

MONTANA 21ST CCLC

2018-19 Annual Report: Evaluation Brief

MAY 2020

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Montana 21st Century Community Learning Centers: 2018-19 Grant Year

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” the U.S. Department of Education developed the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Program.

The 21st CCLC program is largely focused on providing enrichment activities outside of school hours that help students, meet state and local standards in core academic subjects. The program also offers other educational services, including literacy, to the families of participating children.

One overarching mission of the 21st CCLC grant is to collect data at the local, state, and national levels in order to build on research regarding the structure and implementations of effective afterschool programs. To support this effort and help programs improve, grantees and program centers across the state of Montana provide annual data describing grant activities and program outcomes. The present report summarizes findings from the annual evaluation for the 2018-19 grant year.

Grantees took a lot of pride in sharing the variety of programming they are providing. In addition to providing tutoring and homework help, programs offerings included activities related to STEM, art, sports, and academic enrichment. Sites really strived to provide programming that was innovative, aligned with school day activities, relevant to community needs, and exposed students and families to new and unique opportunities.

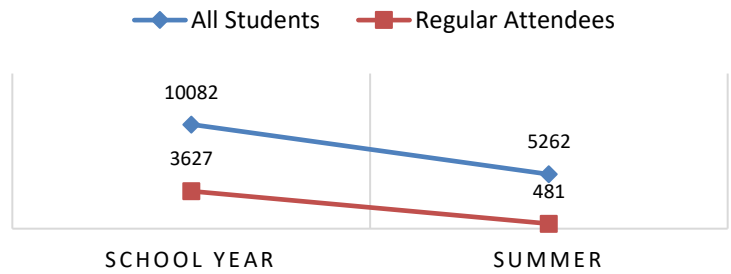


“The 21st Century after-school program has proven to have a positive impact on the students, school and community of Lone Rock School. Overall, our program provides a place where kids can learn in a comfortable and safe environment. We have a daily routine that the kids are familiar with and we offer a program that allows enriching and life enhancing experiences available to all students regardless of their financial status.”

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS AND FAMILIES SERVED?

For the 2018-19 grant year, there were a total of 47 grantees with 110 centers that offered 21st CCLC programming. These centers served approximately 15,344 Montana students (10,082 during the school year and 5,262 in the summer).

For the 2018-19 program year, Montana issued fewer grant awards, but for larger amounts. Because the number of grantees was reduced, comparisons to the prior participation counts are not provided.



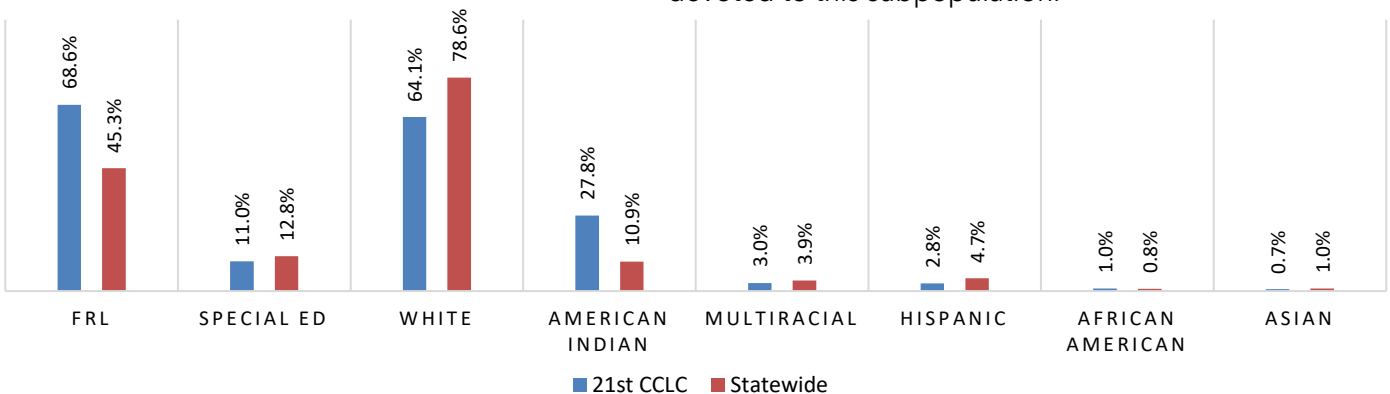
Centers served students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Across all participants, pre-Kindergarteners represent the smallest group (1%). Grades K through five were over-represented, accounting for more than half of the total (60%), with attendance rates peaking in 2nd grade (11%). As students got older, participation rates generally declined. High-school students (in grades 9-12) represent the smallest proportion of the attendees, together accounting for 18% of students.

