

Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Montana State Evaluation Report 2022-23



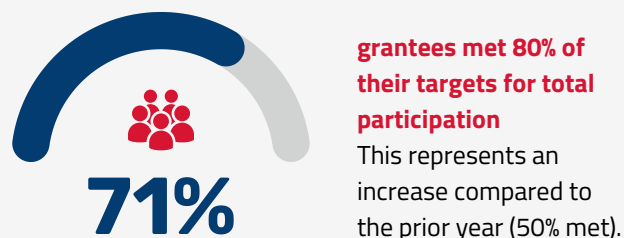
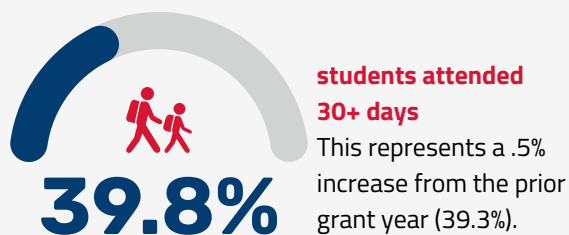
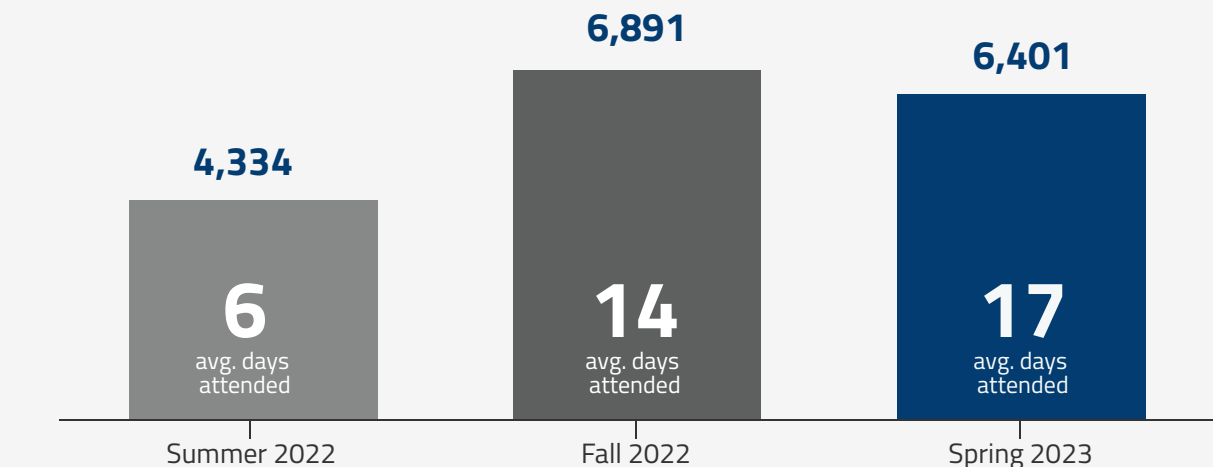
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21st CCLC continued to provide essential support to students and families across Montana!

The 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) Grant is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Education created to support academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours. The program aims to help students meet core standards in academic subjects such as language arts and math, while also encouraging activities to promote physical health and strong socio-emotional wellbeing.

Students that attend their district's 21st CCLC program often come from underserved and underrepresented populations. It is crucial that afterschool activities of high quality are accessible to children of all backgrounds. This grant provides a no-cost solution for children to spend time in a safe, structured environment that supports their learning and helps build a sense of community.

A total of 9,809 students attended 21st CCLC programs during summer 2022 and the 2022-23 school year.



