

Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Montana State Evaluation Report 2020-21



Livingston 21st CCLC



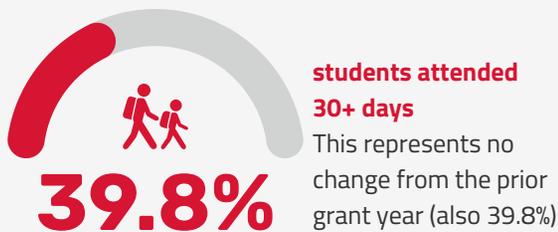
Report Prepared by
Miriam Resendez
State Evaluator
www.jemrllc.com
(800) 674-9676

21st CCLC provided needed supports to students and families in Montana!

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.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have significant impacts on participation and programming during the 2020-21 grant year. Despite challenges, programs across the state met the challenge by helping keep kids safe and engaged in their learning, helping essential workers continue to do their jobs, providing food for families in need, and staying connected with families.

A total of 6,420 students attended 21st CCLC programs during summer 2020 and the 2020-21 school year.



2020-21 Grant Year



29 Grantees

No change from 19-20



87 Centers

2 less than 19-20



6,420 Students Served

34% decrease



850 Family Members Served

71% decrease

ON AVERAGE, 74 STUDENTS WERE SERVED BY EACH 21st CCLC

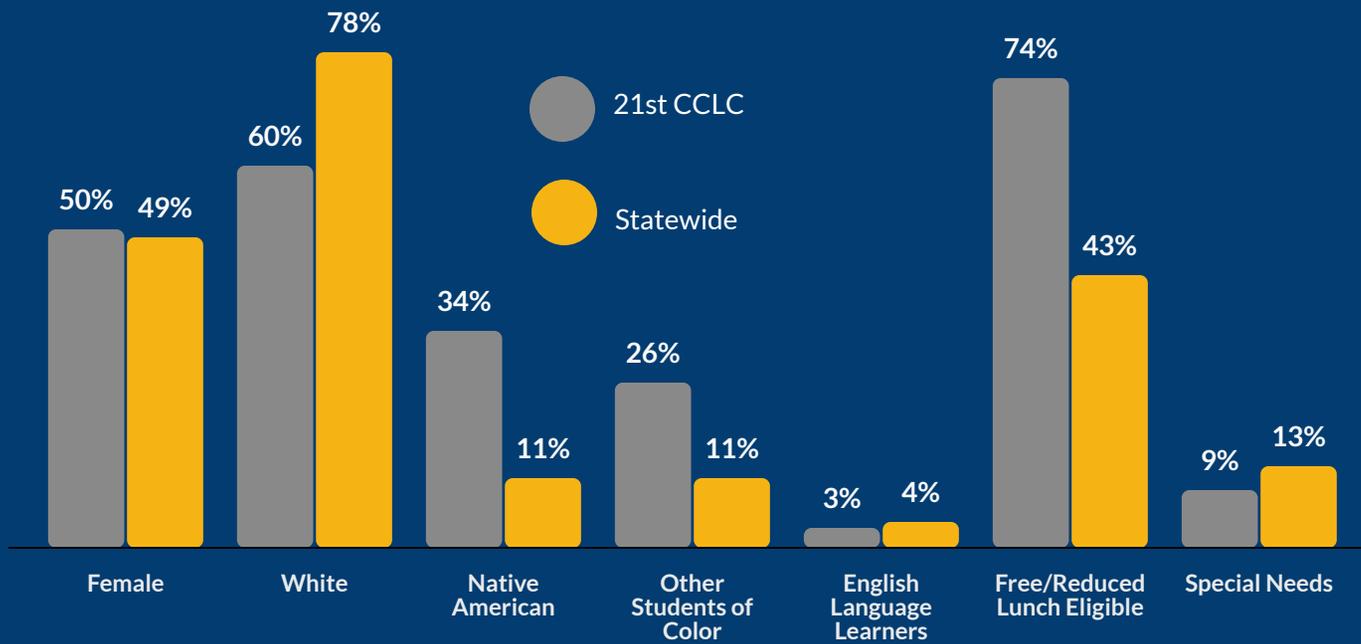
This is a 33% drop compared to last year (111 average served).