Most participants identified as White (64%), followed by American Indian (28%); compared to statewide demographics, a higher proportion of 21st CCLC students were American Indian students and a lower proportion of students were White.

Programs served more students eligible for free or reduced lunch (69%) compared to the representation of these groups in schools across the state (45%). This is not surprising given that 21st CCLC targets high-poverty schools.

Students in special education classes were slightly underrepresented (11%) compared to statewide data (13%), indicating that more outreach efforts should be devoted to this subpopulation.

GRADE	TOTAL SERVED	
Pre-Kindergarten	136	1.1%
Kindergarten	831	6.9%
1 st grade	1165	9.6%
2 nd grade	1333	11.0%
3 rd grade	1294	10.7%
4 th grade	1305	10.8%
5 th grade	1273	10.5%
6 th grade	1079	8.9%
7 th grade	781	6.5%
8 th grade	590	4.9%
9 th grade	731	6.0%
10 th grade	549	4.5%
11 th grade	494	4.1%
12 th grade	399	3.3%
Unknown	127	1.1%
Total	12,087	

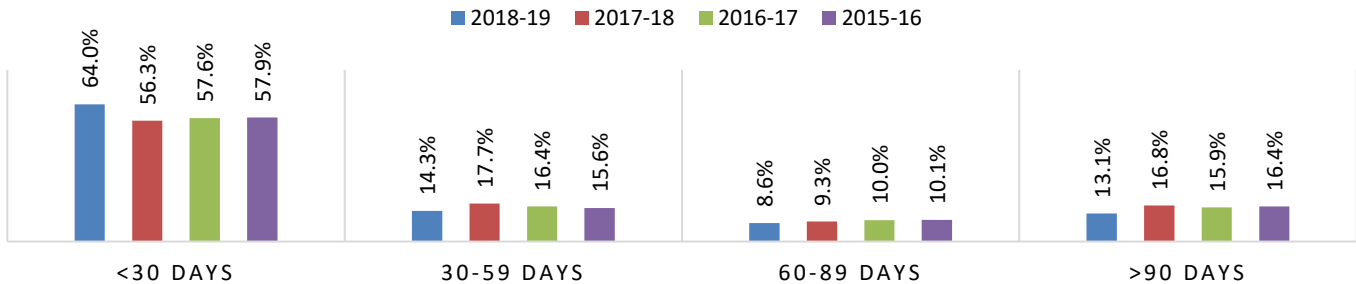


ARE PROGRAMS REACHING THEIR TARGET POPULATIONS?

Attendance varied across individual centers; while over half (57%) served fewer than 100 students, 13% served over 200 (mean attendance = 112 students).

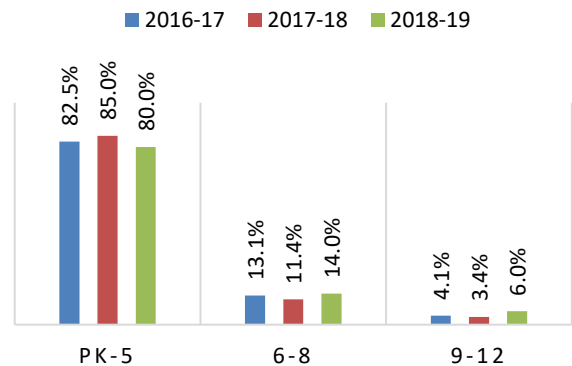
Approximately 36% of school-year participants were regular attendees (i.e., attended the program for at least 30 days). The proportion of students who are regular attendees has not improved and this is less than the most recent national data which indicated that regular attendees make up 54% of all students participating in afterschool programs (US Department of Ed, 2017).

