- ✚ I think carefully about what I’m going to do before I do it.
- ✚ I have control over how I act.
- ✚ I have control over my future.

¹⁸ Behavior Scale, $t = -2.655, p = .008$

As indicated in Figure 45, 72% of students reported possessing personal control. This is slightly lower than the percentage of students reporting personal control in 2016-17, and the state indicator of 75% way not met.

FIGURE 45. PERCENT OF STUDENTS WHO PERCEIVE PERSONAL CONTROL BY GRANT YEAR



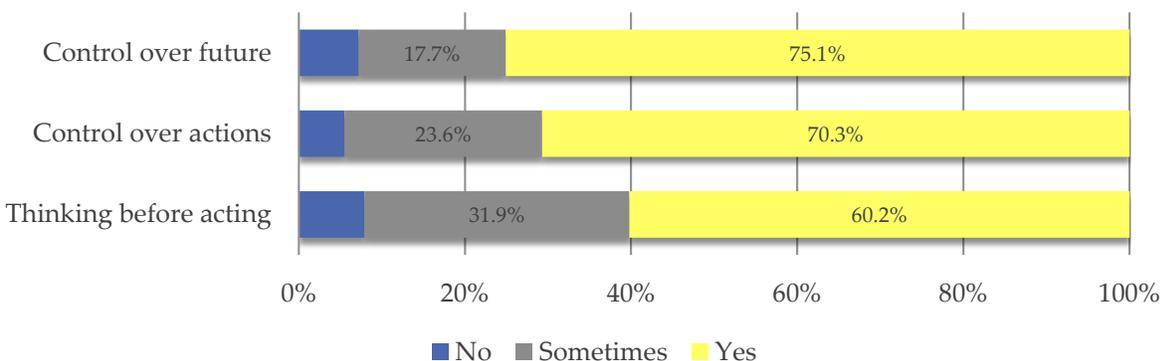
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 4.1.2. At least 75% of 21st CCLC students will report that they have Personal Control (over their behavior and future), as measured by student surveys.

RESULT: 71.7% of students had Personal Control; goal was not met.



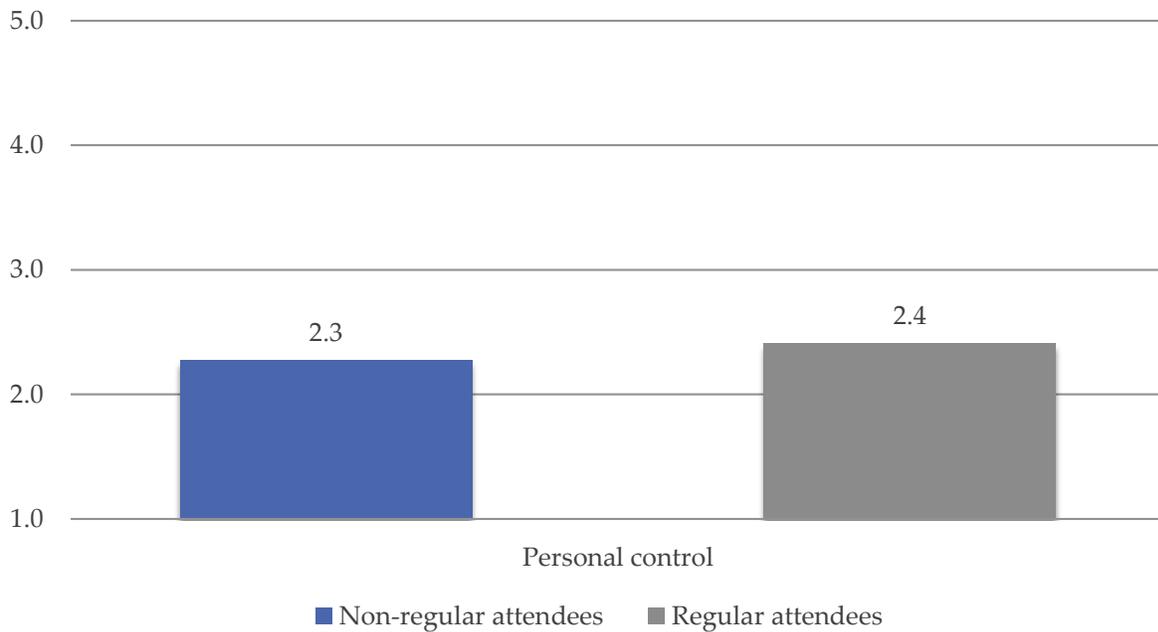
Results by the individual items show that students perceive personal control primarily in their ability to control their future (75%) and their actions (71%), but only 60% of students endorsed thinking before they act. **Thus, it may be beneficial for programs to target this area and teach social-emotional learning skills related to impulsivity.**

FIGURE 46. STUDENT RATINGS OF PERSONAL CONTROL BY ITEM



Analyses also evaluated whether frequency of program participation was related to changes in personal control. This was done by comparing students who attended their 21st CCLC program weekly to those who attended only monthly or quarterly. Results showed a statistically significant difference, such that students who attended more frequently demonstrating greater perceptions of personal control than those who attend less frequently¹⁹ (see Figure 47).

FIGURE 47. STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL CONTROL BY PROGRAM PARTICIPATION



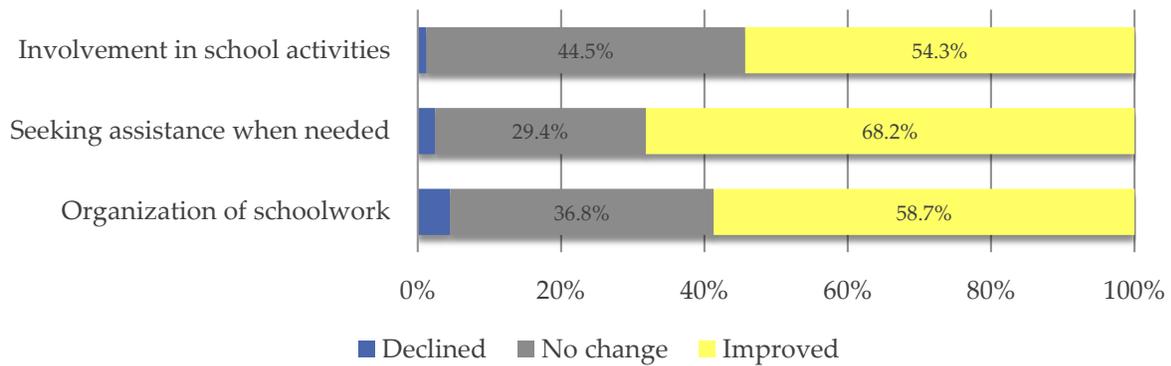
Positive Youth Assets

Organizational Skills, Assistance Seeking, and Engagement in School Activities

Teachers were also asked to rate students in other areas that could benefit from out-of-school programming, such as organizational skills, assistance-seeking behavior, and involvement in extracurricular activities. As shown in Figure 48, ratings indicate that 68% of students demonstrated improvement in assistance-seeking behavior and 59% improved their organizational skills, and 54% became more involved in extracurricular activities, such as technology, arts, music, theater, sports, and recreation.

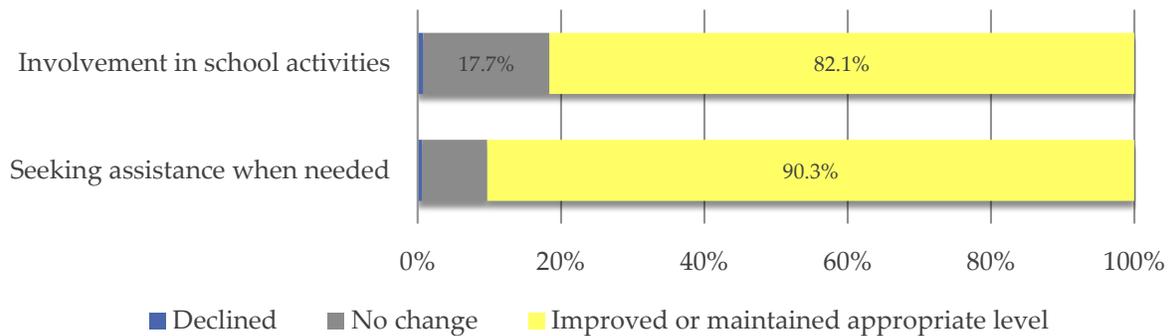
¹⁹ Personal control, $t = 5.150, p < .001$

FIGURE 48. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN OTHER POSITIVE YOUTH ASSETS



Ratings from program staff showed that students, overall, demonstrated substantial improvement in assistance-seeking behaviors (90%) and involvement in program activities, such as technology, arts, and recreation (82%). Consistent with prior findings, program staff rated reported more improvement than did school day teachers.

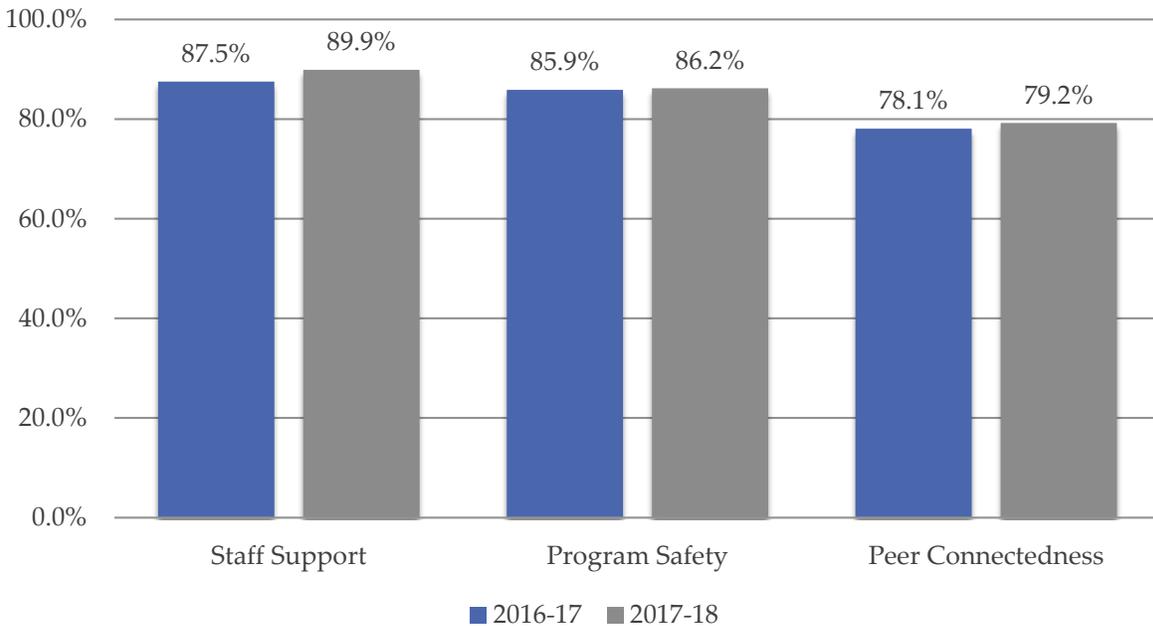
FIGURE 49. PROGRAM STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN OTHER POSITIVE YOUTH ASSETS



Staff Support, Safety, and Peer Connectedness

Students (*N* = 4,601) were surveyed to determine the extent to which they perceived adult support, safety, and connectedness with peers in 21st CCLC program. Results show that 90% of students felt supported by afterschool staff, and 86% felt safe at their programs. Additionally, 79% of students reported that they felt connected with their peers in the program. Compared to 2016-17, all areas have improved slightly (see Figure 50). The performance indicators for staff support and peer connectedness were met, but the percentage of students who felt safe in the program fell below the 90% target.

FIGURE 50. STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF STAFF SUPPORT, PROGRAM SAFETY, AND PEER CONNECTEDNESS BY GRANT YEAR



PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 2.1.1. At least 90% of 21st CCLC students will report that they are Supported by and Connected to staff in their program, as measured by student surveys.



RESULT: 89.9% of students felt Supported; goal was met.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 2.1.2. At least 90% of 21st CCLC students will report that they feel physically Safe in their program, as measured by student surveys.



RESULT: 86.2% of students felt Safe; goal was not met.

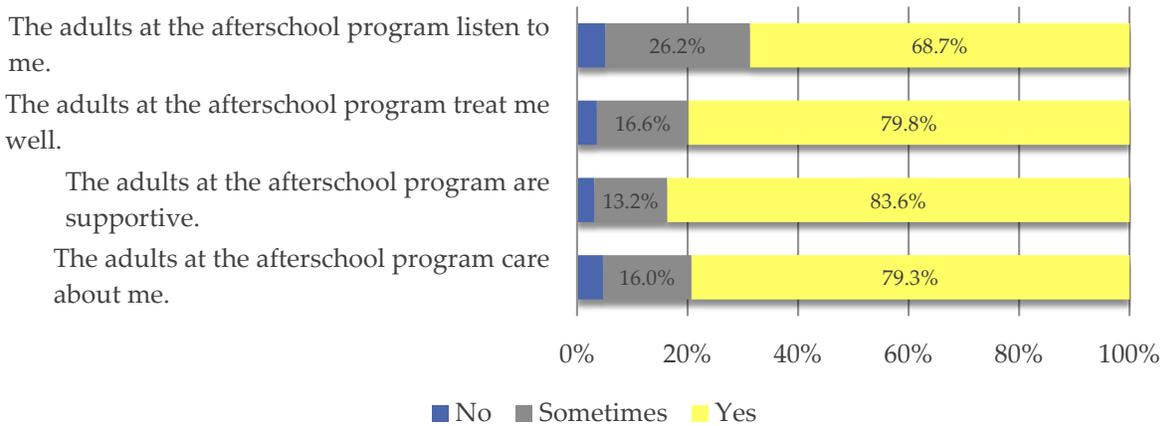
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 2.1.3. At least 75% of 21st CCLC students will report that they feel Connected to their peers and have a sense of belonging, as measured by student surveys.



RESULT: 79.2% of students felt Connected; goal was met.

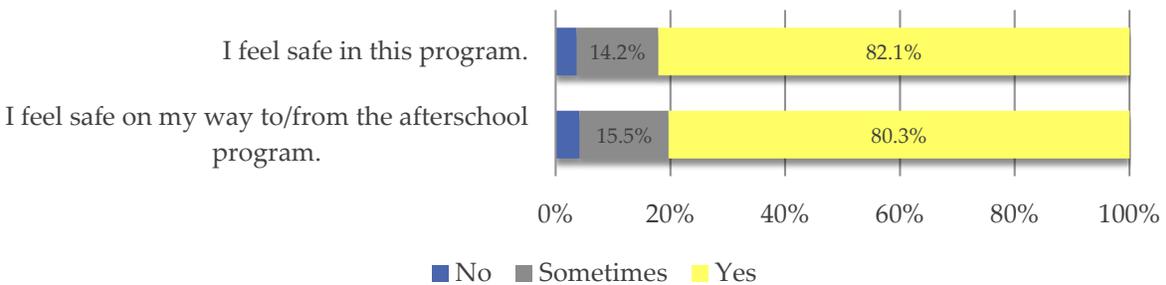
Of the items related to perceptions of adult support, the highest-rated item among students was that adults in the afterschool program were supportive (84%) and the lowest-rated pertained to adults listening to students (69%; see Figure 51).