% of centers by size (# students served):
1-50 students (42%), 51-100 (31%), 101-200 (22%), 201+ (5%)

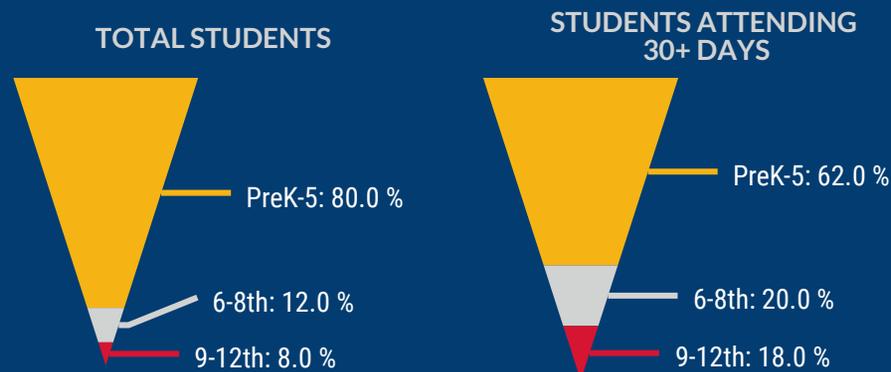
% of centers by region: Southwestern (35%), Western (24%), North Central (22%), Central (16%), and Eastern (3%)

Consistent with the grant, Montana 21st CCLC programs serve students that are more economically disadvantaged than the statewide student population.

21st CCLC participating students are mostly White which is consistent with statewide demographics. That said, the overall percentage of White students is lower (64% vs 78%) and significantly higher for Native Americans (28% vs 11%). Furthermore, the majority are receiving free/reduced lunch which is to be expected given that this grant targets low-income students. Compared to statewide statistics, there is also a lower percentage of special need students in after school programming which indicates that more efforts should be targeted for this subpopulation.



Elementary (grades PreK-5) make up the majority of total and regular attendees (>30 days) while high school (grades 9-12) make up the least.



34 Average # of Total Days Attended





21st CCLC programs offered a diverse range of academic enrichment and youth development opportunities aligned to grant goals.

While the coronavirus pandemic continued to impact communities, 21st CCLC met the moment by offering students a safe and supportive environment with a broad range of programming, including activities focused on academic skills and schoolwork habits, as well as other critical youth assets and socio-emotional skills. Other common enrichment activities revolved around science, health, wellness, safety and nutrition, recreation/physical activity, service learning and civic engagement, peer mentoring, and parental education and involvement. Examination of program offerings show that there is a dual focus on academic enrichment and youth development via arts and music and physical activity. Thus, overall programs are doing well in providing diverse and complementary activities for a well-rounded experience among program participants.

Activity Category	2020-21 Count	2020-21 Percent	2019-20 Percent
STEM	661	22.4%	24.1%
Arts & Music	550	18.6%	23.8%
Literacy	439	14.9%	9.4%
Physical Activity	284	9.6%	7.9%
Community/Service Learning	184	6.2%	4.8%
Youth Leadership	176	6.0%	5.0%
College and Career Readiness	163	5.5%	5.3%
Homework Help	135	4.6%	5.5%
Mentoring	123	4.2%	4.5%
Counseling Programs	97	3.3%	1.7%
Tutoring	74	2.5%	3.8%
Violence Prevention	21	0.7%	1.7%
Drug Prevention	15	0.5%	0.6%
English Language Learners Support	14	0.5%	1.7%
Entrepreneurship	13	0.4%	0.2%
Truancy Prevention	4	0.1%	0.1%

The most frequent activities offered during the school year were: STEM-related activities, arts and music, literacy, and physical fitness. This is consistent with the prior year distribution. On average, activities occurred multiple times per week, and included 20 to 30 participants.