STUDENT ATTENDANCE



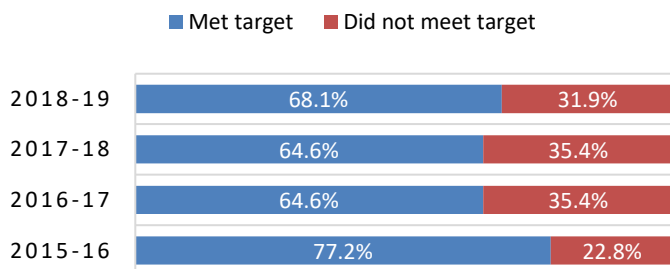
Regular attendance also varied by grade. Elementary (PK-5) students made up 60% of the all participants enrolled in 21st CCLC programs but made up 80% of regular attendees. Middle school (6-8) students made up for 14% and high school students (9-12) made up for only 6% of regular attendees. This pattern of participation across grades is consistent with observations from the previous grant year.

REGULAR ATTENDEES



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.

% OF CENTERS MEETING ATTENDANCE TARGETS



As part of the grant application process, potential grantees are asked to provide the targeted number of students that they planned to serve. Based on this data a state performance indicator was created which specifies that at all grantees are expected to serve at least 80% of their target capacity. During the 2017-18 grant year, 65% (51 of 79) of centers met their target attendance goals, thus the overall target was not met (80%).

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRAMS CENTERS, STAFF, AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS?

In the 2018-2019 school year, Montana 21st CCLC centers had a total of 1,532 staff members. Of these, 68% were paid staff (mostly teachers and other school staff) and 32% were volunteers (mostly college students and community members).



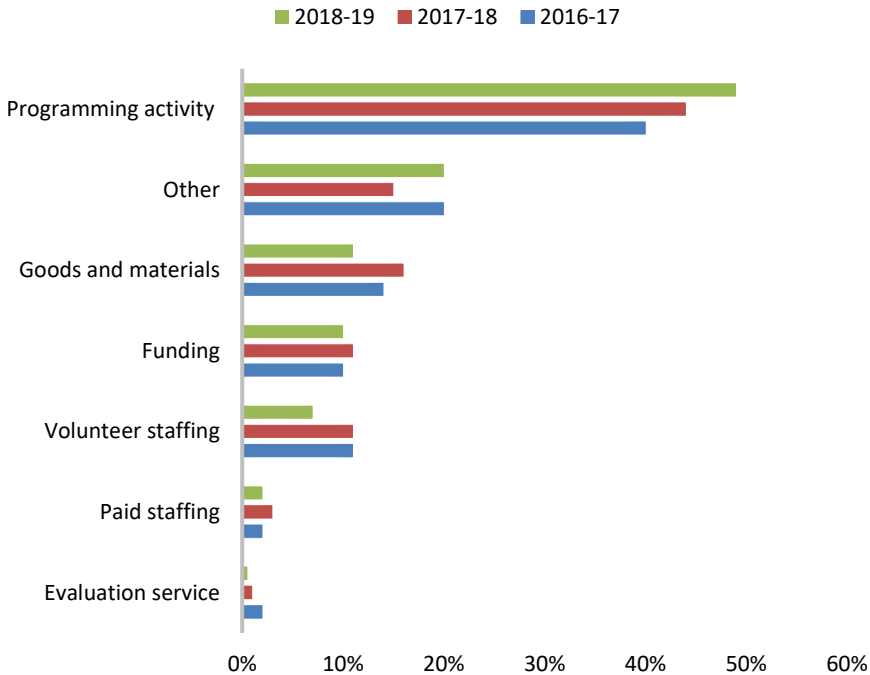
STAFF TYPE	PAID		VOLUNTEER	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Administrators	137	13.2%	5	1.0%
College Students	55	5.3%	199	40.1%
Community Members	157	15.2%	134	27.0%
High School Students	93	9.0%	32	6.5%
Other Non-Teaching School Staff	216	20.8%	14	2.8%
Parents	18	1.7%	67	13.5%
School Day Teachers	319	30.8%	22	4.4%
Other	41	4.0%	23	4.6%
Total	1,036	68%	496	32%

Partnerships provide grantees connections to the community and additional resources. Encouraging these relationships is an important component of the 21st CCLC grant. Results show that partnerships were an important area where sites felt they were exceling, and they reported mostly positive and supportive partnerships at the local, school and state levels. Solid community partnerships allowed grantees to provide unique and engaging programming that utilized the skills and knowledge of community members to enhance school day learning.