FIGURE 51. STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF STAFF SUPPORT BY ITEM



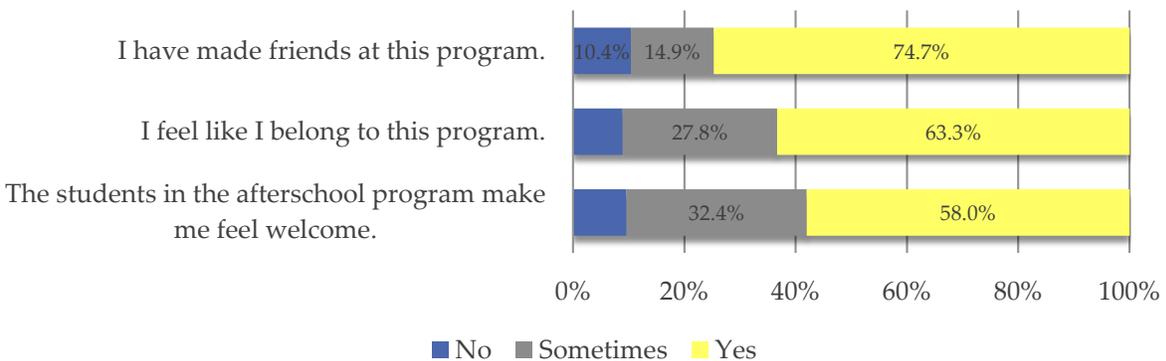
As shown in Figure 52, 82% of students felt safe at the program, and 80% felt safe on their way to and from the program.

FIGURE 52. STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAM SAFETY BY ITEM



On items related to peer connectedness, little over half of students (58%) reported that students at the program made them feel welcome, and 63% agreed they felt like they belonged. That said, 75% reported making friends in the program (see Figure 53).

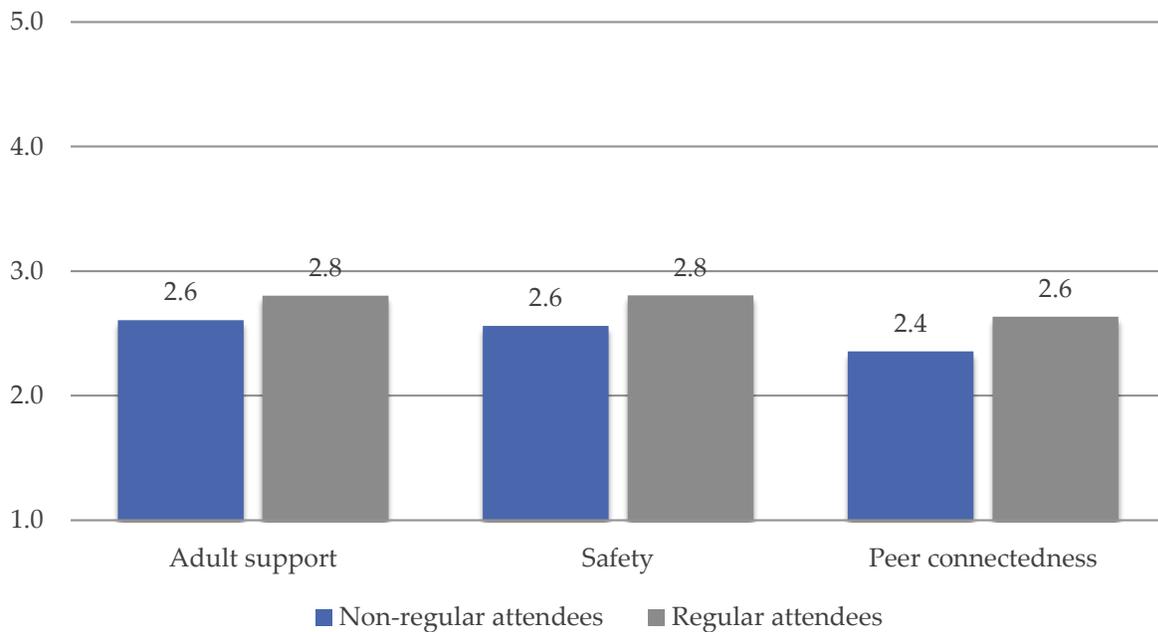
FIGURE 53. STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF PEER CONNECTEDNESS BY ITEM



RESULTS BY PARTICIPATION LEVEL

Analyses were also conducted to examine if regular attendance was related to the student perceptions of support, safety, and connectedness. Analyses showed significant relationships between student attendance at the 21st CCLC program and their perceptions in all three areas.²⁰ As shown in Figure 54, students who attended the program more weekly demonstrated more positive perceptions than those who attended only monthly or quarterly.

FIGURE 54. STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY, PEER CONNECTIONS, AND SUPPORT AMONG REGULAR AND NON-REGULAR ATTENDEES

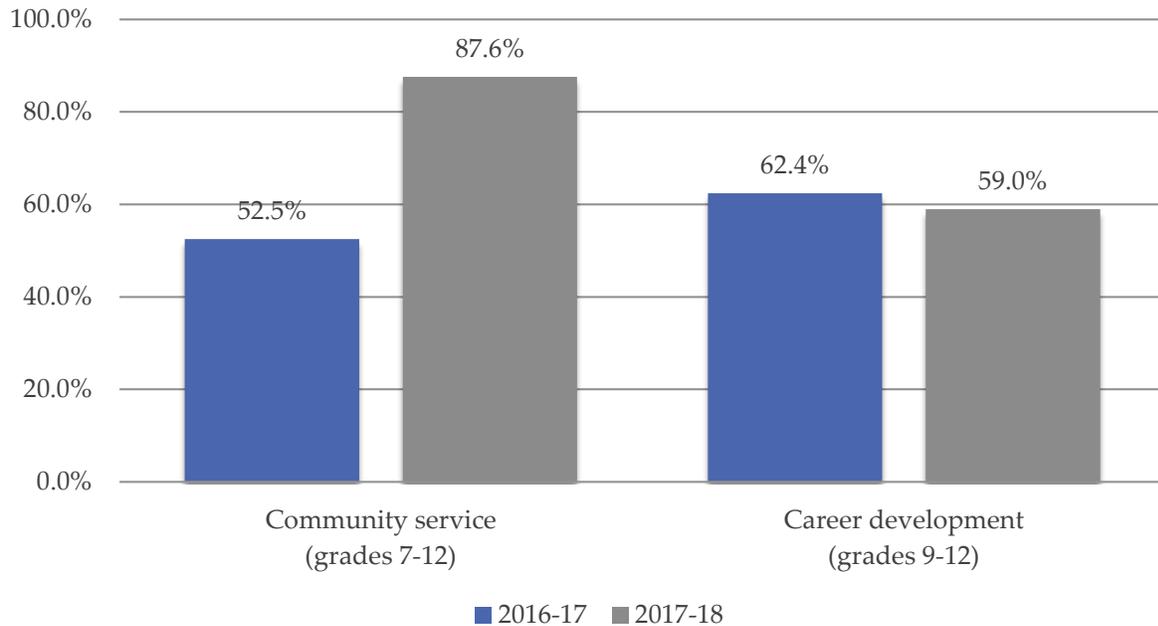


Engagement in Community Service and Career Development Opportunities

An additional goal of the Montana 21st CCLC state grant is to enhance opportunities for students in civic or community service learning and career development and encourage students to become more involved in these areas. Thus, objectives were set for increasing engagement in these activities. Results show that 88% of 6th-12th-grade students (*N* = 1,133) actively engaged in community service opportunities, and that 59% of 9th-12th-grade students (*N* = 422) received career development opportunities from their afterschool programs. The 50% target for community service opportunities was met, but programs did not reach the 75% target for career development. As shown in Figure 55, these results community service engagement increased substantially from 2016-17 rates, while participation in career development opportunities dropped slightly.

²⁰ Perceptions of support, *t* = 6.890, *p* < .001; perceptions of safety, *t* = 7.969, *p* < .001; perceptions of connectedness, *t* = 8.369, *p* < .001

FIGURE 55. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY GRANT YEAR



PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 3.2.1. At least 50% of 21st CCLC middle- and high-school students will report that they participate in Community Service or Service Learning opportunities, as measured by student surveys. 

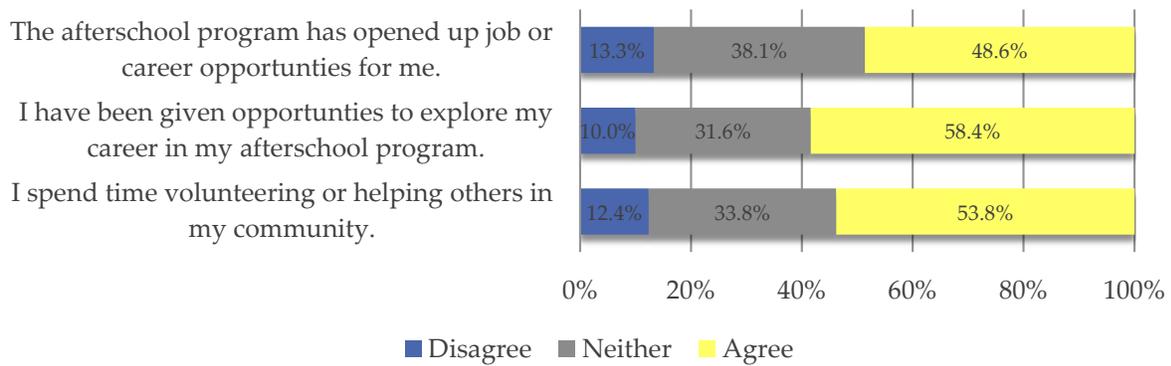
RESULT: 87.6% of students participated in Community Service Learning; goal was met.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 3.2.3. At least 75% of 21st CCLC high-school students will report involvement in Career Development opportunities, as measured by student surveys. 

RESULT: 59.0% of students participated in Career Development opportunities; goal was not met.

Results for individual items show that 58% of high-school students reported that their afterschool program provides students with opportunities to explore careers and 49% believed that participating in the program has opened career opportunities. Levels of involvement in community service were similar, with 54% of middle- to high-school students reporting that they spent time volunteering or helping others in their communities (see Figure 56).

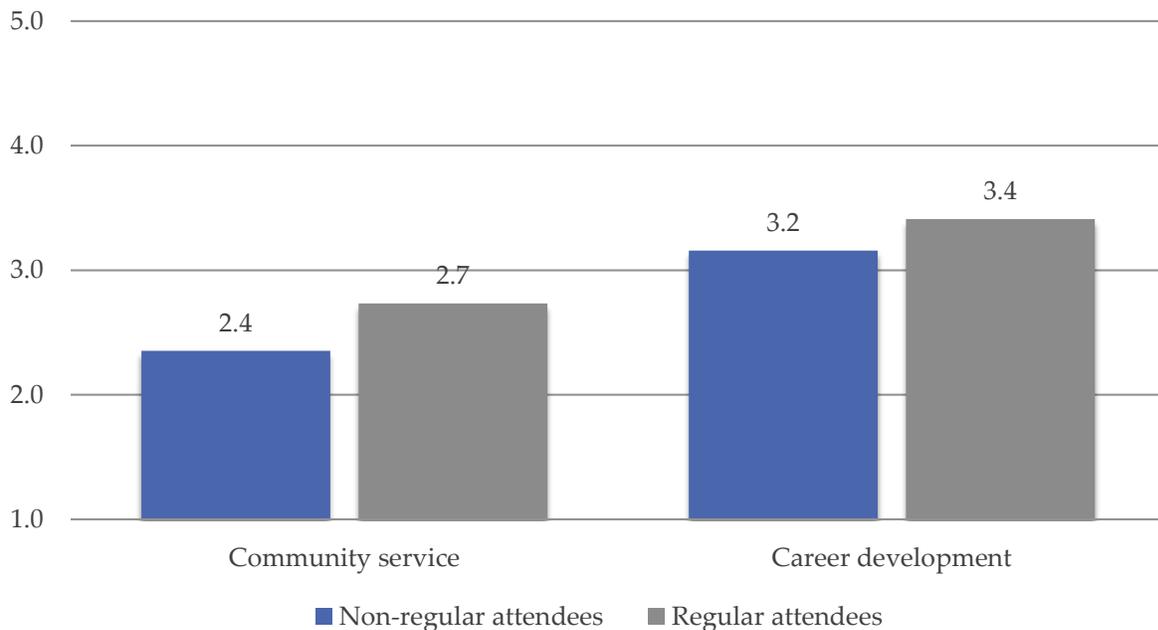
FIGURE 56. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY ITEM



RESULTS BY PARTICIPATION LEVEL

Analyses were conducted to examine if regular attendance at 21st CCLC programs was related to students’ participation in these community service and career development activities. Results showed significant relationships between student attendance at the 21st CCLC program and their engagement levels in both areas.²¹ As shown in Figure 57, students who attended the program weekly demonstrated more positive engagement in community service and career development opportunities than those who attended only monthly or quarterly.

FIGURE 57. INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AMONG REGULAR AND NON-REGULAR ATTENDEES



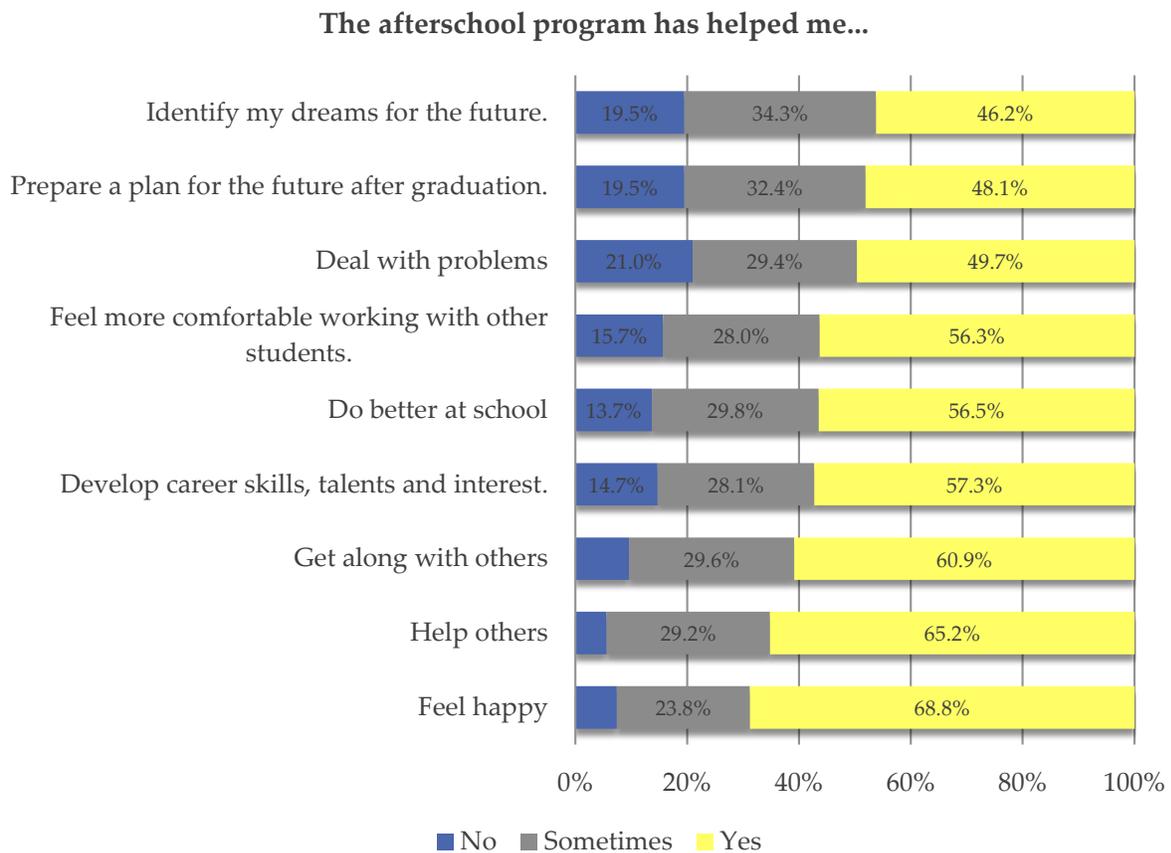
²¹ Community service, $t = 2.942, p = .003$; career development, $t = 4.078, p < .001$