41

centers (47%) offered parent or family programming; this represents a decrease as compared to last year (68% offered). Types of activities offered included:



- 36% family social events
- 28% activities that support youth in academics
- 33% parenting or family management

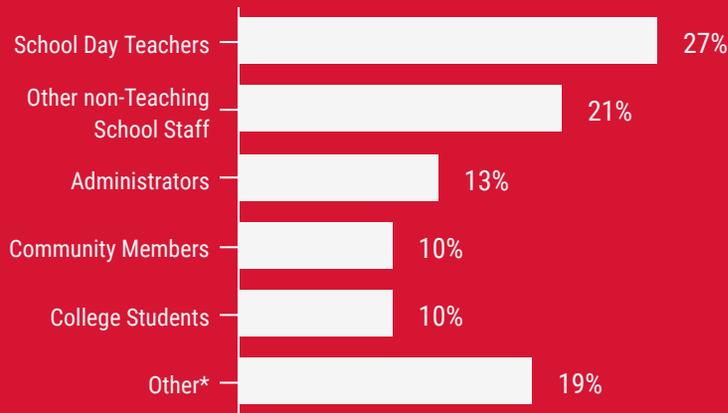


The majority of 21st CCLC centers offered in-person programming for most (if not all) of the 2020-21 school year, while following local COVID-19 mitigation protocols.

21st CCLC programs were operated by 1,186 staff members which is a decline from the prior year (n=1,466) although the total number of centers operating was similar (87 vs 89). Anecdotal information obtained from program administrators revealed that hiring and retaining staff was a major challenge in 2020-21 due to health concerns, lack of childcare, and part-time hours.



of staff were paid, the remaining 17% were volunteers



*High school students, parents, subcontractors, not specified



Livingston Staff at the Bozeman Maze

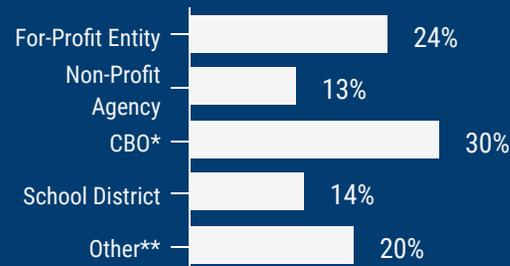


Rocky Boy Field Trip

PARTNERSHIPS

provide grantees with connections to the community and additional resources that may not be available to the program otherwise.

302 partners were reported with an average of 12 partners per grantee. This represents a decline as compared to the prior year (n=345) and is likely due to social distancing measures which limited the number of in-person partners that could provide programming.