Grantees reported having 444 local partners. The majority were community partners, non-profit organizations, government, and for-profit entities. Partners offered various resources and opportunities to 21st CCLC centers, the most common of which were programming or activity supports, and goods and materials.

“Our partnership with our public library has enable our second and third graders to participate regularly in art classes and our fourth and fifth graders to participate in coding classes.”

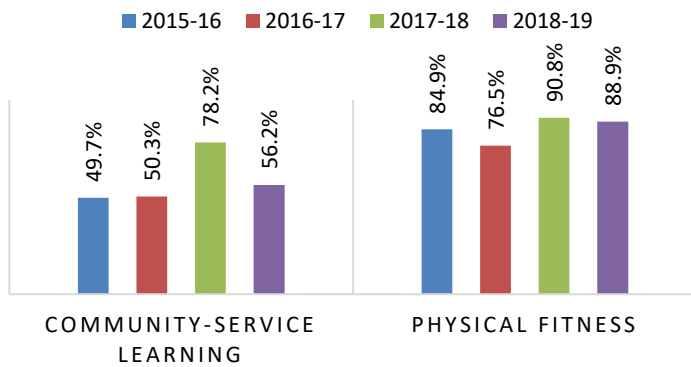
RESOURCES PROVIDED BY 21ST CCLC PARTNERS



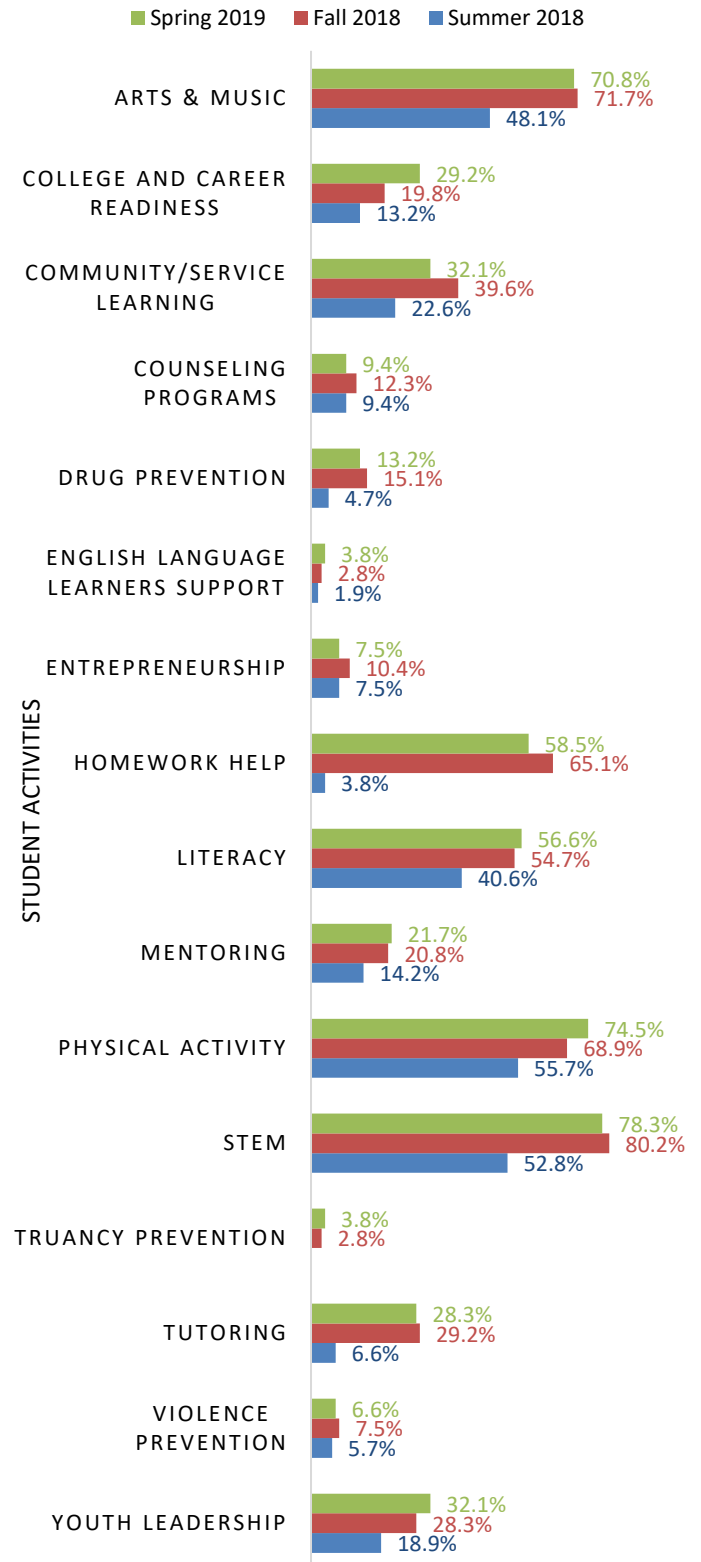
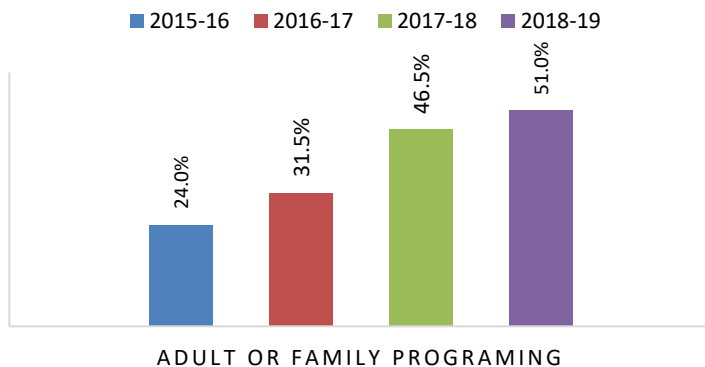
WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF 21ST CCLC PROGRAMMING?