Other Program Impacts

Student Impacts

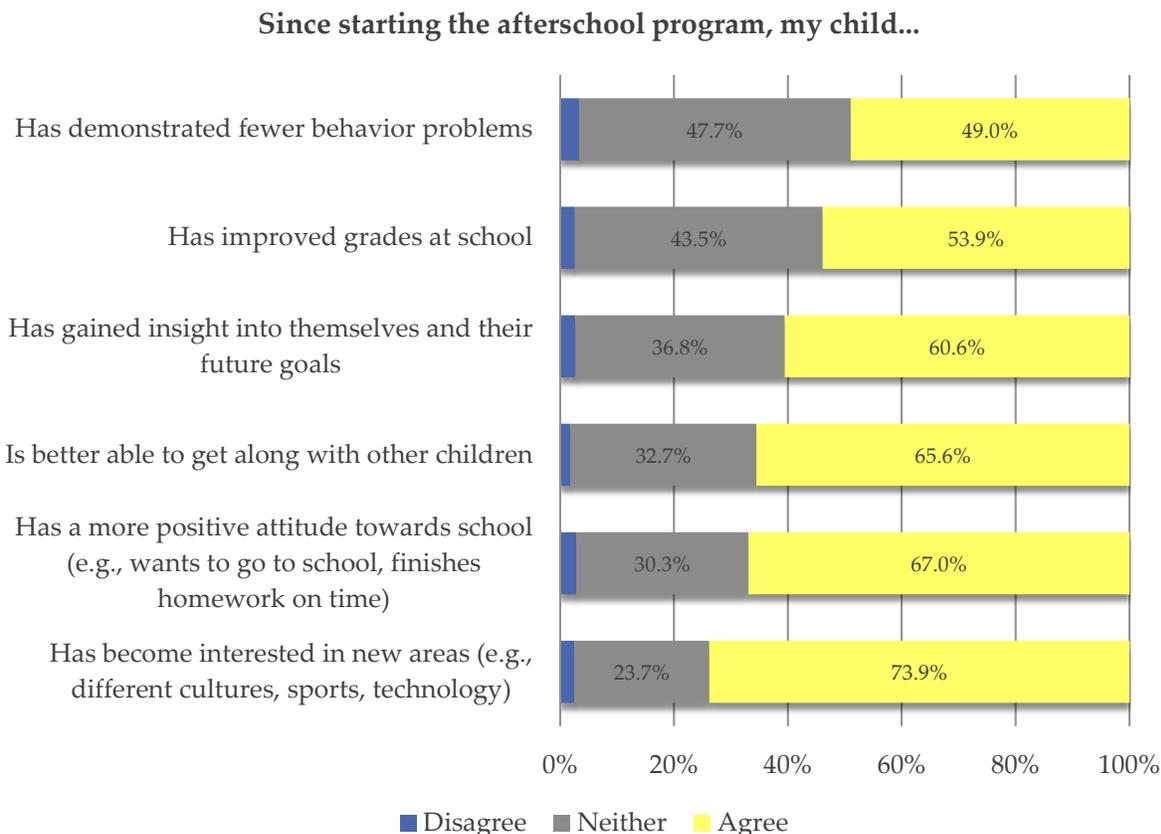
Student surveys also inquired different areas where the program positively impacted them ($N = 4,063$). Figure 58 shows the results, which are ordered to reflect the area most impacted (feeling happy) to area the least (helping students to identify dreams for their future). **These data show that while programming helps to promote positive feelings and support from others, students continue to need dealing with problems, and for older students, planning for the future.**

FIGURE 58. STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF OTHER PROGRAM IMPACTS



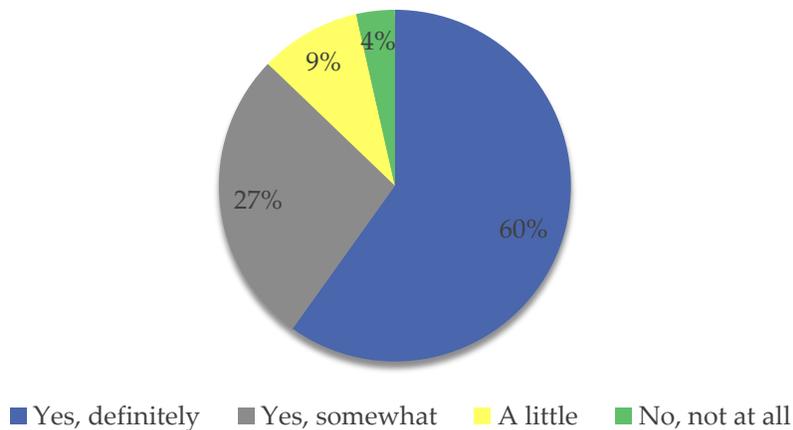
Similarly, parents ($N = 2,094$) were asked to report on their perceptions of ways the program impacted their several different aspects of their students' behavior. As shown in Figure 59, most parents felt that the program positively influences their students' interests in new areas (74%), their attitudes towards schools (67%), and their ability to get along with their peers (66%). In contrast, less than half of parents (49%) felt that their student had fewer behavior programs, and only 54% reported improved grades. Less than 5% felt their programs did not assist students, indicating that overall, parents perceived the impacts of the 21st CCLC program to have been positive.

FIGURE 59. PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF OTHER PROGRAM IMPACTS



Teachers were also asked about the extent to which each of their students benefited from 21st CCLC programming. Teachers responses indicated that they believed that 87% of their students directly benefitted from attending the afterschool program.

FIGURE 60. TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF WHETHER STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM THE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

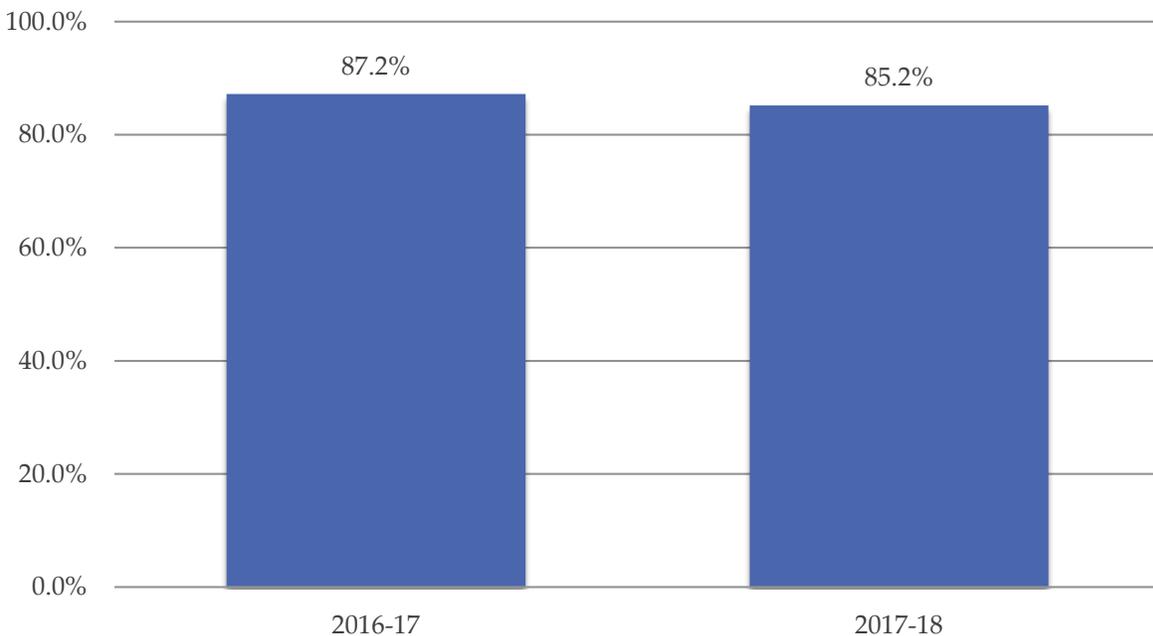


“Some students benefit from the extra attention and love that is exhibited by the program staff. Students benefit by being held accountable for their academics and homework assignments. Students also benefit by the exposure to basically unlimited discovery, exploration, and learning by engaging in board games, building games, teamwork games, etc. They are also exposed to a social environment and a safe environment that they may not have at home.” – School Day Teacher

Parent Impacts

Another goal of 21st CCLC programs is to assist parents and caregivers so that they can better support students’ education, health, and mental well-being. This includes providing information on the importance of being involved and knowledgeable in their students’ activities and education. Parent who participated in 21st CCLC adult offerings (2,175) were surveyed to determine whether they felt knowledgeable about their students’ schooling. It should be noted, however, that programming directed to families was limited to only 66 centers in Montana during the grant year. With this in mind, results show that 85% of parents reported being aware and knowledgeable of their students’ activities and progress. This result exceeds the annual target of 65% and as such, the target goal was met. As shown in Figure 61, this is a slight decline from 2016-17 percentages.

FIGURE 61. PARENT KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF STUDENT PROGRESS BY GRANT YEAR



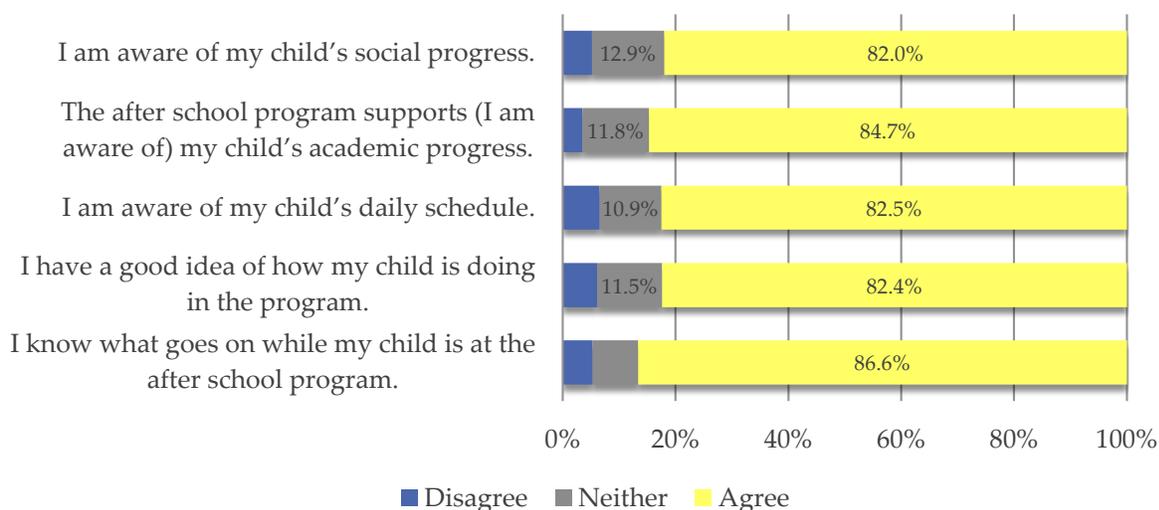
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 3.1.2. At least 65% of 21st CCLC parents will report that they have Knowledge and Awareness of student progress and activities at the school and afterschool program, as measured by parent surveys.



RESULT: 85.2% of parents were Knowledgeable and Aware; goal was met.

In general, across all items a high proportion of 21st CCLC parents report awareness and knowledge. As shown in Figure 62, parents reported the greatest awareness regarding students' activities in the afterschool program (87%).

FIGURE 62. PARENT KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF STUDENT PROGRESS BY ITEM

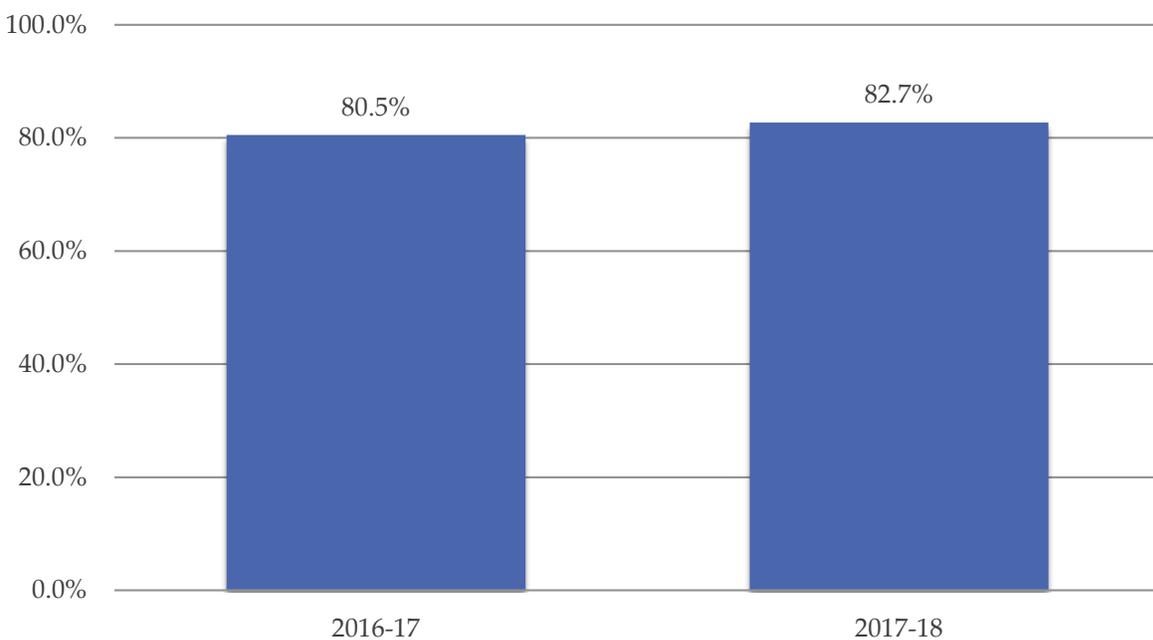


WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF STUDENT, PARENT, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATION SATISFACTION CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT OF MONTANA 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS?

Student Satisfaction

Satisfaction with a program can manifest itself in multiple ways. For example, program engagement and interest in a program can be indicative of satisfaction. As one measure of satisfaction, students were surveyed on their level of involvement and interest in 21st CCLC programming and activities ($N = 4,231$). Results show that 83% of students reported being actively engaged with their 21st CCLC program, slightly higher than the percentage of engaged students in 2016-17 (see Figure 63). This also reached the target set in the state performance indicator.