*Community-Based Organization

**Faith-based, Charter, College/University, not specified

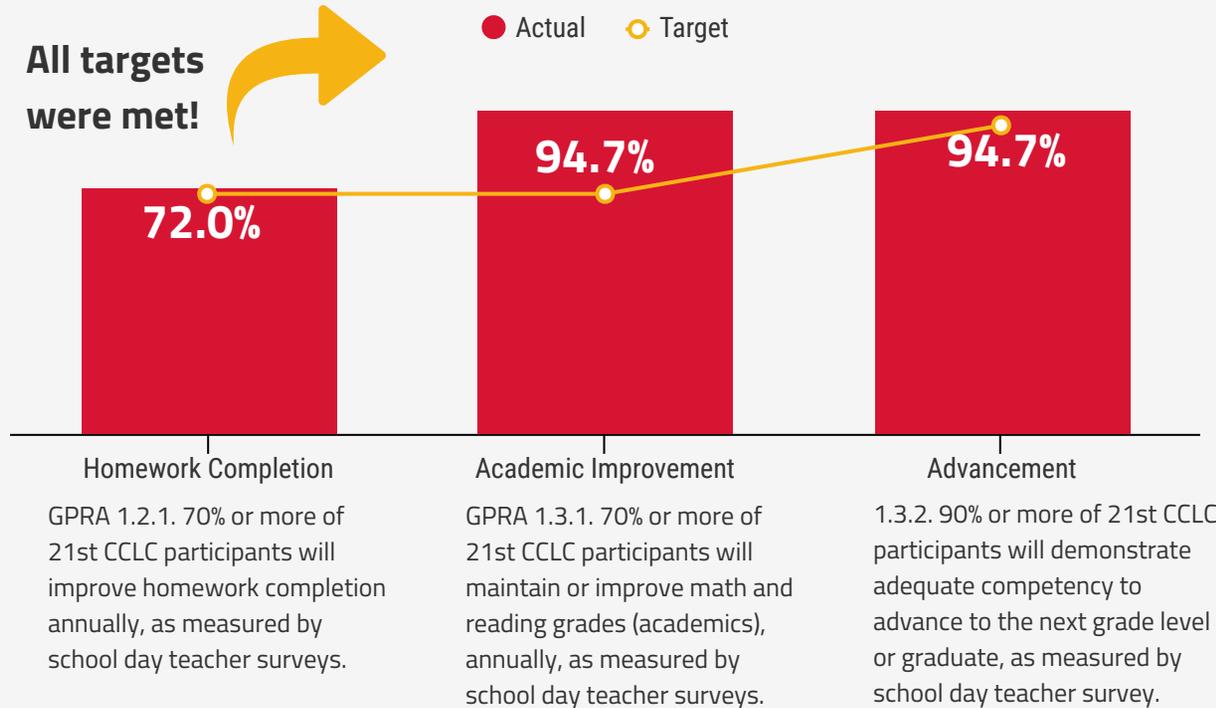
46%
provided programming



18%
provided goods

21st CCLC programs continue to make positive impacts on students and their families!

GOAL 1: 21st CCLC will see improvements in the academic achievement of their students.



71% **students agreed**
The academic work we do in the after school program relates to what we are doing in school.



82% **students agreed**
The afterschool program has helped me with academic performance (e.g., grades and tests in school).



76% **parents agreed**
The afterschool program has a positive influence on my student's academic performance



DATA NOTE

It is important to consider that statewide there were significantly less surveys collected due to COVID, especially student and caregiver surveys. Furthermore, several objectives were not applicable or measurable given COVID-19 related restrictions; of the 31 original objectives only 18 were measured in 2020-21. As a result, comparisons to the prior grant year (2019-20) are not generally included.

STUDENT VOICES

"The after school program has done well this year by teaching us as much as possible, letting us have a lot of fun, while letting us learn."

"The after school program is nice and sometimes it helps you with your school work and the other times it takes your mind off of school/school work."

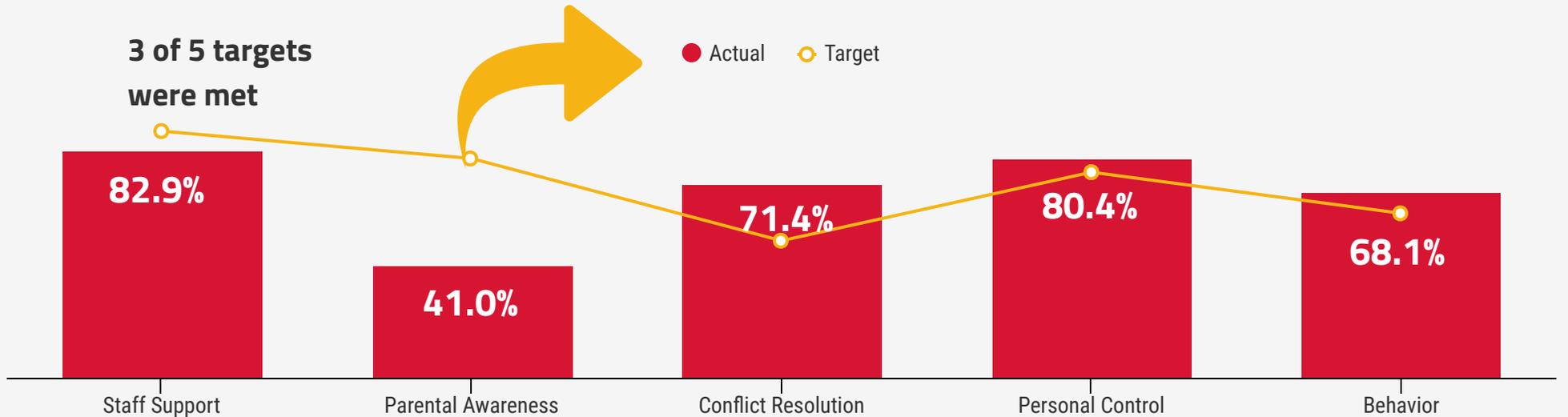
"They have helped me have some extra time to get my homework done."