There is clearly a dual focus on academic enrichment and youth development at 21st CCLC programs. The most commonly offered student programs were STEM activities, arts and music, physical fitness activities, literacy support, community service learning and homework help. The least offered activities were ELL supports, counseling services, and programs related to truancy and violence prevention. Overall, programs did well in providing diverse and complementary activities for a well-rounded experience.

Two state performance indicators relate to the provision of two specific activities; results show that 56% of centers offer community-service learning opportunities (target of 80% not met) and 89% offered health or physical fitness activities (target of 75% was met!).



Adult programming was available at 51% of centers. This represents a 5-percentage point increase from the previous grant year and continues a positive trend of increasing adult offerings over time. Family social events were the most common type of parent and family programming.



HOW WELL DID GRANTEES IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM?

In January 2019, grantees were asked to complete the Montana Monitoring and Quality Improvement Self-Assessment. This self-assessment helps grantees to improve their programs by evaluating them against a common set of quality indicators that reflect standards of best practice. Performance in each area was rated on a scale of 1 to 4, corresponding to Developing, Operational, Advancing, or Excelling in their implementation of best practices associated with each indicator.

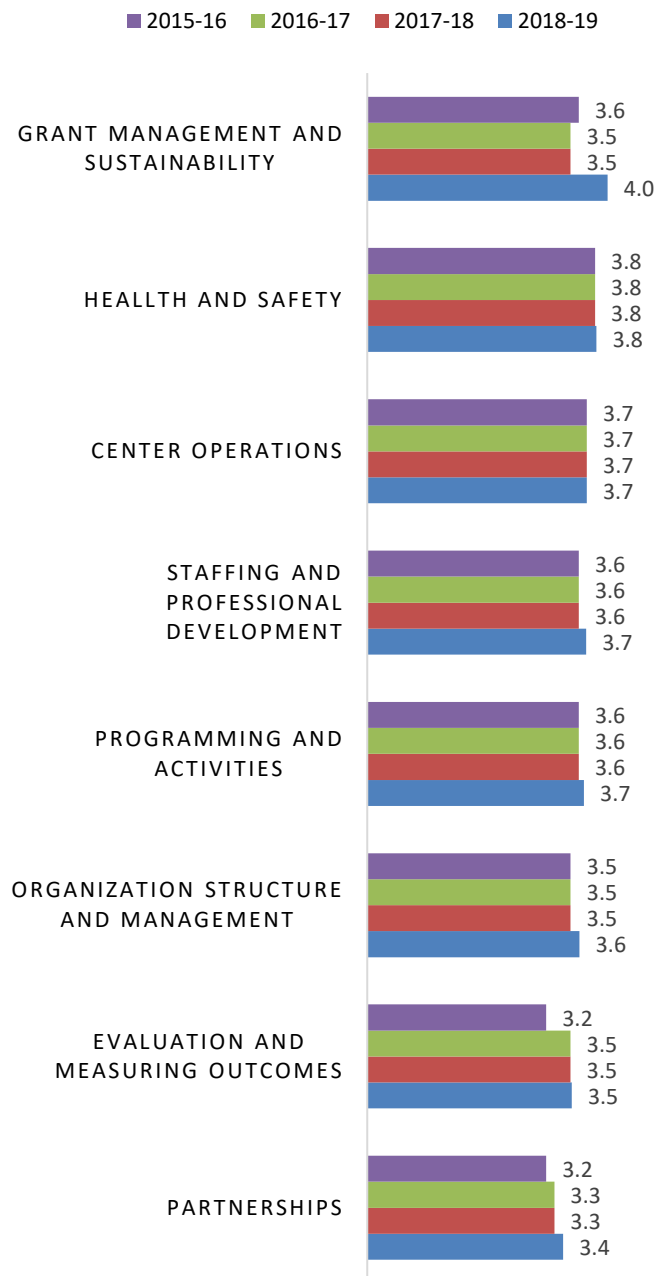