FIGURE 63. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AND INTEREST BY GRANT YEAR



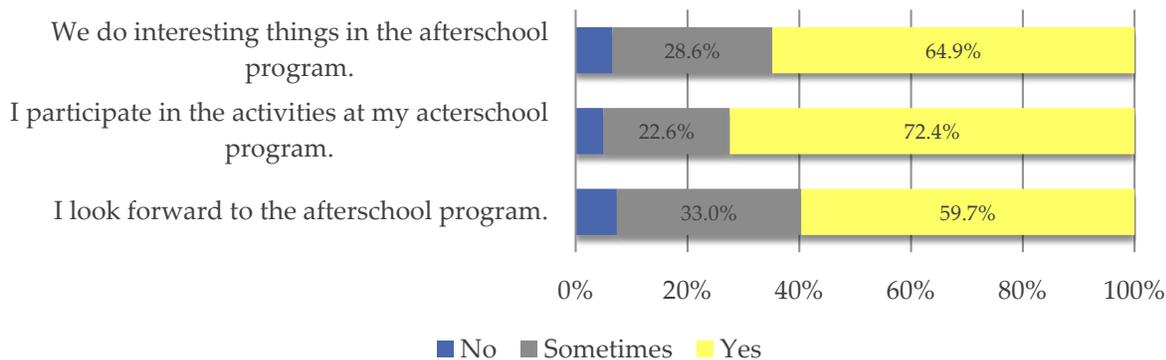
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 5.1.3. At least 80% of 21st CCLC students will report that they are Actively Engaged in their learning experience at their local afterschool program, as measured by student surveys.



RESULT: 82.7% of students were Actively Engaged; goal was met.

Analyses by the individual items that constitute this scale show that the majority (72%) of students agree they participate in program activities, with an additional 23% reporting that they 'sometimes' participate. As shown in Figure 64, a substantial percentage reported doing interesting things in the program (65%) and most students (60%) looked forward to the program.

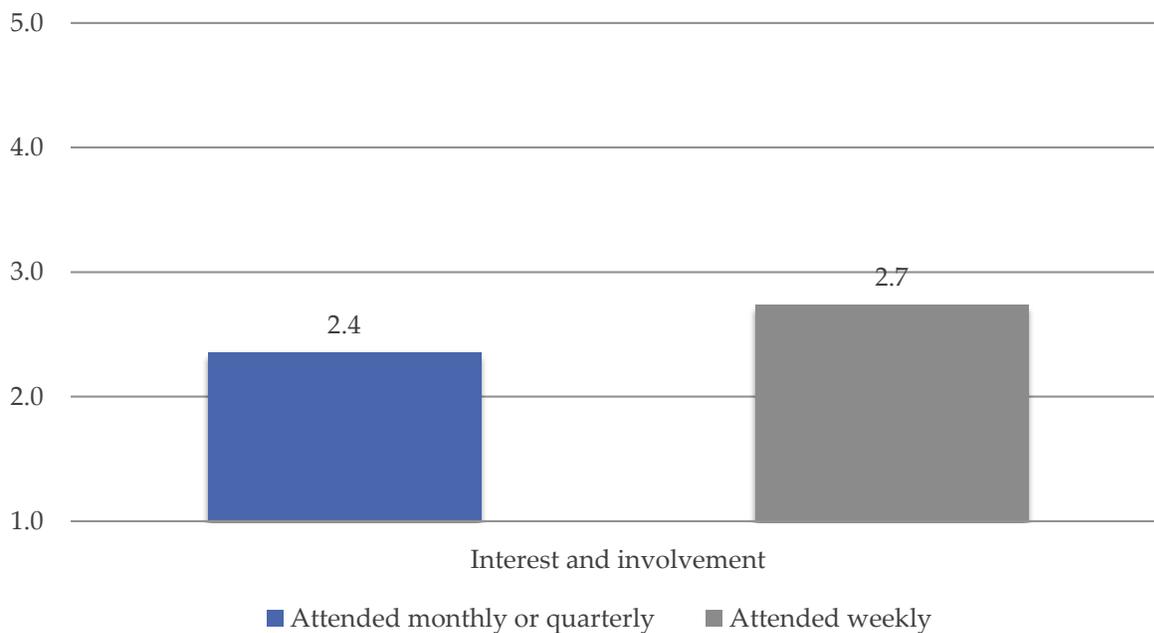
FIGURE 64. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AND INTEREST BY ITEM



RESULTS BY PARTICIPATION LEVEL

Figure 65 displays levels of program engagement reported by regular and non-regular attendees. As seen in prior results, analyses indicated that that students who attended the 21st CCLC program weekly reported higher levels of involvement and engagement than did those who only attended monthly or quarterly.²²

FIGURE 65. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AND INTEREST BY PARTICIPATION LEVEL

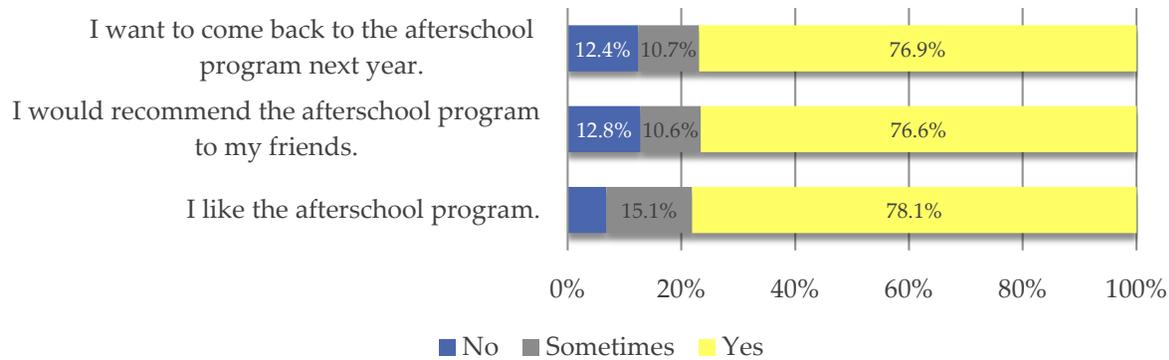


²² Involvement, $t = 12.057, p < .001$

Student Enjoyment

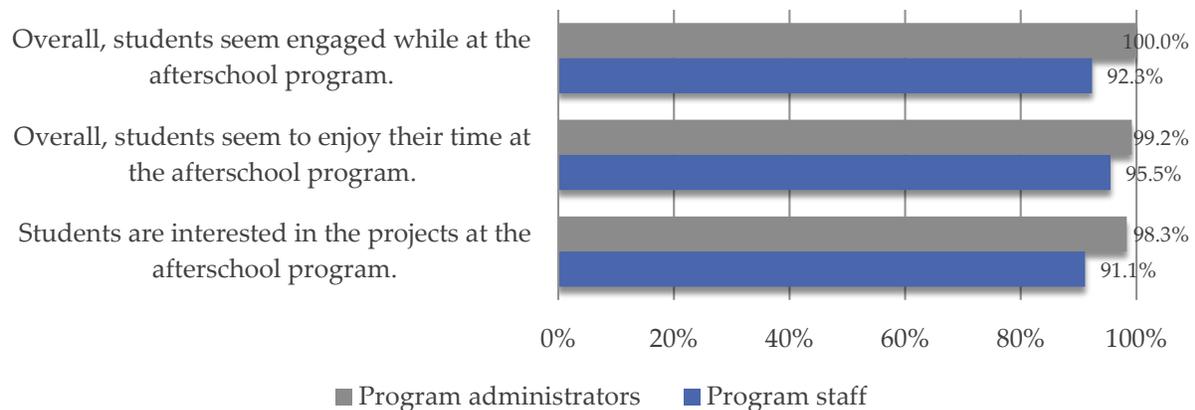
Students were also asked several items designed to measure their general satisfaction with the program. Over 75% of students agreed that they liked the program, would recommend it to friends, and would like to attend next year. Also noteworthy are the low rates of disagreement (see Figure 66).

FIGURE 66. STUDENT ENJOYMENT



Program staff (*N* = 507) and administrators (*N* = 119) were also asked about their perceptions of student engagement and interest in their 21st CCLC programs and school. As shown in Figure 67, a high percentage of staff and administrators agreed that students seemed to enjoy their time at the program, were engaged, and interested in the projects of the 21st CCLC program.

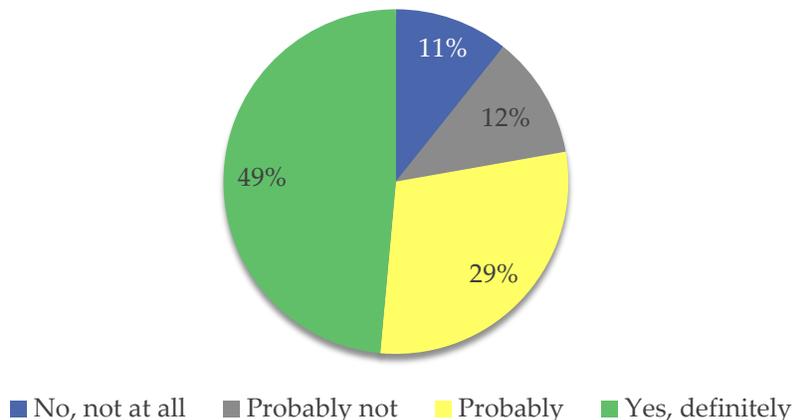
FIGURE 67. PROGRAM STAFF AND ADMINISTRATOR PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AND INTEREST



Students were also asked whether they would like to see additional activities (other than homework help). As shown, 77% of students agreed. **These findings also support the state’s push for additional programming that expands on existing educational supports (e.g., arts and culture, physical activities, etc.).**

FIGURE 68. STUDENT DESIRE FOR ADDITIONAL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Would you like more activities, other than homework help, in the afterschool program?

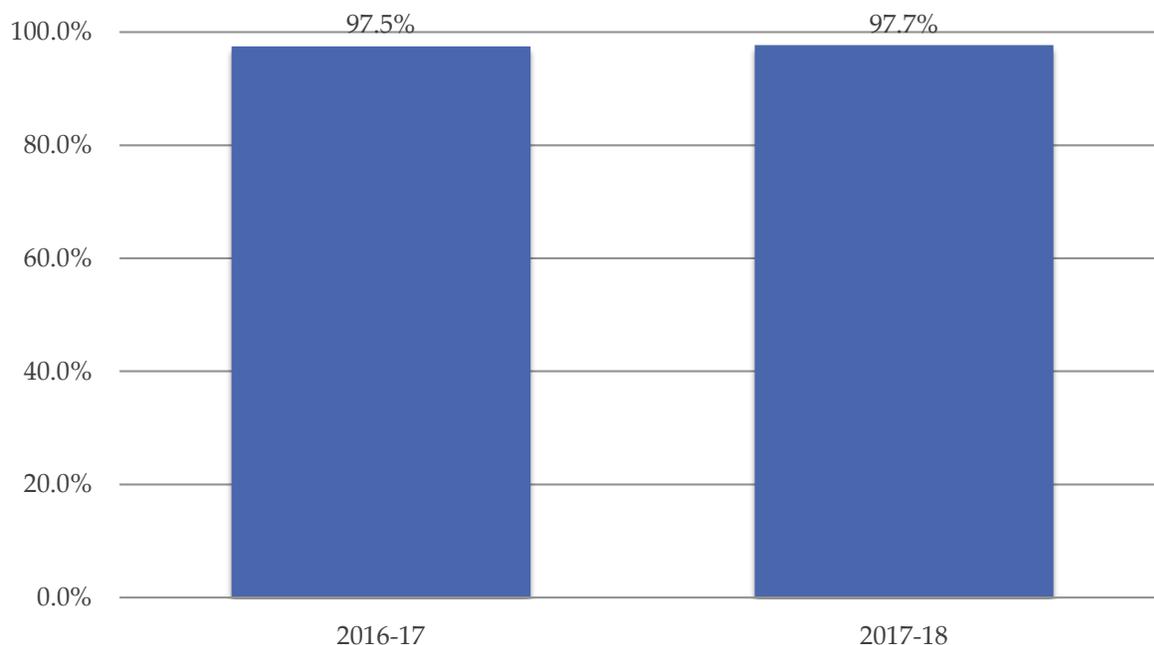


Parent Satisfaction

Program Satisfaction

Parents ($N = 2,090$) were also surveyed to indicate their satisfaction with 21st CCLC programs. Of these, nearly all parents reported that they were satisfied (98%). This exceeded the annual target of 85% satisfaction, such that the state indicator was successfully met. As shown in Figure 69, parent satisfaction was similar across program years.

FIGURE 69. PARENT SATISFACTION BY GRANT YEAR



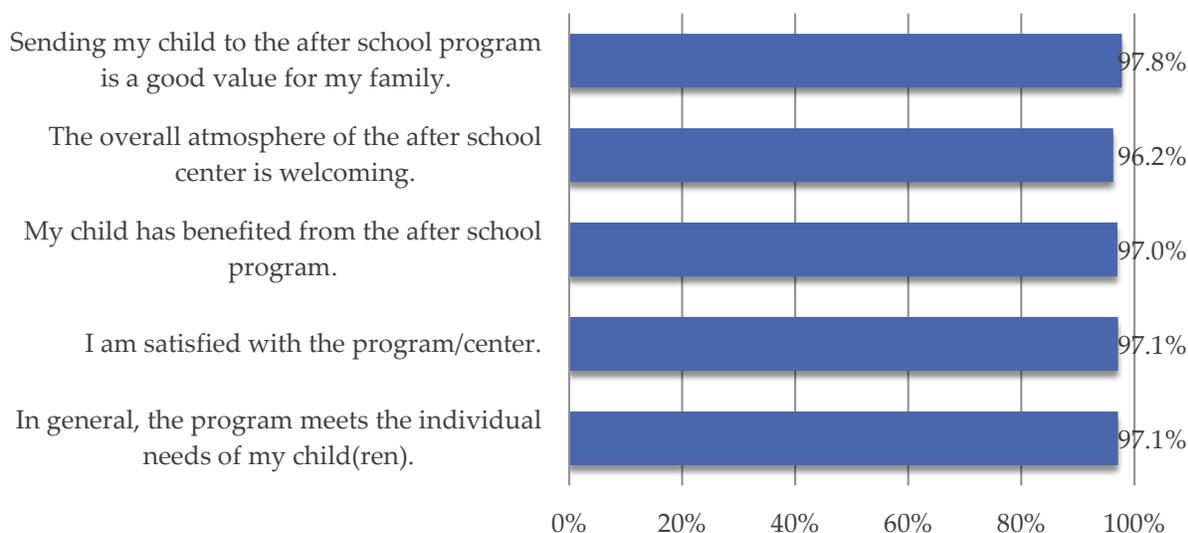
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 6.1.1. At least 85% of 21st CCLC parents will report Satisfaction with their students afterschool program, as measured by parent surveys.



RESULT: 97.7% of parents were Satisfied with Afterschool Programs; goal was met.

Across all items, parent satisfaction was consistently high (see Figure 70). Nearly all parents agreed that the program was welcoming, a good value for their family, and that they were satisfied with the program. Similarly, parents overwhelmingly agreed that programs met their students’ needs and that their students benefitted from participating.