GOAL 2: 21st CCLC programs will provide a safe, supportive, and healthy environment.

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

GOAL 4: 21st CCLC programs will see an increase in the social-emotional skills of their students.



2.1.1.1. 90% or more of 21st CCLC students will report that they are supported by and connected to staff in their program as measured by student surveys.

3.1.2. 80% or more of parents will report that they have knowledge and awareness of student progress and activities in the 21st CCLC program and school, annually, as measured by parent surveys.

4.1.1. 50% or more of 21st CCLC students will improve conflict resolution skills, annually, as measured by school day teacher surveys.

4.1.2. 75% or more of 21st CCLC students will report that they have personal control (over their behavior and future), annually, as measured by student surveys.

GPRA 4.2.1. 60% or more of 21st CCLC students will improve behavior, annually, as measured by school day teacher surveys.

21st CCLC students felt their program has helped them in multiple areas, including interpersonal skills, problem solving skills, and well-being.

% STUDENT AGREEMENT

- 82% working with others (collaboration)
- 75% handling problems
- 89% getting along with others
- 90% feeling good about themselves

"The after school program has provided excellent friends, closer connections, and an overall great experience."

"Probably the most amazing to me has been the online program that really brought people together when everyone was so far apart and everything was so crazy."

"This is a place where we can get together and hang out and share together. It's really positive."



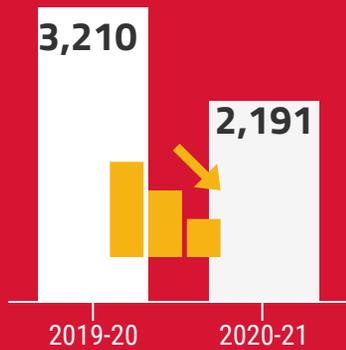
Seely Lake 21st CCLC

GOAL 5: 21st CCLC programs will promote the active engagement of enrolled participants.

1 of 3 targets were met

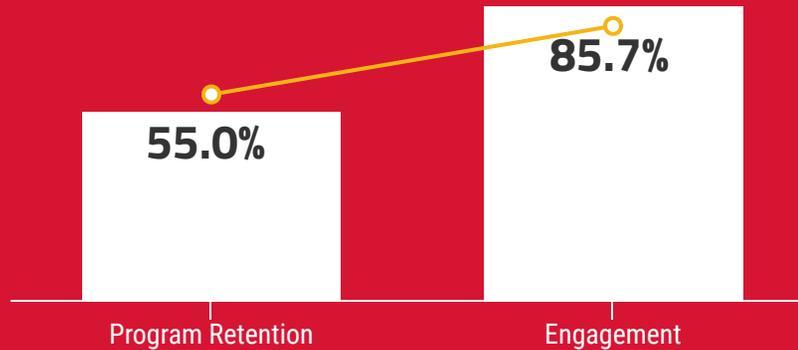


● Actual ● Target



Regular Participants

5.1.1. Increase the frequency of participation of regular students (30 days or more) attending 21st CCLC programs during the school year annually as measured by attendance spreadsheets.



5.1.2. 60% or more of students will be retained in 21st CCLC programs annually, as measured by attendance spreadsheets.

5.1.3. 80% or more of 21st CCLC students will report that they are actively engaged in their learning experience at their local afterschool program, annually, as measured by student surveys.

71% **students agreed**
The after school program has helped me with my motivation to do well and stay in school.



84% **students agreed**
I regularly participate in activities at my after school program.