Specific state indicators of quality programming stipulate that all (100%) grantees should meet at least 80% of standards in Management and Sustainability, Health and Safety, Partnerships, Staffing and Professional Development, and Organizational Management and Structure. An additional indicator requires all centers to establish a sustainability plan. For 2018-19, these indicators were met for Grant Management and Sustainability and Health and Safety.

AREA	COMPLIANCE ¹
Organizational Structure/Management	91.2%
Partnerships	82.4%
Staffing/Professional Development	95.1%
Grant Management/Sustainability	100%
Health/Safety	100%
Sustainability Plan in Place	83.7%

¹ Centers meeting 80% of the individual quality indicators are considered to be compliant.

As shown in the figure to the right, the areas with the highest ratings were: Grant Management and Sustainability, Health and Safety; Center Operations; Staffing and Professional Development and Programming and Activities. Ratings indicated that Partnerships was the weakest category for programs, followed by Evaluation and Measuring Outcomes; however, the average ratings for these areas was 3.4 and 3.5, respectively, indicating that respondents generally perceived their programs to be *Advancing* or *Excelling* in these areas.

"I think one of the greatest successes is that the students that are there are happy and safe."



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

The challenges most commonly experienced by grantees included:

- ✚ Finding and retaining quality staff
- ✚ Management of student behavior
- ✚ Fluctuations in daily attendance
- ✚ Communicating and coordinating with school day teachers

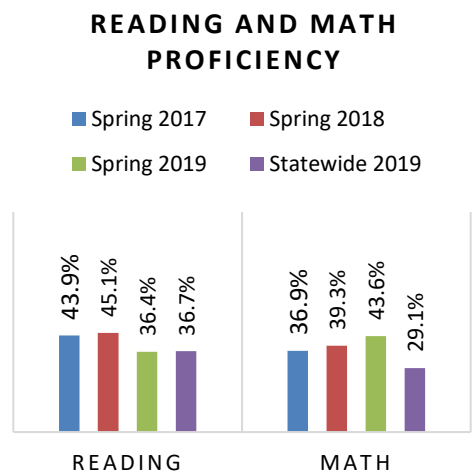
While all grantees experienced successes, the successful aspects of programs varied considerably. Common areas of success included:

- ✚ 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
- ✚ Building strong relationships with program staff and community members