FIGURE 70. PARENT SATISFACTION BY ITEM



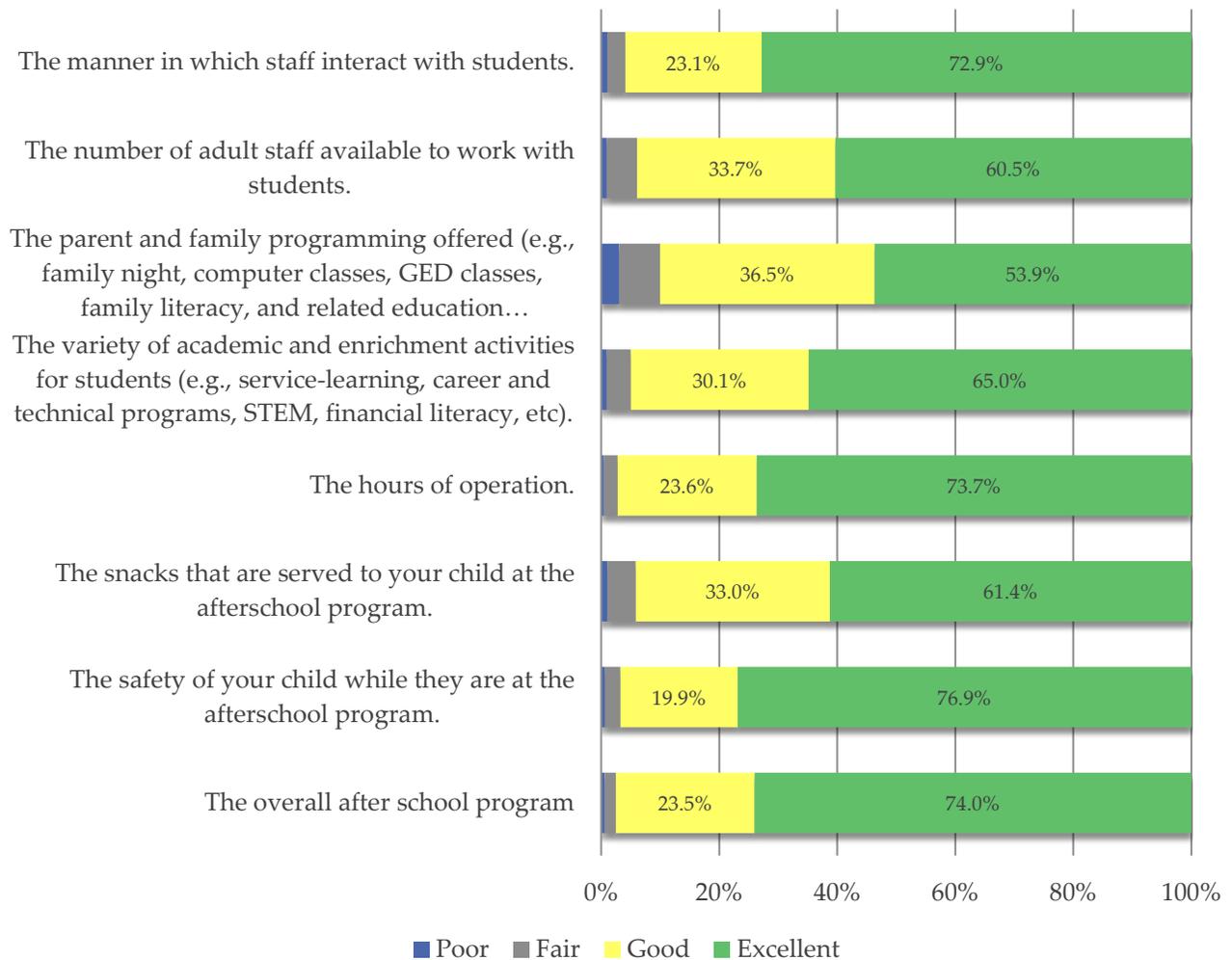
The following word cloud visualization shows the most frequent responses given by parents when asked what they liked best from the 21st CCLC program. The size of each word indicates its prominence in parent responses, with larger words appearing more frequently than smaller words. Most parents appreciated the variety of activities available to students (especially homework help) as well as the program staff caring for their children.

FIGURE 71. ACCORDING TO PARENTS, WHAT ARE THE BEST PARTS OF THE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM?



Parents were also asked to rate different components of the 21st CCLC program. As shown in Figure 72, the most highly rated areas were safety, overall program, and the hours of operation. The least favorable aspects were the parent and family offerings. This is consistent with findings that only 66 centers are providing family programming. **This suggests that grantees direct more efforts to providing more programming that supports adults and families.**

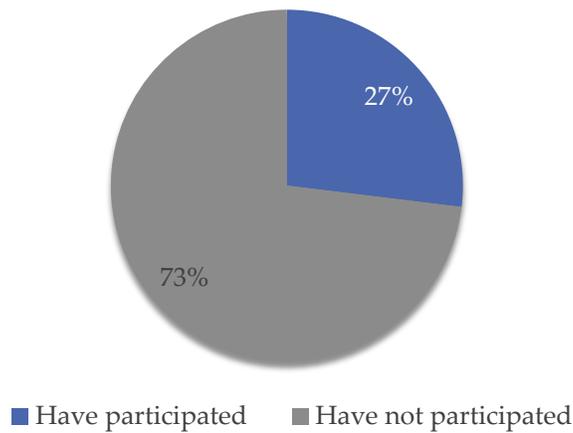
FIGURE 72. PARENT SATISFACTION WITH PROGRAM COMPONENTS



Satisfaction with Adult and Family Programming

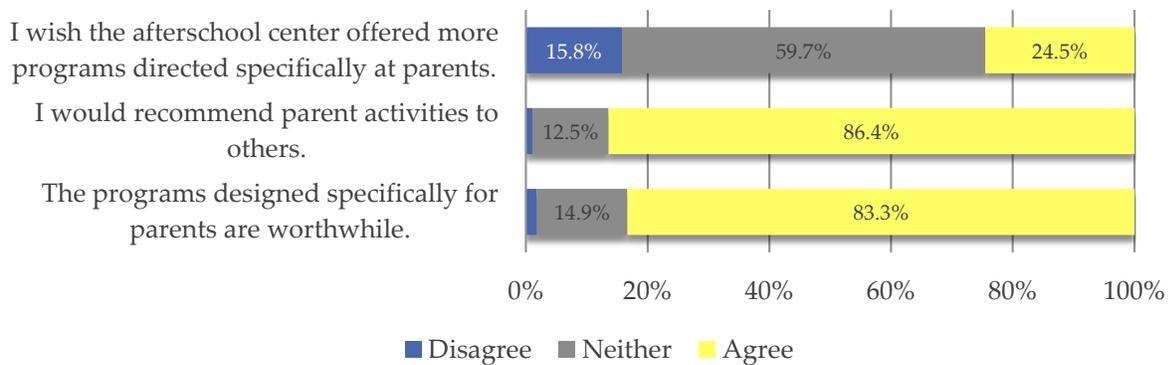
In order to gather data on the parent and family activities being offered by Montana 21st CCLC programs, parents (*N* = 2,049) were asked whether they participated any program activities and if so, how satisfied they were with the programming they attended. As shown in Figure 73, only 27% of parents surveyed participated in this programming. Given this, the feedback provided is limited to a small subset of parents (*n* = 552).

FIGURE 73. PARENT PARTICIPATION IN ADULT PROGRAMMING



Bearing this in mind, most parents agreed that the adult programming is worthwhile (83%) and that they would recommend it to others (86%; see Figure 74). Interestingly, when asked if there should be more programs directed specifically toward parents, only 25% agreed. Thus, among those who have participated in family and parent activities, most find the offerings to be sufficient.

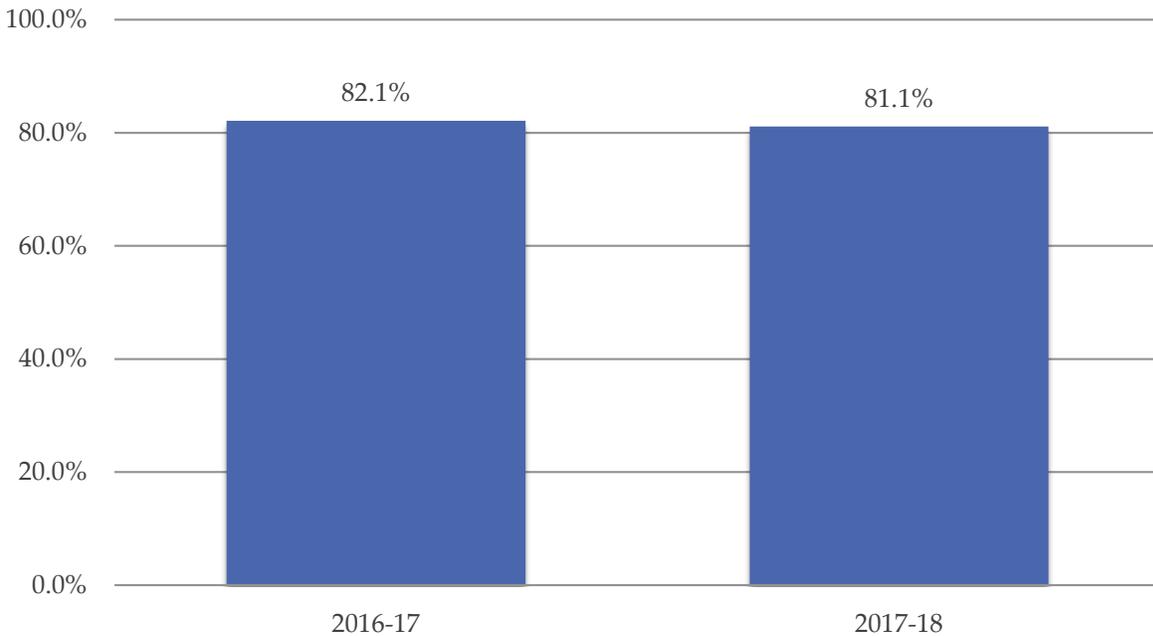
FIGURE 74. PARENT SATISFACTION WITH ADULT PROGRAMMING



Satisfaction with Communication

Parents were also asked about their satisfaction with their communications and interactions with staff at the 21st CCLC programs. A high percentage of parents (81%) indicated that they were satisfied with the communication they receive program staff. Moreover, this exceeded the annual target of 65% and as such, the goal identified in the state performance indicator was met. As shown in Figure 75, parent satisfaction with communication was consistent with 2016-17 reports.

FIGURE 75. PARENT SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION BY GRANT YEAR



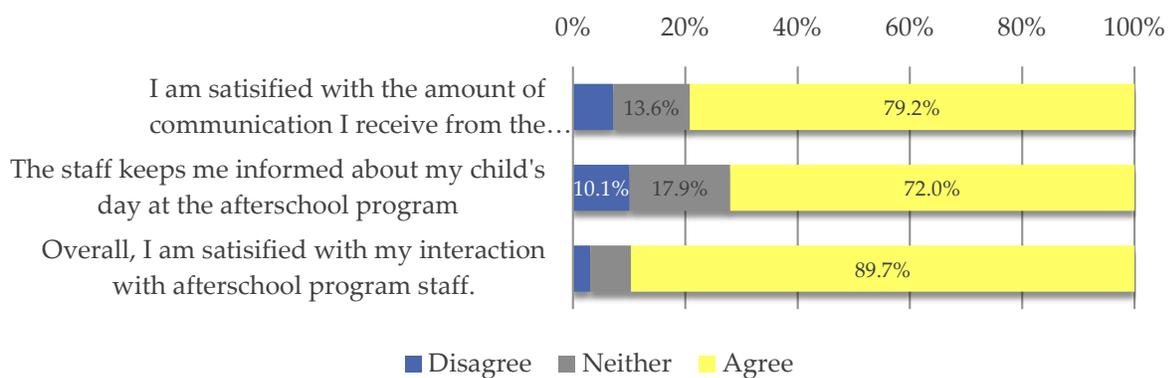
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 3.1.1. At least 65% of 21st CCLC parents and caregivers will report that they were Satisfied with Communication from center staff, as measured by parent surveys.



RESULT: 81.8% of parents were Satisfied with Communication; goal was met.

Examination of individual items showed that 90% of parents were satisfied with their interactions with program staff (see Figure 76). While 80% indicated that they were satisfied with the amount of communication with program staff, only 72% agreed that staff kept parents informed about their child’s day during afterschool programming.

FIGURE 76. PARENT SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION BY ITEM

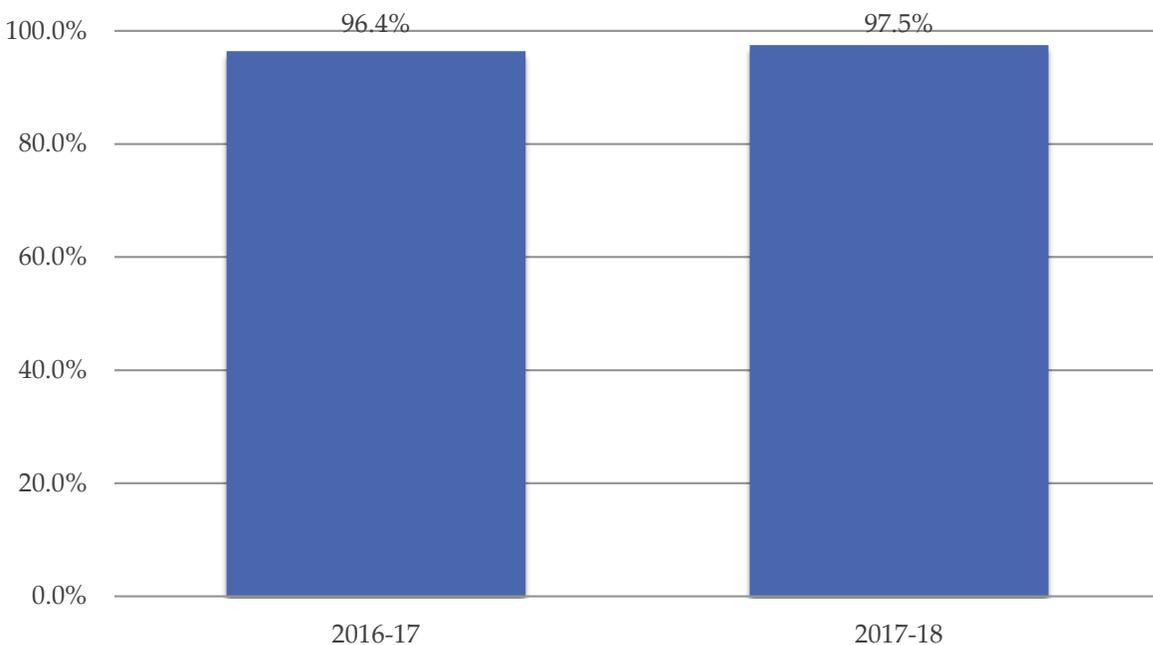


Teacher and Administrator Satisfaction

Perceived Value

School day teachers ($n = 1,482$) and school administrators ($n = 169$) from partnering schools were also asked about their perceptions of the value of 21st CCLC programs. As shown in Figure 77, almost all teachers and administrators (98%) reported that the 21st CCLC programs are valuable, which was similar to the previous year's rating. Furthermore, this percentage exceeded the annual target of 90% and thus, the performance goal was met.