78% **parents agreed**
The after school program has helped my student with attitude/behavior towards school.



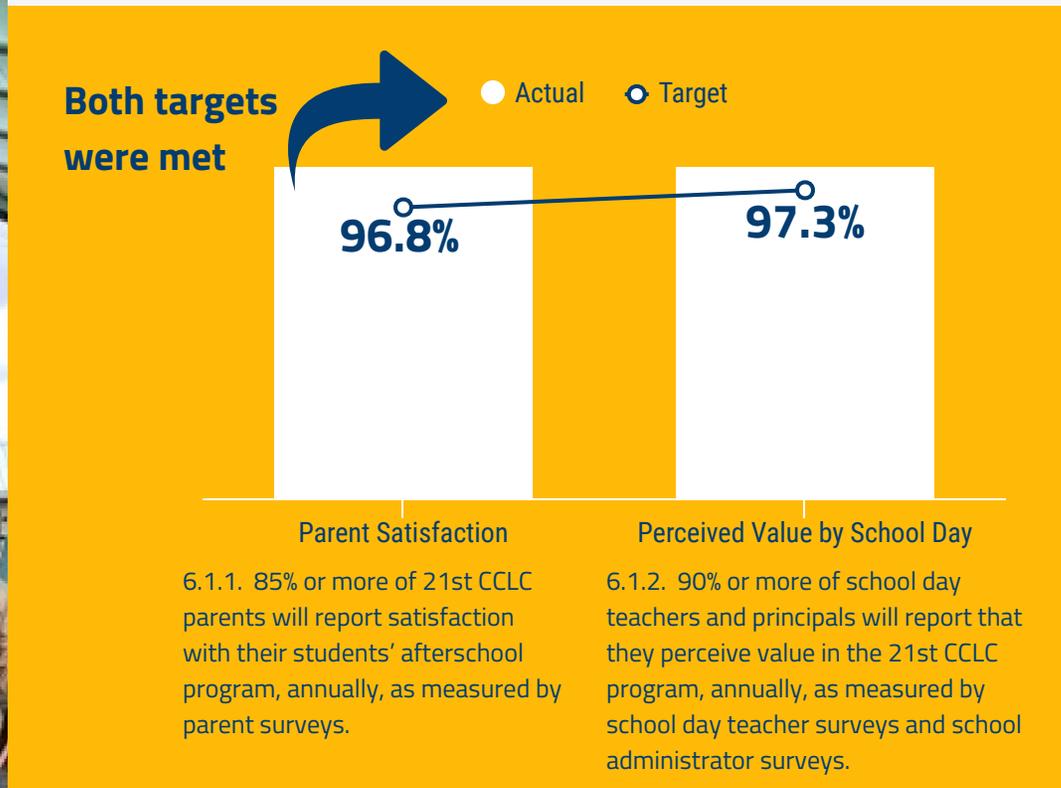
"We greatly appreciate all the staff of [21st CCLC LINKS program] and the members that contribute to the program. We are grateful to have a safe and interactive caring place for our son while we work. Thank you all for your love and support of our children!" - Parent





GOAL 6: 21st CCLC programs will provide high-quality operations.

Objective 1 - 21st CCLC programs will be perceived as valuable by parents, school teachers, and school administrators.



Students also value 21st CCLC!

- 93% are satisfied with the activities that are offered
- 89% look forward to going to their 21st CCLC program
- 85% feel they belong in the program