2022-23 Grant Year



35 Grantees

Comparable to 21-22



102 Centers

Comparable to 21-22



9,809 Students Served

12% increase



325 Family Members Served

36% decrease

ON AVERAGE, 98 STUDENTS WERE SERVED BY EACH 21st CCLC

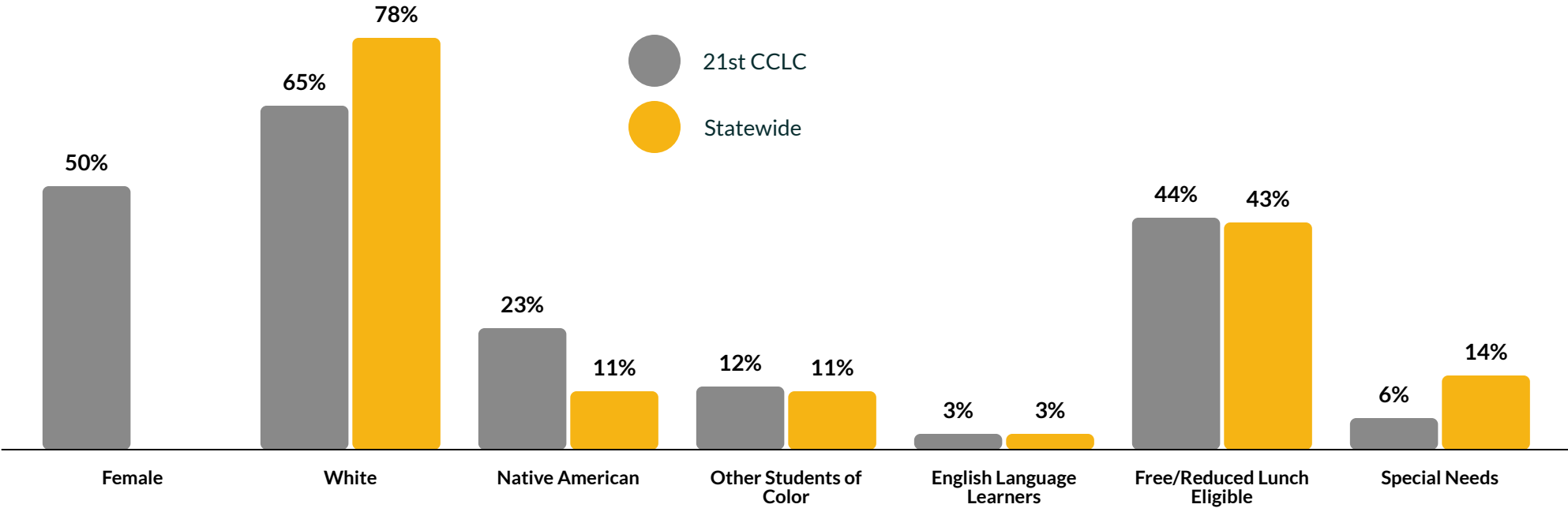
This is a 13% increase compared to last year (87 average served).

% of centers by size (# students served):
1-50 students (28%), 51-100 (30%), 101-200 (34%), 201+ (8%)

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

Montana 21st CCLC programs are serving a diverse student population who are in need of enriching learning opportunities during out-of-school time.

The 21st CCLC student population mirrors Montana's overall demographics with a predominantly White population of students (65%). However, it also serves a higher representation of Native American students (23% vs. 10% statewide). Approximately 44% of students are eligible for free/reduced lunch which is consistent with the statewide average. Improvement opportunities exist for serving more students with special needs and low-income students, especially considering that the latter are a focal group for 21st CCLC programs.

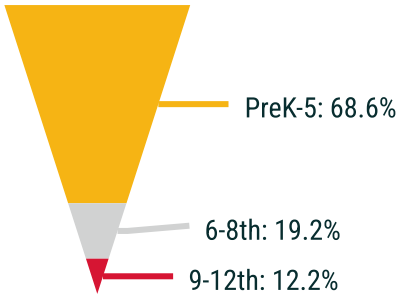


Elementary (grades PreK-5) make up the majority of total and regular attendees (>90 hours) while high school (grades 9-12) make up the least.

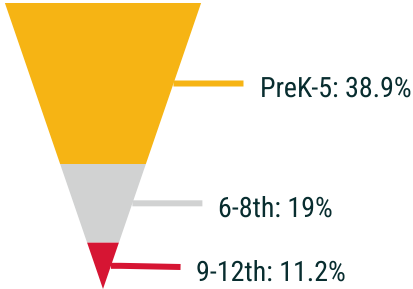
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Average # of Total Days Attended

TOTAL STUDENTS



STUDENTS ATTENDING 90+ HOURS



21st CCLC programs offered activities throughout the year that targeted physical, educational, and lifestyle enrichment for students.