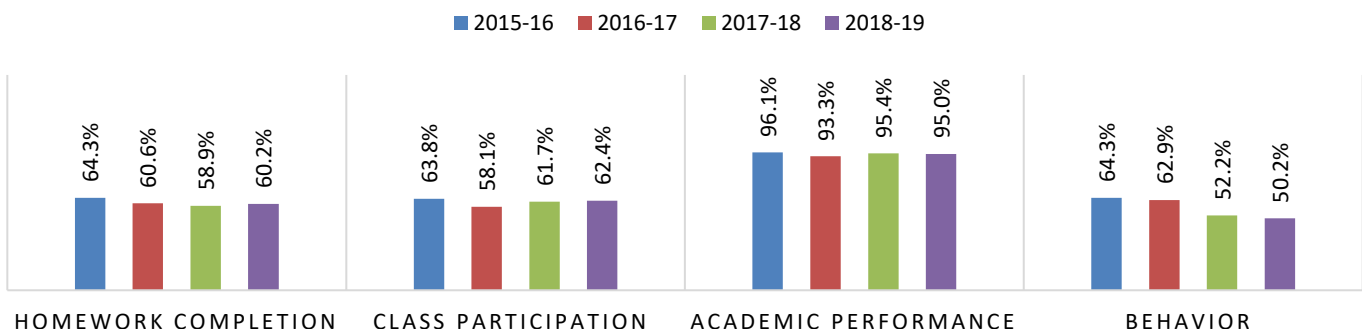
WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS ON FEDERAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES?

Results from the state assessments show that 36% of 21st CCLC participants were proficient on the state assessment in reading and 43% were proficient in math. Of note, the two state objectives associated with this data were revised for this year; they now indicate that proficiency rates should meet or exceed the proficiency level on reading/language arts and mathematics State Assessments *among free/reduced lunch students statewide*. Proficiency rates were higher than the statewide average for math and were very similar for reading (difference of -.3%).

Performance indicators also propose that 70% of students should improve Homework Completion, Class Participation, and Academic Performance, as measured by teacher surveys. Additionally, 60% of students were expected to improve their Classroom Behavior. As shown below, the target for improved Academic Performance was met, but the others were not.



% OF STUDENTS REPORTED AS IMPROVED BY SCHOOL TEACHERS



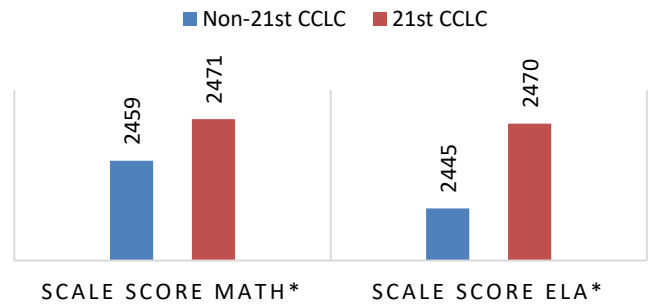
IMPACT OF 21ST CCLC - MATCHED SAMPLE COMPARISON

Montana students participating in 21st CCLC afterschool programs in the 2018-19 school year (n=9,128) were compared to similar students in Montana that did not participate in 21st CCLC programming (n=9,083) via propensity scores and matching methods. This procedure matched each 21st CCLC student with the closest non- 21st CCLC student based on key demographic variables.

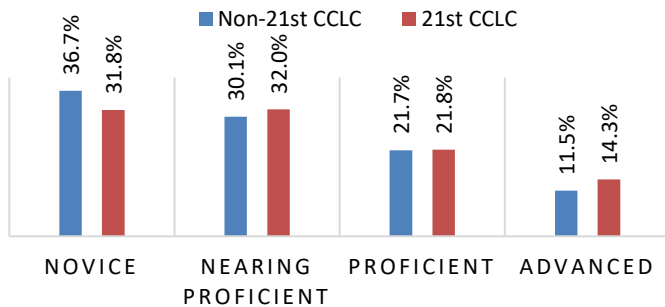
Results from a comparison of state assessment scores show that students participating in 21st CCLC programming had significantly higher scale scores than did non-participating students for both math and ELA.