FIGURE 77. TEACHER AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAM VALUE BY GRANT YEAR



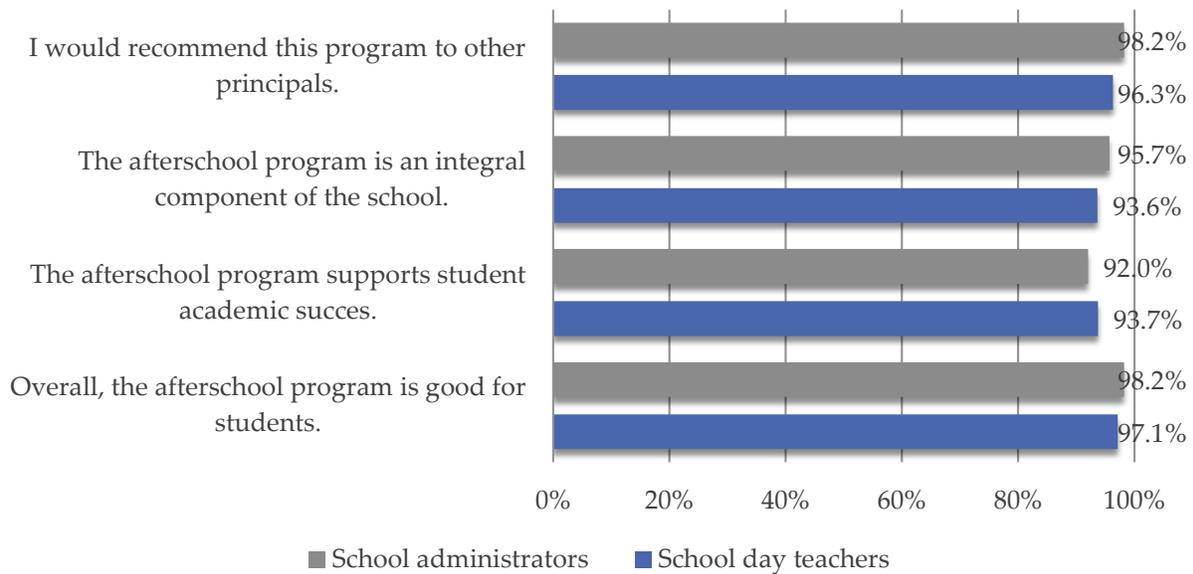
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 6.1.2. At least 90% of school day teachers and principals will report that they Perceive Value in the 21st CCLC program, as measured by teacher and school administrator surveys.

RESULT: 97.5% of teachers and school administrators Perceived Value in their afterschool programs; goal was met.



With regards to individual items, agreement was high for both teachers and school day administrators. As shown in Figure 78, the items with the highest endorsement pertained to perceptions that afterschool program was good for students and that respondents would recommend program to their colleagues. Administrators and teachers also reported that the 21st CCLC programs supported student academic success, and that programs were an integral part of the school.

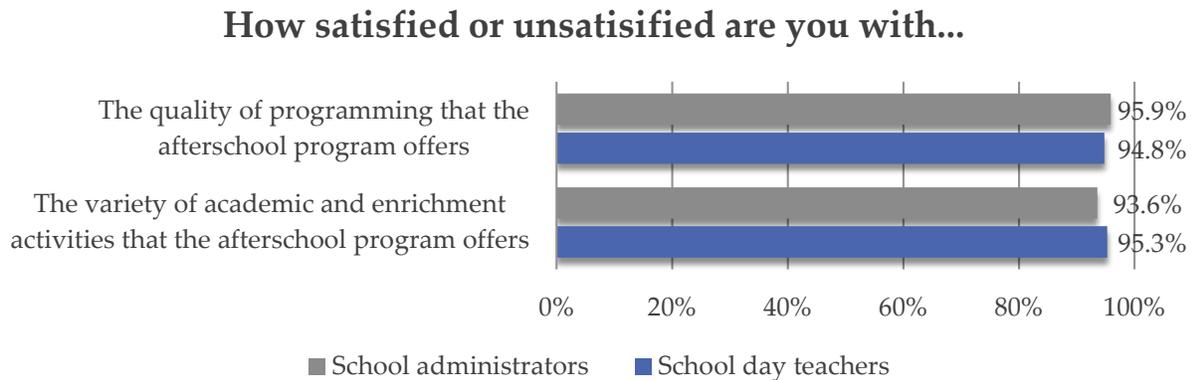
FIGURE 78. TEACHER AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SATISFACTION BY ITEM



Word clouds were also used to visualize responses from school administrators and teachers regarding the benefits of the program. These further support reports of high satisfaction with 21st CCLC programming. In particular, when asked how the program benefits students, teachers and principals concurred that the afterschool programs offer students a wide variety of activities to participate in. They also noted that the program benefits students by providing a safe environment where they can complete homework and receive additional academic supports.

Teachers and school administrators were also asked to rate the variety and quality of the programming offered by 21st CCLC programs. Results again show high rates of satisfaction with the academic and enrichment opportunities programs provided to students (see Figure 81).

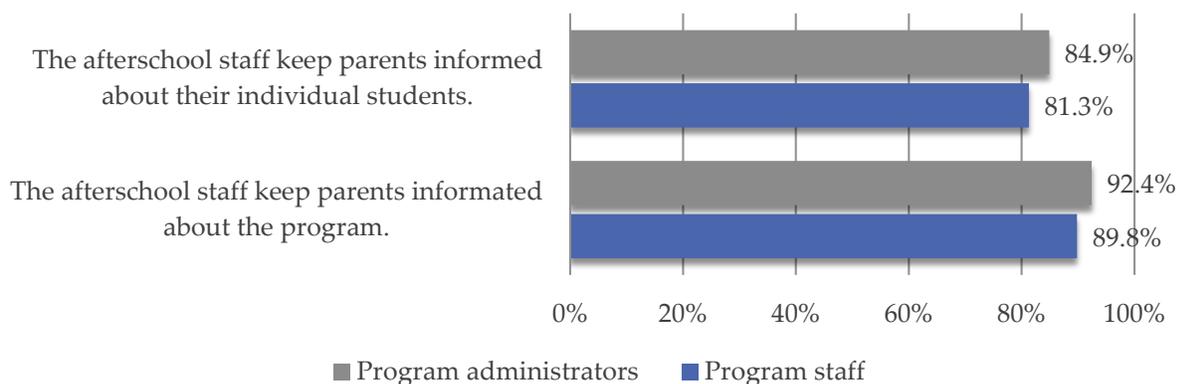
FIGURE 81. TEACHER AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SATISFACTION WITH AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMING



Satisfaction with Communication

Program staff (*N* = 507) and administrators (*N* = 119) were also asked about the extent to which they kept parents informed about their programs and students. As shown in Figure 82 below, over 80% of staff and administrators reported that they communicated with parents to keep them informed of the program and the progress of their students. This supports parents’ perceptions of the extent of communication with program staff.

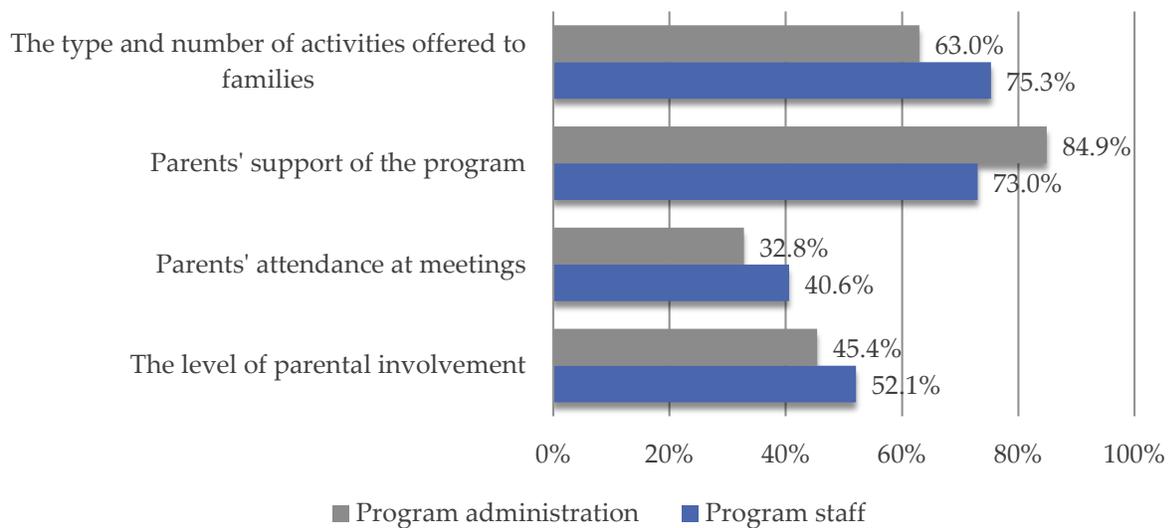
FIGURE 82. STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS



When program staff and administrators were asked about their satisfaction with the level of parental involvement in their programs, results were mixed (see Figure 83). While over 73% of program staff and 85% of administrators felt that parents supported the 21st CCLC program, only half were satisfied with the level of parent involvement, and only fewer were satisfied with parent

attendance at meetings. Additionally, when asked about satisfaction with the number and types of family activities offered, 75% of program staff and 63% of administrators were satisfied. While this is a high percentage, incorporating more parent and family offerings may be a target for some programs moving forward.

FIGURE 83. PROGRAM STAFF AND ADMINISTRATOR SATISFACTION WITH PARENT INVOLVEMENT

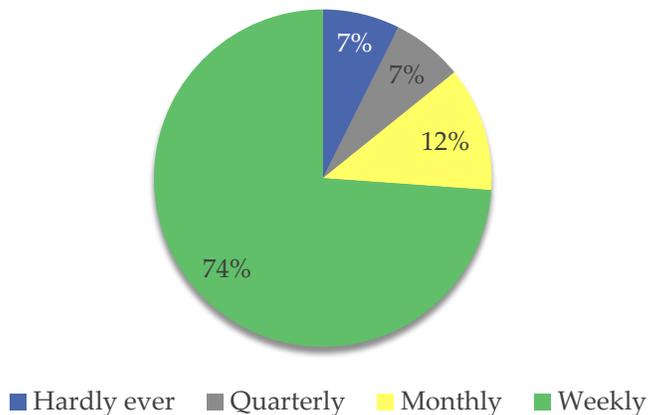


Another important partnership in 21st CCLC programs is that between schools and the staff and administrators at the afterschool program. For many grantees in Montana, these typically consist of the same individuals since most grantees are school-based organizations (81%). Despite this, many of these school-based programs include staff from outside of the school district (e.g., college students, community members, volunteers, etc.) and thus, collaboration and communication between school-day and program personnel is a central component of effective program operations.

To measure the extent to which collaboration and communication is occurring, school day teachers ($N = 1,469$) and administrators ($N = 176$) were asked how often they visited programs and communicated with staff. Results showed that 74% of school administrators indicated that they communicated with program administrators at least weekly (see Figure 84).

FIGURE 84. SCHOOL AND PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR COMMUNICATION

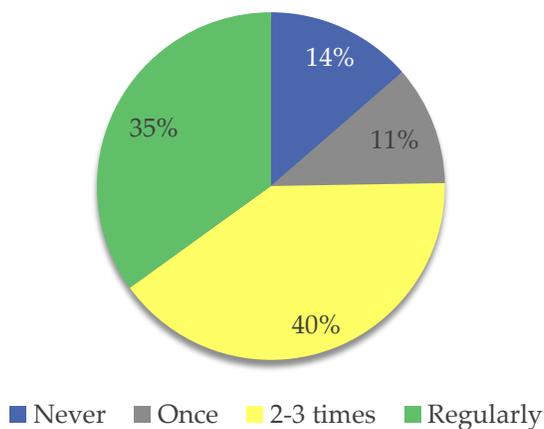
How often do you interact with the afterschool site administrator?



As shown in Figures 85 and 86, teachers interacted with program staff less frequently than did school administrators. Results showed that 35% of school teachers visited the program regularly, and an additional 40% reported that they visited the program at least 2-3 times per year. Only 14% reported that they never visited the afterschool program.

FIGURE 85. SCHOOL DAY TEACHER VISITS TO AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

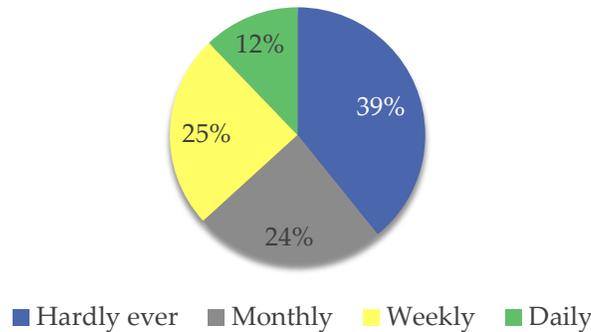
How often have you visited the afterschool program?



Unfortunately, only 37% of teachers indicated that they communicated with program staff on a weekly basis, and 39% of teachers reported that they ‘hardly ever’ communicated with program staff. **This suggests that more supports are needed to improve collaboration between school day teachers and program staff – this is especially important given that ESSA emphasizes the alignment of afterschool programming and school day operations.**

FIGURE 86. SCHOOL DAY TEACHER AND PROGRAM STAFF COMMUNICATION

How often do you communicate with the afterschool program staff about particular students or curriculum?



School administrators and teachers were also asked to report on their satisfaction with 21st CCLC programs with respect to their communication, collaborative activities, and integration with school day activities. As with the prior findings, school administrators reported greater satisfaction with collaboration than did teachers (see Figure 87). Administrators provided consistent high ratings across all items. For teachers, the highest-rated item was satisfaction with communication between the afterschool program and the school (71% of respondents were satisfied). The lowest-rated items pertained to satisfaction with collaborative activities and with afterschool staff providing teachers with information about their students’ progress (65% satisfaction for both items).

FIGURE 87. SCHOOL DAY TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR SATISFACTION WITH PROGRAM COLLABORATION AND SCHOOL DAY INTEGRATION



As part of the school administrator and teacher surveys, respondents were asked to comment on how communication could be improved with after school staff. The following presents the main themes observed from this item: *If communication could be improved with after school program staff, how can this be accomplished?*

- ✚ Among school administrators, the most suggested improvement is to have regularly scheduled meetings between program staff and school personnel. These are often difficult to schedule, so several administrators commented that scheduling would be easier during the school day or if afterschool programming discussions could be incorporated into existing meetings (e.g. staff meetings).
- ✚ Teachers indicated that generally, there needs to be increased communication to better align afterschool activities with school day learning. Specifically, teachers would like the opportunity to discuss their students' needs and progress, to be made aware of any observations or concerns regarding their students, and share academic expectations with program staff, particularly as it pertains to homework assignments. It was suggested that teachers collaborate with program staff to create requirements for students to participate in certain activities to ensure that students are completing their homework assignments and studying for tests before participating in other afterschool activities.

"I think the communication between the after school staff and the general staff should communicate on what the students need to work on, if they are missing work or having behavioral problems. I think that it would help significantly."

- ✚ Most of teachers preferred to communicate with program staff via email. Other methods mentioned include a student planner, a confidential Google doc accessible by all staff, or in person. Several teachers also commented that they were often unaware of the activities taking place in the afterschool program. They suggested setting up a newsletter, bulletin board, or monthly calendar so that teachers, students, and parents can be learn about program offerings, and so that teachers can encourage students to attend activities that align with their needs or interests. Teachers also noted that this may be a way to increase awareness about programs in the broader community.

In summary, while most 21st CCLC centers have collaborative relationships between teachers and program staff, there is also evidence that with increased communication surrounding student needs, school day activities, and program offerings, these collaborations can become more productive. As discussed in the following section, this is an area that the state would do well to address these communication needs in future training and support opportunities.

WHAT SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES WERE ENCOUNTERED IN THE DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS?

In order to explore both the successes and challenges experienced by 21st CCLC programs and their partners and key stakeholders, open-ended items were included on surveys completed by school administrators, program administrators, school day teachers, program staff, and parents. The comments for each question were analyzed to identify themes. Themes were designated when similar comments recurred across participants. What follows is a summary of the main findings obtained from survey responses, organized by the survey question and respondent type.

Successes

What Are Your Greatest Successes in The Afterschool Program This Year? In What Ways Does the Afterschool Program Benefit Students and The School Community?

Program administrators, center staff, and school principals were asked to respond to one or both of the above questions regarding the aspects of the 21st CCLC programs that were most successful or had the greatest positive impact on students and schools.