Activity Category	2022-23 Percent	2021-22 Percent
Healthy and Active Lifestyle	27.1%	20.7%
Well-rounded Learning, including credit recovery or attainment	22.0%	23.7%
Academic Enrichment	17.2%	13.3%
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, including computer science	12.6%	17.2%
Literacy Education	9.6%	10.2%
Cultural Programs	4.2%	2.5%
Career Competencies and Career Readiness	2.7%	3.7%
Drug and Violence Prevention and Counseling	1.8%	2.9%
Parenting Skills and Family Literacy	0.9%	0.2%
Telecommunications and Technology Education	0.8%	0.2%
Social Emotional Learning	0.4%	1.7%
Assistance to Students who have been Truant, Suspended, or Expelled	0.3%	0.1%
Family Engagement	0.2%	1.6%
Expanded Library Service Hours	0.1%	0.1%
Math	0.1%	1.1%
Services for Individuals with Disabilities	0.1%	0.2%

The most frequent activities offered across all years (measured by the % of activities were offered) were: physical activity/healthy and active lifestyle; well-rounded learning which includes arts, music, and literacy; academic enrichment (including homework help); and STEM-related activities.



It's already amazing. I love it when I'm with everyone. It makes me happy and I enjoy everything we do here!

21st CCLC Student

11

centers (11%) offered parent or family programming; this represents a decrease as compared to last year (19% offered). Types of activities offered included:



- family social events
- activities that support youth in academics
- parenting or family management

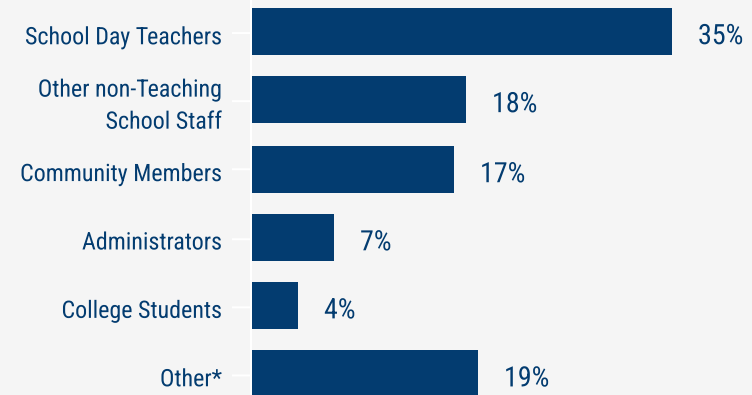
The majority of 21st CCLC centers were open during the school year, on average, for 2.5 hours after school per week for approximately 4 days per week .



21st CCLC programs were operated by 880 staff members, which is a decrease from the prior year (n= 1,331). Despite the lower staffing levels, the total number of centers operating increased from the prior year (101 vs 89). Centers have found it particularly difficult to hire and retain staff, a pattern that emerged following the pandemic.



Percentage of Staff by Category



*High school students, parents, subcontractors, not specified

PARTNERSHIPS

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



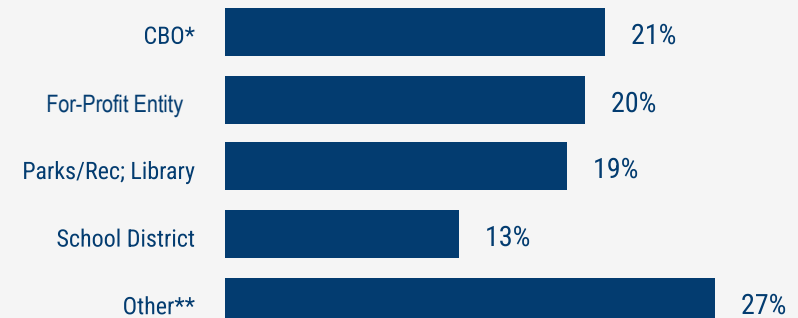
21% increase in total partnerships from last year to this year.

544 partners were reported with an average of 17 partners per grantee. This represents an increase as compared to the prior year (n=451). Centers were able to prioritize partnerships as COVID-19 restrictions were lifted and more resources became available.

*Community-Based Organization

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

Partners by Percentage



21st CCLC programs worked to improve the lives of students and families!