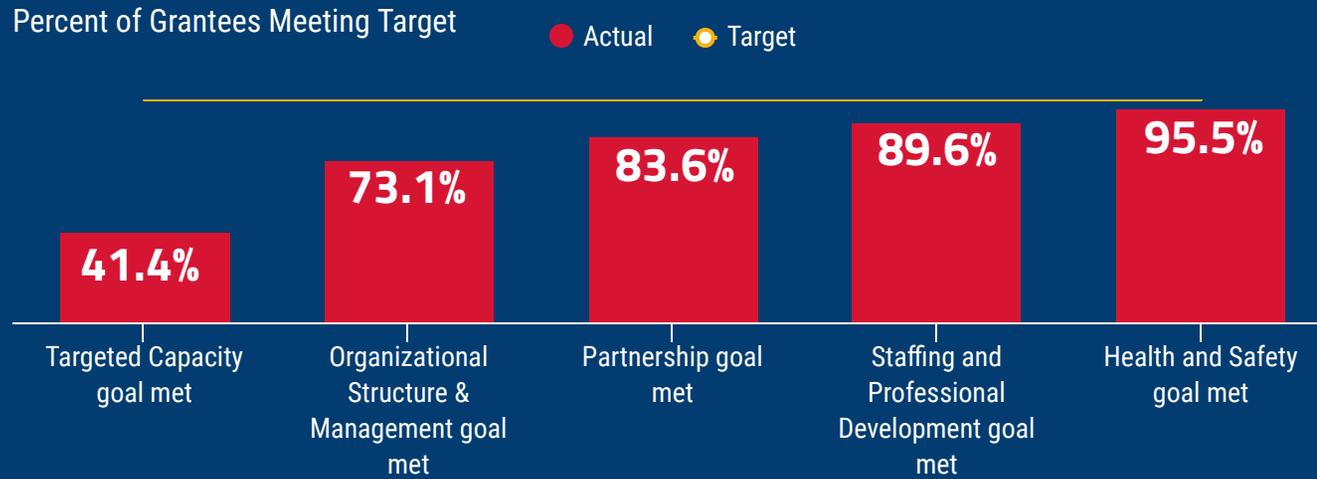
Parent satisfaction with various aspects of 21st CCLC program is high.



GOAL 6: 21st CCLC programs will provide high-quality operations.

Objective 2 - 21st CCLC programs will offer high-quality activities and operations that meet the needs of youth in the community.

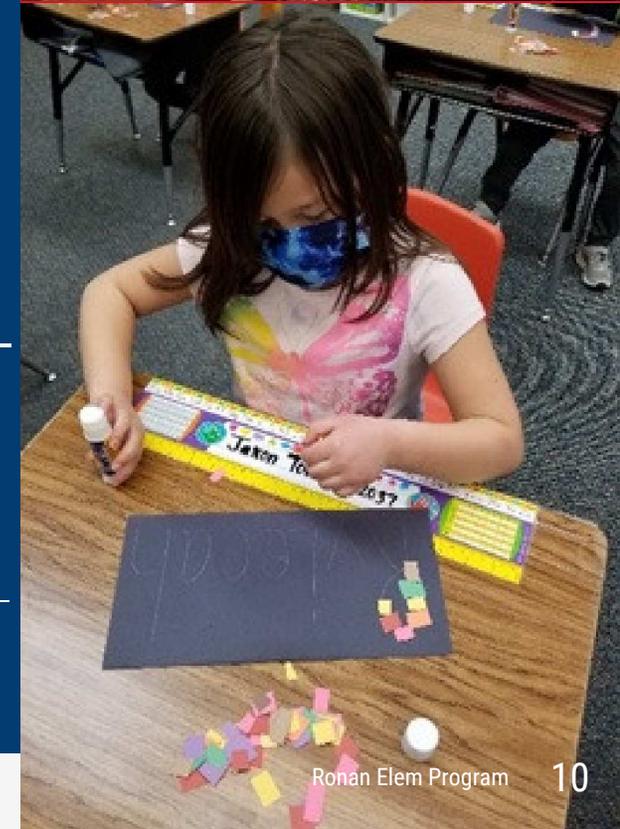
A Self Reflection Tool is completed by grantees annually to measure progress towards quality programming. The purpose of this tool is to improve the quality of Montana's 21st CCLC programs by helping practitioners take a critical look at their programs against standards of best practice. Statewide targets have been set for four of the quality elements (see items below) such that all grantees should aim to comply with at least 80% of the indicators measuring each element. While none of the targets were met, programs should be commended for the significant number of grantees that report high quality programming (90%+) in the areas of organizational management, partnerships, staffing and professional development, and health & safety.