- ✚ Program administrators, Program Staff and School Day Administrators all agreed that one of the greatest success of their program was the ability to offer students additional academic supports through tutoring, homework help, and additional lessons. They also pointed to the learning gains and academic achievement of students in the program as well as improved homework and assignment completion for struggling students. For many centers, collaboration with school day teachers led to substantial improvement in academic-related programming. Many administrators also believed that students especially benefitted from alternative learning modalities, which allowed them to reinforce concepts learned in the classroom by getting hands-on experience.

“We provide activities that help kids engage in academics in a fun and different way. Our program tries to offer activities that the kids want. They are more invested in their school as a result.”

- ✚ In addition to academic growth, program administrators, program staff and school day administrators indicated that their students also demonstrated personal growth and increased maturity as the year progressed. By creating a safe, supportive environment, students gained confidence, leaderships skills, and increased engagement. As they developed positive relationships with staff and peers, students improved their social-emotional skills, leading to more positive interactions between students and fewer behavior problems.

“It increases their confidence as they gain hands-on experience with things and work in small groups with teachers and mentors. They gain insights into new things -- and into their own abilities. They feel appreciated, safe, valued and capable!”

- ✦ Administrators and staff also noted that they were able to offer participants unique opportunities and engaging programming activities that were tailored to the interests of the students. Many specifically cited STEM and technology-related activities as having been particularly successful. Several administrators and staff members also noted that they were able to increase their program offerings throughout the year and develop interesting programming that generated high student engagement. School day administrators indicated that this exposure allowed students an opportunity to explore and develop their interests and participate in activities they would not otherwise have access to outside the program.

“The activities help us to identify strengths and interests in different students, and then we try to cater to those strengths and interests, while also challenging students to try new things. We can maintain communication with teachers to ask them if they realized that student had such a talent or interest in a certain activity. The small size of our school allows for more personalized programming on a daily basis.”

“Students and families in small schools often have limited opportunities/options for enrichment outside of the school day. Our after-school program provides those opportunities and support... Our students have been exposed to so many things (from dance to coding) that they would not have been exposed to without the PEAK program.”

- ✦ Several administrators noted that their programs were successful in recruiting and retaining participants. This allowed them to offer important services—supervised afterschool care, snacks or meals, tutoring—to the students and families that needed them. School day administrators and program staff noted that programming addressed a fundamental need in their communities and provided students with a safe, supported, enriching environment that students enjoyed and looked forward to attending.

“Many students have begun attending multiple times a week and I’m seeing them express their gratitude for having a place to go after school rather than stay at home. Each time I’m sitting in on a program I hear comments that showcases the strength of our program. In cooking last week one student said, ‘I never like zucchini but I like the way we cooked this zucchini. I’m glad I thought to try it because it’s really good! I discovered I like cooking zucchini!’”

- ✦ Program staff were also successful in developing close, trusting relationships with students. Several noted the most rewarding connections were the ones they built with “tough” students, or students that were initially disengaged or demonstrating behavior problems, who were able to develop skills that allowed them to succeed in the program and in school. School administrators also indicated that program staff have created a safe positive environment for students to grow and succeed and have built positive relationships with students.

“My greatest success in the after-school program this year is learning how to successfully speak with a child who is frustrated and create positive outcomes or goals.”

“The program has built strong rapport with many students and parents and it provides a safe and consistent place for these students to feel like they belong.”

- ✚ Lastly, school administrators were also enthusiastic about students becoming more involved in their communities.

“Every Thanksgiving, the entire school community, including the 21st CCLC Program, prepares a Thanksgiving dinner for local families in need. Whether the students are baking pies or decorating placemats, the idea of giving back to our community through service is a strong and viable one.”

What Things Do You Like Best About the Afterschool Program?

Surveys also elicited information from students and parents regarding the aspect of the program that they were most satisfied with.

- ✚ Working parents reported that the primary benefit of the program was having a safe place for their child to go after school. They indicated that having a reliable afterschool program allowed them to work full days or commute to other cities for their jobs and gave them peace of mind knowing that their children were being cared for. Generally, parents were appreciative of the hours and location of the afterschool centers and with the affordability of the program.

“Having an after school program helps me to get hours of work and school done. Without the after school program, I have no idea what I would do as a single mother. I thank everybody who is involved in making sure that the program runs smoothly!”

- ✚ Many parents were also appreciative of the snacks and meals that the programs provided. This was also cited by students as being their favorite part of the program.

“Their dinner program has saved our family on countless occasions when I am forced to work late. I often find myself dining with my children because the menu is so healthy and delicious.”

- ✚ Parents and students also liked the variety of activities available. Parents noted that the program provided children with many opportunities that they would otherwise not have the means to access. They also liked that these activities promoted learning while still being interesting and engaging. Many students indicated arts and crafts, using computers, STEM activities, cooking, playing games, and skiing were their favorite parts of the program. A substantial proportion of students also reported that physical activities, such as playing outside or in the gym was their favorite aspect of the program. Students were excited about the new interests they had developed and the opportunities that they were offered.

"My favorite part is that I learn something new every day."

"I like the variety of activities that the kids are involved with. From making foods, mentors from the high school thru Big program, to using their hands on to be creative with various projects. Activities are broken up so they are constantly doing different things."

- ✚ Both parents and students were also happy that the program provided the opportunity to meet students outside of their classes and socialize with friends. Parents were also appreciative of opportunities for their children to interact with students in different age groups. Students commented that the welcoming environment helped them to make new friends during their time at the program.

"My fav part is that we all get along and we all care about each other and do not like bullying. That we all try our best to be a better person!"

"I really like that my child has been able to meet and interact with so many kids from other grades. This is not always the case during the regular school day and has been a huge benefit for us. It has provided her with more confidence and has really helped her feel like a member of the school community."

- ✚ Homework completion was an important aspect of the program for many parents. They reported that this avoided arguments about completing homework at home, helped when students had questions that they were unable to answer, and allowed parents and children to spend more time doing family activities in the evenings. For students, they liked that the program provided them with opportunities to catch up on assignments.

"The adult who helps me with homework is really good. He makes me feel like I count and my opinion matters no matter what the subject is. I get a better understanding of what I'm doing."

"My son needs extra help with his homework. He gets this one on one attention in this program. Thanks to this outlet he is a lot less angry when he comes home... no more fighting with homework because it is usually already finished when he arrives home."

- ✚ For some parents and students, the aspect of the program that they most liked was the center staff. They reported that staff were dedicated, caring, and engaged with students. Many also reported that they were very familiar with the staff and that they were very satisfied with the communication they received from staff and teachers about their child's progress in the program. Many students reported that they formed strong bonds with the teachers, staff, and student mentors. Others noted that the program helped them feel more connected to their peers and their school.

"I am so thankful for the caring, safe and engaging creative atmosphere that is available for my child. I could not ask for a better staff to care for my child and ensure her safety and happiness"

while in the program. Staff communication is always made at pick-up, and their awareness of my child's afternoon is shared."

- ✚ Finally, many students reported that their favorite aspect of their program was that they were able to make their own choices about what they wanted to do.

"My favorite part about the after school program is that it is self-directed."

In Your Opinion, What Has Been the Most Positive Result Of Your Child's Participation In The Afterschool Program This Year?

Parents and teachers also indicated the aspects of the program that had most impacted their students.

- ✚ The majority of parents and teachers reported that the primary benefit of afterschool programs was that its impact of student academics. Both parents and teachers indicated that the homework help, tutoring and ability to engage in hands on learning activities lead to increased academic achievement. Some parents noted improvements in their child's grades, while others indicated that they had demonstrated learning gains in math, reading, or science. Several parents also reported through participating in the afterschool program, their child had improved their attitudes towards school and were more academically engaged. Teachers indicated that the personal attention allowed students to ask questions for clarification, increase their understanding of difficult concepts, and catch up in subjects where they struggled. As well, having designated work time allowed more students to complete homework assignments.

"All my struggling students who are fortunate enough to be in the program get incredible support and pass my class. I am positive they would not pass without this program."

"The after-school program has done great things for my son. He cares about school now and he is planning on going to college and before the program, he did not care about school or really anything."

- ✚ Some parents and teachers indicated that the afterschool programs provided students with unique opportunities that exposed them to a variety of activities. Teachers saw these activities as valuable for broadening students' horizons, exposing them to new and interesting topics, and reinforced learning by demonstrating ways that concepts learned in class could be applied to the real world. Parents indicated their children developed new interests or learned new skills, specifically in the areas of STEM and culinary arts.

"The program's activities encourage students to try things that usually lie outside of their usual limits for interests. Scientific experiments become things a young person can do at home. Arts such as dance and painting are encouraged as personal pursuits in a largely agricultural community. This benefits the community and our students because it stretches their boundaries."

- ✦ According to some parents and teachers, participating in afterschool programs allowed the student to develop or improve their social-emotional skills. Parents noted their child developed confidence, learned to appropriately cope with emotions, and decreased negative behaviors. Many parents also noted that their child was more willing to try new things.

“The kindness and respect that is modeled by the staff and carries over to student interactions, has been a really positive influence. Being able to practice prosocial interactions in a controlled and fun environment has really helped with her development.”

- ✦ Another commonly reported impact was improvements in students’ social skills. Students were able to bond with their peers and make new friends that extended beyond the afterschool program. Many parents reported the program had helped their shy children to socialize, join groups, and voice their opinions. Others were happy to see that their child was more willing to share or cooperate with their peers, areas where they had previously struggled.

“Since we live in a poverty/low income area, I see the benefits of children being able to unwind after school constructively with guidance. They are taught how to interact and work together other than in the classroom setting.”

“In my opinion, the most positive result of my son’s participation in Kid Connection has been the uptick in his social skills amongst his peers. It gives him an excellent dose of peer immersion, as he is predominantly surrounded by adults in his home life.”

- ✦ Finally, teachers agreed with other stakeholders that by providing a safe place for students to go afterschool, the 21st CCLC programs were filling important needs in their communities.

“Many of the students who are served by the after school program would not have adult supervision during the after school hours. This program is a vital part of insuring kids are looked after and cared for during the work day, as many of our kids come from households with parents who work full-time jobs.”

What Has Been the Most Successful Outcome Of The Partnership Between The 21st CCLC Afterschool And School Day Programs?

Program administrators were asked to respond to an additional question regarding the success of the partnerships between schools and 21st CCLC programs. The most common responses are described below.

- ✦ Overwhelmingly, program administrators found that school partnerships benefited the students by maintaining consistency between school and afterschool environments. At many programs, afterschool centers were located on school campuses, facilitating the

transition between school day and afterschool operations. Expectations about student behavior were consistent across both settings. Many programs were staffed with school day teachers and at some, afterschool staff were present during the school day, so students were already familiar with the adults running the program.

“This partnership has played a big role in allowing us to successfully maintain our program. The school has provided a place that the children are familiar with and where they feel safe and eager to continue learning even after a long day. I commend the teachers for working with us as a team, helping and guiding the kids to make the transition at the end of the day, so that everyone is accounted for and for the students’ own assurance.”

- ✚ Connections with school day teachers also allowed afterschool centers to align their programming with school day learning. Teachers were able to communicate about what was being taught in their classes.

“Our CCLC teachers incorporate school day learning, adding more in-depth activities and hands-on experience, into our afterschool program. We all benefit!”

- ✚ Administrators also reported that close communication with teachers allowed program staff to better address the needs of individual students. Similarly, by informing teachers of students progress or difficulties during afterschool, teachers were able to adapt classroom instruction to better meet students’ learning needs. Overlap between school day and afterschool personnel further bolsters the ability to support students and address specific needs.

“I am in the building daily I am also in some of the classrooms during the learning day. Being here in this capacity helps me know and understand the students learning needs their strengths and weakness. As well as what is in place during the day so I can continue on with the same kind of support. I also can scaffold need on to what is being taught.”

Challenges

What Have Been the Greatest Challenges In The Afterschool Program This Year?

Administrators and staff at 21st CCLC centers were asked the about difficulties they experienced during the 2017-18 program year.

- ✚ Administrators agreed finding and retaining quality staff has been a major challenge for programs. Some cited low staff salaries as a barrier to hiring to staff members. Administrators felt that difficulties recruiting program staff led to less effective programming and low staff-to-student ratios made it difficult for centers to operate smoothly. In turn, staff indicated they were overwhelmed by the number of students they were supervising, sometimes creating chaotic environments and making it difficult to

provide students with one-on-one attention. Several respondents noted that this had led to problems with staff burnout.

“Another challenge is finding teachers and staff that want to stay after school and work a couple extra hours. All of the responsibilities are falling on the shoulders of the director to plan all of the lessons and to keep the program staffed. She puts in a lot of extra time each day.”

“Our numbers grew, and we didn’t have the staff or room to maintain our current activities with the large number of students we had attending.”

- ✚ For staff and many administrators, the greatest challenge was behavior management. Respondents indicated that the behavior problems of a few difficult students were often disruptive and difficult to manage. Resolving behavior often required staff to direct their attention away from other students, interfering with effectively offering programming to the larger group.

“Challenges have mostly come from behavioral issues. Problems with small groups of children acting out prohibit the entire program from accomplishing all of our goals.”

“The greatest challenges that we have faced this year have had to do with behavioral issues concerning some of our students. This has caused disruption in the operation of our daily agenda, as well as a showcase of inappropriate behavior.... The program director has attended workshops with great concern, in an attempt to find instruction/direction as to how to deal with these problems in a safe and appropriate manner.”

- ✚ Responses from both administrators and staff indicate that recruiting and retaining regularly attending students has also been a considerable challenge for many programs. They noted that competing extracurricular activities and after-school activities played a large role in reductions or fluctuations in attendance, especially among older students. These fluctuations made it difficult to plan programming.

“At my school the track/field season as well as the wrestling session overlap with my programs and start after Flagship is running. My enrollment changes dramatically due to these sports. Kids drop out or join into activities later and makes for sometimes awkward transitions. When program councilors are prepared for 12 students and instead have 4 it can be challenging to adjust and plan.”

- ✚ Many administrators continue to struggle with creating consistent lines of communication with school day teachers. Several reported that teachers were too busy to invest in the afterschool program which created challenges when it came to asking teachers to complete surveys about the program and their students that participated. As well, programs where a large proportion of the staff were school day teachers reported that it

was sometimes difficult to coordinate schedules and that some teachers struggled with balancing the responsibilities associated with the different roles.

“Again, like previous years, the program staff, site coordinator and director have struggled to create an open line of communication between school day teachers at our 2-5 grade school. As this school provides a majority of the participants, we have made many attempts to help connect school day programming to after school. These teachers are often uninterested or find that this relationship will create more work, though they always seem happy to hear their students are participating. I hope to develop some future ideas to help these teachers become invested in the after school program.”

- ✚ Some staff members indicated that they encountered challenges related to communication between staff members or with program administrators. Staff reported several problems with inconsistencies in program operations that were the result of miscommunication or lack of communication.

“A struggle has been trying to make sure all the staff are on the same page when it comes to implementing structured time and new policies.”

- ✚ Administrators also reported that involving parents in the program was a challenge. Some reported that they experienced additional difficulties related to communicating with parents about their child’s behavior problems.

“Our biggest challenge is getting parents on board with the program. Some parents use it for nothing more than a babysitter. Others have so little value in education that they don’t encourage their students to participate in the program.”

- ✚ Many administrators indicated funding and sustainability as major challenges. Several reported that it was difficult to make time for these due to other responsibilities within the program. Several also noted that uncertainty about future funding made it difficult to plan for the future and invest in long-term program improvements. Although many programs indicated that student recruitment and retention were a challenge, others reported that funding limited the number of students that centers could serve.