Scale scores on the SBAC are classified into four categories of performance called achievement levels. These achievement levels are referred to as Novice, Nearly Proficient, Proficient and Advanced. Students performing at Proficient or Advanced levels are considered on track to demonstrating the knowledge and skills for college and career readiness. Students participating in 21st CCLC programs significantly differed from students that did not participate in 21st CCLC programming on SBAC math and ELA Performance Levels. There were greater numbers of 21st CCLC students than non-21st CCLC students that were at Proficient or Advanced levels. As well, there were more non-21st CCLC students than 21st CCLC in the Novice level for both math and ELA.

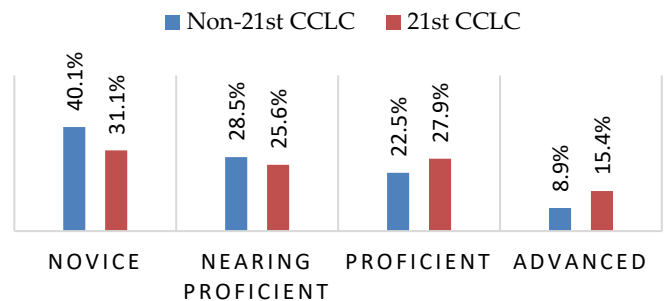
SBA SCALE SCORES



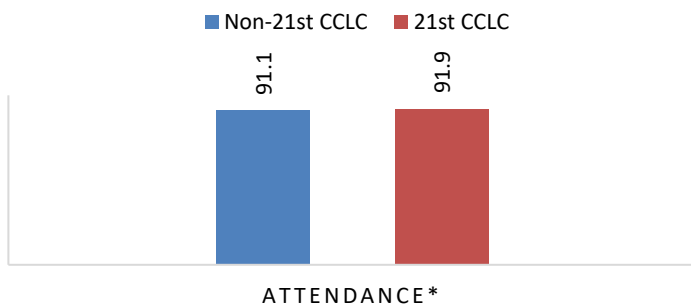
SBAC PERFORMANCE LEVEL MATH



SBAC PERFORMANCE LEVEL ELA



STUDENT SCHOOL DAY ATTENDANCE



Student school day attendance levels were also analyzed for differences between the two groups of students. Students participating in 21st CCLC programming had significantly higher attendance rates than non-participating students.





Contact Information

Michelle Cusey 21st CCLC Program Manager

Montana Office of Public Instruction
Phone: 406-444-3519
TTY: 406-444-0235
michelle.cusey@mt.gov
<http://opi.mt.gov/>



Reported Prepared
by:

Miriam Resendez
President / Evaluator
JEM & R LLC
(800) 674-9676, ext. 700
www.jemrllc.com



A full report of these findings is available. Please contact OPI for more information.

WHAT OTHER WAYS DID PROGRAMS IMPACT STUDENTS AND FAMILIES?

Grantees were asked to report on their observations about how their programs impacted participating students and families. Multiple grantees reported positive impacts in the following areas:

- ✚ Many grantees saw improvements in the area of student academics. They observed learning gains and improved academic achievement among students in the program as well as improved homework and assignment completion for struggling students. As well, it was reported that students benefited from the alternative learning modalities which reinforced concepts learned in the classroom.
- ✚ Students demonstrated personal growth and increased maturity. The program's safe, supportive environment helped students to gain confidence, leadership skills and increased engagement. Students also improved social-emotional skills, leading to more positive interactions and fewer behavior problems.
- ✚ A variety of engaging programming activities offered students with many opportunities they would not have means to access. This exposure allowed students to explore and develop their interests, particularly in the areas of STEM, technology, and the culinary arts.

WHAT WERE LESSONS LEARNED AND WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR IMPROVEMENT?

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

- ✚ Helping programs provide better communication to parents and school day teachers with regards to activities and student behavior. Increased communication with school day staff would also promote alignment between afterschool programming and classroom learning.
- ✚ 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

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

- ✚ 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 programming during summer and holiday breaks (e.g., providing targeted funds)
- ✚ Expanding the number of centers that offer adult programming
- ✚ Continuing to direct efforts toward long-term retention of participants