Using the Self Reflection Tool, grantees rate their programs on a scale of 1 (developing) -4 (excelling) on various indicators aligned to the seven elements shown here. The fact that the average rating for all elements reached the "Advancing" level (3 and above) indicates that overall, grantees feel they are implementing high quality programs across multiple indicators.



Livingston Program



Ronan Elem Program

Program Spotlight

According to the Livingston 21st CCLC Program Director, staff did an amazing job at being the first back for in-person programming in the county; they had to work long hours, take on extra responsibilities in keeping the children safe (sanitizing, enforcing masking, etc.) and had to be flexible with their hours given the constant changes and need to cover for one another when quarantines were needed. They were inspiring to watch as they worked as a team of professionals caring tirelessly for the children and families of Livingston.

Despite challenges, staff were able to implement a well-rounded engaging program throughout the school year. Over the course of the year, operating hours increased by 70% from a normal 15 hour programming week to 25.5 hour programming week., and the average daily attendance was 100 students. Innovative programming included:

- Families signed up for cooking kits to cook a complete meal at home with their children. YouTube videos featuring a local chef demonstrating how to prepare the recipes and offering cooking tips were created to support families as they prepared their meal.
- Working in the Lincoln School Farm as part of a lesson on harvesting garlic and the nutritional benefits of garlic, the children planted, tended and harvested the garlic in partnership with Farm to School of Park County.
- The local librarian from the Livingston Public Library reads to students once a week during the school year. Students also participate in a tour of the library to reinforce their familiarity with this valuable community resource.



Next Steps

The coronavirus pandemic spurred an unprecedented upheaval of K-12 education in the United States that continued into the 2020-21 school year. In response to the devastating impact on Montana students and their families, 21st CCLC met the moment by playing an important role in communities' response to the pandemic and recovery. It is clear that Montana's 21st CCLC program administrators and staff mobilized in an extraordinary manner during the 2019-21 grant years to ensure all youth have access to tangible and intangible supports, including learning and social engagement opportunities they need to emerge from this crisis resilient and strong. The following recommendations are focused on how we can better prepare and equip grantees with the tools they need to deliver high quality programming during these unprecedented times to help youth re-engage, re-connect, and thrive.



Connecting with Youth and Families

Take advantage of the plethora of resources and trainings available to help after school professionals meet the social emotional learning needs of youth and to make them feel connected to their peers and community. Brief tips include:

- Cultivating positive interactions that allow participants to recognize what they have in common with each other, which supports relationship building. Similarly, engage in deliberate rapport building.
- Communicate with students and their families outside of class. The more contact staff have with students and families, the better. The most effective communication is personalized (that is, not just newsletters or email blasts).



Addressing Inequities

Programs must continue to reach and serve a significant number of youth from low-income families (target population for 21st CCLC). Additional tips include:

- Program staff should be well-equipped to serve as resource navigators by helping families connect with food, health, mental health, economic, and other supports.
- It is essential that resources and guidance to help afterschool and summer programs include parents, families, and youth as authentic partners in program design focused specifically on inclusive practices.
- Programs should pursue partners that have a track record of effectively engaging communities of color and other underserved youth.



Sustaining Connections with Community & School Partners

Guide grantees on a process for fostering successful and positive communication with external stakeholders such as parents, school-day personnel, and other community agencies. When information, resources and tools are shared across contexts, it creates a complementary learning environment that supports the development of students. Other tips include:

- Consider identifying exemplar grantees who have been effective communicators with parents and community members, and school day partners.
- Grantees should identify specific point person(s) to facilitate communication with the school, community and with parents.



Quality Assessment

Montana 21st CCLC has developed a continuous quality improvement process with the explicit purpose of improving the quality and performance of grantees. As part of this process, grantees engage in an annual program quality reflection process. It is recommended that current quality elements, sub-elements, and indicators be reviewed and revised to reflect changes in local environments and to fully address all quality expectations for Montana after school programs. In order to accomplish this task, it is important to involve diverse stakeholders across OPI, 21st CCLC programs, as well as incorporate caregiver and youth voice.