“The greatest challenge has been having enough students on the waiting list to fill another class but not having the funding to serve them. We serve the greatest number of students we effectively can.”

- ✚ Administrators also found that the reporting requirements and paperwork was burdensome. Several also noted that it was difficult to complete end-of-year surveys, reports, and grant applications because due dates were clustered at the end of the school year.

"I'm new at this and trying to understand all the paper work has been overwhelming."

- ✚ Staff also found it challenging to design programming that appealed to a diverse group of students, such as when centers served students of many different ages, or when there was substantial variability in students' abilities and learning needs. As well, staff reported that it could be challenging to engage students, especially surrounding homework and classroom activities. This was particularly difficult with older students and at the end of the school year.

"The greatest challenge was] learning how to help each individual student with their needs. Every kid is different, so it is sometimes hard to figure out how to help them in the ways that they need."

"Managing our first hour without having time for the students to blow off steam after school. It is extremely difficult to go directly from a full day of school to a mixed classroom environment where the students are expected to settle down and do homework despite the fact that they don't all have homework."

- ✚ Another common challenge noted by staff and administrators was a lack of designated space for afterschool activities. Many programs had difficulty coordinating shared spaces with other school staff, and several reported that their programs had outgrown the spaces they were allocated or were too small to accommodate many activities.

"For me it has been managing students in a small space, managing noise levels, creating separate spaces for different age levels to do different types of activities."

- ✚ Finally, administrators and many staff members repeatedly cited the weather as having been a barrier to implementing quality program. The main difficulty reported was in developing varied indoor programming that continued to engage students. This has been a recurrent challenge during the winter months, but administrators and staff reported that lengthy, unexpected interruptions in program activities due to fall wildfires and spring flooding posed a substantial challenge. During the winter, inclement weather and school closures made it difficult for centers for provide consistent and effective programming for families.

"The greatest challenges this year has been the weather. Due to weather, we have had to cancel school and/or cancel ALL after school activities."

"We would have liked to do more activities outside this year, but because of all the smoke in the fall and the brutal winter, many of our activities have had to be indoors."

WHAT ARE THE LESSONS THAT HAVE BEEN LEARNED? WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR IMPROVEMENT, AND HOW CAN PROGRAMS BETTER ACHIEVE GOALS AND GRANT OBJECTIVES?

Lessons Learned and Areas for Improvement

While students and parents generally indicated high levels of satisfaction with 21st CCLC programs, surveys also included an opportunity for parents and students to indicate the areas of the program that have been less successful and to make suggestions for improvement. The most commonly observed themes in their responses are described in the summaries below.

Are There Any Areas of The Afterschool Program That You Believe Could Improve?

Responses to the question above suggest that 21st CCLC programs may be able to improve in the following areas.

- ✚ When asked about what areas for improvement, the most popular suggestion among parents was more communication from the program staff. Parents indicated that they wanted to know more about what their child was doing during the day, their child's academic and social progress, and their child's behavior during the program. They also requested that there be more information regarding upcoming activities or events and that this information be disseminated through periodic emails. Parents also indicated that they would like to be more familiar with the program staff and would like to see staff members make more of an effort to get to know them. Several parents were disappointed with the lack of staff interaction when they picked up their child at the end of the day.

"I feel the communication is probably the biggest area of improvement. My child seems pretty happy there because is pretty social, but I never hear from anyone other than him how his day went."

"I wish there was more personable staff. None of them introduced themselves to me or my children. I still am unsure of names. I also have no idea who they are. Teachers? Child care workers? Any training? No idea."

- ✚ Several parents and students suggested that there could be more variety in the activities offered at the programs. Students specifically expressed the desire for more time devoted to the activities they enjoyed. Additionally, some students suggested new activities that could be incorporated into programming. These activities varied considerably, but additional time spent outside was the most common request. Students wanted to see upgrades in the resources needed for some of the more popular activities, such as new computers and new sports equipment.

“The one thing I would like to change about the after school program is, add a creative writing class. It would be a great way to use the power and beauty of words to spark hope and positive change in the community.”

“All the activities are very craft based which I don’t find helpful for my child.”

- ✚ Other parents wanted to see more focus on academics. Students were divided on this issue as a substantial number wanted less homework time, while many others wished that more time could be devoted to homework and studying. Several students suggested that there be optional homework time that students could choose when needed.

“[For students] to be outside with an adult if you don’t have homework. That would make it more quiet in the room for those that have homework.”

“[I would like a] stronger emphasis on homework completion for kids with parents that work later into the evening”

- ✚ Parents and students indicated they would like the program to be more available. Many requested that programming was offered during breaks or on early release days, other requested that the program begin earlier in the morning or end later in the evening. Parents and students also requested that the program be made more available to current participants and more accessible to new students that would like to attend.

“I think it would be wise to offer sessions during Christmas and Spring Break. I also think a full summer program would be a great idea.”

“I also wish the program started earlier and went later in the school year. It is sometimes difficult to find child care for those couple of weeks at the beginning and the end of the school year.”

- ✚ Parents would like to see an improvement in the way that program staff interacts with the students, particularly surrounding behavior problems and disciplinary action. Some reported that they felt the staff could be more engaged with their children and several parents noted that they would like staff to address problems with bullying. Similarly, several students reported that they were struggling with being bullied by other students in the afterschool programs. Some students felt that some attendees should be more cooperative and more respectful of the staff, and others noted that staff could be better about dealing with misbehavior.

“Due to the nature of my child, who is exuberant and tends to be overwhelmingly dramatic, I felt the staff were ill prepared and let their personal feelings show through their teaching, and guidance. Not all children are wonderful, but at the same time, all children can do wonderful things. I feel that the staff was ill equipped to handle the fact that there might be children who were not great to be around but were still in the program and still had to deal with.”

- ✦ Several parents noted that the programs could be more organized and less chaotic. They noted that programs would benefit from more staff members and larger spaces. A number of parents brought this up as a safety concern, worrying that children could wander off or be picked up by another person without parent approval.

"Pick up could be more organized. I feel like anyone could come get my child and they wouldn't even notice she was gone."

"I wish there was a more private area for study - my child is easily distracted, and her homework time suffers when kids are doing fun things while my child studies."

- ✦ Students' primary request was to receive larger snacks and to have more variety in the snacks and drinks offered at the program. Some parents also requested healthier snacks.

"The food needs less sugar as it winds my child up. More protein would be good."

- ✦ Although mentoring and interacting with younger students were aspects of afterschool programs that many older students appreciated, a number of students expressed a desire to have more separation from younger students, such as activities that were specifically designed for middle- or high-school students, or separate spaces for older students to work and socialize. Older students indicated that they would like to have more freedom and more choices regarding how they spent their time in the program.

"More space. A place where the middle school kids can be by themselves."

- ✦ There were several rules that students expressed dissatisfaction with including the ability to chew gum and have some allocated time where they are allowed to use cell phones or other devices. As well, students expressed that they wanted occasions when animals or pets could be brought in during afterschool activities or otherwise incorporated into programming.

"[It would be] to make it so that we could listen to our favorite music on head phones well working on the computers."

"Could there be an after school program that has to do with animals? Like if a teacher of the program could bring in their pets"

Conclusion

The 21st CCLC program is focused on providing enrichment activities outside of school hours that help students meet state and local standards in core academic subjects and complement their regular academic programs. They also aim to provide other educational services, including career and job training, to the families of participating children. The present report summarizes results from the 2017-18 annual state evaluation and offers data collected in accordance with the expanded Montana evaluation plan.

During the 2017-18 grant year, a total of 79 grantees with 142 centers offered 21st CCLC programming to approximately 13,915 students during the school year and 6,110 during the summer. In general, the centers offered diverse, high-quality programming, including but not limited to: STEM related activities, homework help, literacy, arts and music, and physical fitness. Additionally, school and program administrators reported afterschool programming aligns with school day activities. During the school year, programs were staffed by 2020 adults, most of whom were teachers or other non-teaching school staff. Of these staff members, 38% were volunteers. In addition, programs partnered with 740 organizations. Partners primarily supported afterschool centers by providing activities or programming to students.

Results showed that 21st CCLC administrators rated their centers as meeting a number of quality standards. For example, between 84% and 88% of centers met compliance targets for Staffing and Professional Development, Grant Management and Sustainability, Partnerships, and Organizational Structure and Management, while 95% met Health and Safety standards. Analyses also show that grantees who have more than five years of experience with the 21st CCLC grant self-report a greater compliance with quality indicators than those who have less experience. Statistically significant differences were observed for quality indicators related to Staffing and Professional Development, and to indicators related to Organizational Structure and Management.

During the 2017-18 grant year, 21st CCLC grantees successfully met 14 out of 32 state performance objectives (44%). This represents a slight decrease from the prior year, when 50% of indicators were met. Specifically, indicators were met in the areas of: improvements in math proficiency, teacher perceptions of academic improvement, students' conflict resolution skills and perceptions of personal control, students feelings of being connected to peers and supported by staff, parent knowledge and awareness of student progress, student engagement in program activities, health and fitness offerings, and student, parent, teacher, and administrator satisfaction.

Analyses also examined the hypothesis that students who attend 21st CCLC programs more frequently (i.e., on a weekly basis, or for more than 30 days during the school year) will show more positive benefits than students who attend less frequently (i.e., on a monthly or quarterly basis, or for less than 30 days during the school year). Regular students who attended the program more frequently demonstrated higher levels of performance or changes in a number of outcomes;

this indicates that promotion of greater participation in 21st CCLC programming is critical to making impacts on student lives.

Survey data shows high rates of satisfaction with 21st CCLC programs among students and parents. Students reported that they enjoyed the program, would recommend it to their friends, and would like to attend again next year. Parents reported high rates of satisfaction with the overall program and cited program safety and the hours of operation as areas where the program was doing especially well. They were least satisfied with parent and family programming and the number of adults available to assist students. Teachers and school administrators felt that the afterschool program was valuable and good for students and reported high levels of satisfaction with the variety and quality of academic and enrichment opportunities offered to attendees. Most teachers reported that they were satisfied with communication and collaboration and felt the afterschool program fit in with the school day. This is important given the emphasis of the new ESSA legislation on coordination and collaboration between afterschool and school day curricula.

Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned challenges and other data reported herein, it is recommended that the state focus future professional development and supports toward:

- ✚ Helping programs better understand and manage student behaviors (e.g., how to integrate MBI and/or social emotional learning activities in after school programming)
- ✚ Offering diverse, engaging and innovative activities for different age and ability levels in order to increase student attendance and participation
- ✚ Increasing alignment between afterschool programming and classroom learning by improving communication and collaboration with school day staff

Other areas that the present report shows as needing improvement include:

- ✚ Increasing the career development opportunities offered to high-school participants
- ✚ Increasing operating hours by setting a statewide minimum for every 21st CCLC school year program (e.g., 8 hours per week) and encouraging centers to provide summer programming (e.g., via targeted funds)
- ✚ Building stronger relationships and better communication with parents, including expanding the number of centers that offer adult programming
- ✚ Continuing to direct efforts toward long-term retention of participants

Given that several programs have been quite successful in some of these activities, sharing of successes and lessons learned would also benefit 21st CCLC programs in Montana (e.g., via statewide meetings – online or in-person, regular communications on best practices (e.g.,

quarterly newsletter), establishing a Community of Practice, building an online resource library, etc.).

In addition, the following are areas that should be targeted for improvement based on state performance indicator results. Recommendations for improving upon these areas are also noted.

- ✦ Centers need to increase student enrollment, regular student attendance, and participant retention. Programmatic strategies for maximizing student participation include: (a) design program features to meet the needs and preferences of students and parents, (b) promote awareness of the program within schools and to parents, and (c) use attendance data to identify students facing difficulties in attending the program.
- ✦ Centers should incorporate adult and family activities, opportunities for career exploration, and community-service learning activities into programming. For the 2017-18 program year, the proportion of centers providing these offerings was low (about 50% of centers) and among centers that did provide this programming, it was offered less frequently. It is important for centers, grantees, and state education agencies to collaborate to identify strategies that will help increase these offerings and offer professional development opportunities in related areas. Additionally, increased communication between different centers across the state will allow programs to adopt strategies that other centers have found to be successful.
- ✦ Centers reported the lowest ratings in the areas of Partnerships (as measured by the MT Monitoring and Quality Improvement Self-Assessment). This area could be targeted for additional training opportunities that could inform program personnel about strategies for establishing and collaborating with community partners. There should also be continuing focus on program evaluation trainings (webinars, online recordings, annual conference and regional meetings), as center ratings indicate that ongoing support is needed. However, given that many centers have made progress in this area, additional improvement efforts should use self-assessment data to identify centers that are struggling and specific areas where additional training is needed.
- ✦ Objectives associated with student motivation and school engagement (i.e. homework completion and class participation) were not met and were not impacted by participation levels. Grantees should encourage collaboration with school day teachers to determine ways to better align afterschool programming with classroom learning and to offer consistent motivational strategies across both school day and afterschool programming.

Afterschool Best Practices

The following recommendations are drawn from articles summarized in *Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success*. This compendium is composed of nearly 70 research articles, essays and commentaries organized to help schools and communities leverage out of school time to accelerate student achievement and wellbeing.

Offer Inspired Programming

There should be a major emphasis on providing students with fun, hands-on, engaged learning experiences that are tied to the regular school day. Some strategies for providing engaging learning experiences include but are not limited to: (a) make learning relevant by incorporating practical examples and connecting instruction to student interests and experience, (b) make learning active through opportunities for collaborative learning and hands-on academic activities, and (c) build positive adult-student relationships among OST program participants.

Align the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program with school-day learning to provide more time for youth to practice skills and expand knowledge.

Strategies for aligning programs include: (a) use OST program coordinators to maintain communication between school and program personnel, (b) designate a school staff person to coordinate communication with OST programs and to help them support school needs, (c) connect OST instruction to school instruction by identifying school-based goals and learning objectives, and (d) coordinate with the school to identify staff for OST programs. To support the alignment with the school day, programs are expected to have regularly scheduled communication and intentional planning between school day and center staff.

Provide Well Structured and Diverse Program Offerings

Structure includes minimum time requirements set by the state that will provide students with ample opportunities to engage in math, reading, and science enrichment, as well as a wide array of fine arts education, physical recreation, character building, service learning, tutoring, entrepreneurial education, and other personal enrichment activities not always available during the regular school day.

Implement a Results-Oriented Focus

To enhance accountability and data-driven best practices, use extensive data tracking and monitoring procedures. This includes employing a continuous improvement model approach for progress and outcome monitoring.

✚ Incorporate Community Involvement

Communities are at the core of successful programs. Grantees should make a strong effort to the surrounding community to procure business partnerships, expertise in enrichment areas, and best practice recommendations.

✚ Provide Strong Professional Development

Excellent afterschool programs depend largely on the talents and abilities of staff and leaders. Strong professional development makes program staff aware of the impact of their decisions, the way they think about the program and participants, and how they handle challenges.

✚ Promote Family Engagement

Programs should provide parents with an opportunity to provide input on all facets of the program, inform parents of participants' progress, and formally invite parents to attend program events.

In sum, the Montana 21st CCLC program is to be commended for its efforts in assisting grantees with their implementation of these much-needed out of school time programs. This includes but is not limited to monitoring visits, quarterly regional meetings, and regularly scheduled conference calls with grantees to share the latest news on 21st CCLC programming, lessons learned, and to recognize outstanding programming or outcomes. While it is evident that there is progress to be made with respect to outcomes, with continued support, technical assistance, and progress monitoring, it is also clear that Montana has a strong foundation from which to build on and achieve positive results for communities and their youth.