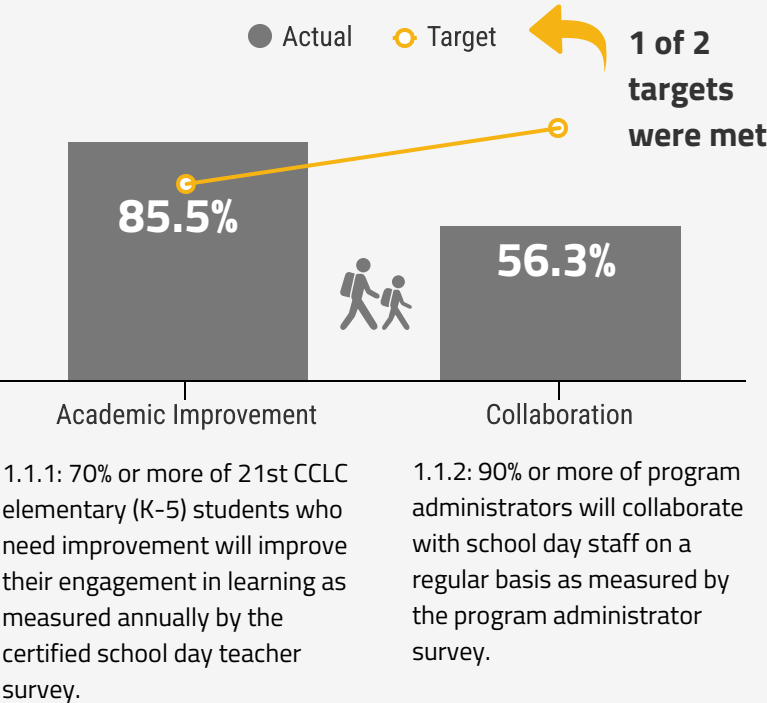
GOAL 1: 21st CCLC programs will show improvements in core academics.

OBJECTIVE 1.1:

Students will demonstrate proficiency in core academics.

Goal 1 is associated with improving academic performance. The goal of Objective 1.1.1 to improve learning engagement in 70% or more of K-5 students in 21st CCLC programs was met.

While the data indicates that most program administrators (56%) do communicate with school day staff, the goal of 90% outlined by Objective 1.1.2 is still not met.



STUDENT VOICES

"I love this program so much, I don't really want it to change. I learn from my program teacher, she is really nice!"

"I like the program the way it is. I've made a lot of friends, I look forward to coming, especially in the summer. I learn a lot and have so much fun."

"I love school so much, and I love the teachers here. I learn a lot. But I think we that we need to be more active as we learn, and do more group projects together. To strengthen our minds, muscles, and the ability to work together better!"

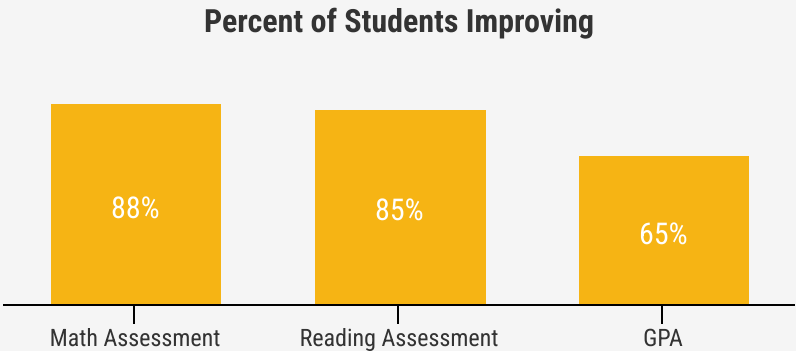
CAREGIVER FEEDBACK

"The club provides a safe place for students to get academic assistance, be social, and have meals."

We moved to Boulder last spring, just short of the school year but in time for the after-school program starting and it was great. Our kids were able to meet future classmates and teachers, get to see the area, and go on awesome field trips! It seemed like they knew half of the community before we the parents did. But it was great for keeping them educationally occupied with their peers throughout the duration of the program!"

Across all 21st CCLC students in grades 4-8 who were not proficient in reading and/or math in 2022, 85% + demonstrated improvements from Spring 2022 to 2023 as measured by state assessments.

Among 21st CCLC students in grades 7-8 and 10-12 with a prior-year unweighted GPA of less than 3.0 (N=321), results show that approximately 65% of students demonstrated maintenance or increases in their GPA.



96% of parents agreed that students benefit from participation in 21st CCLC programs.

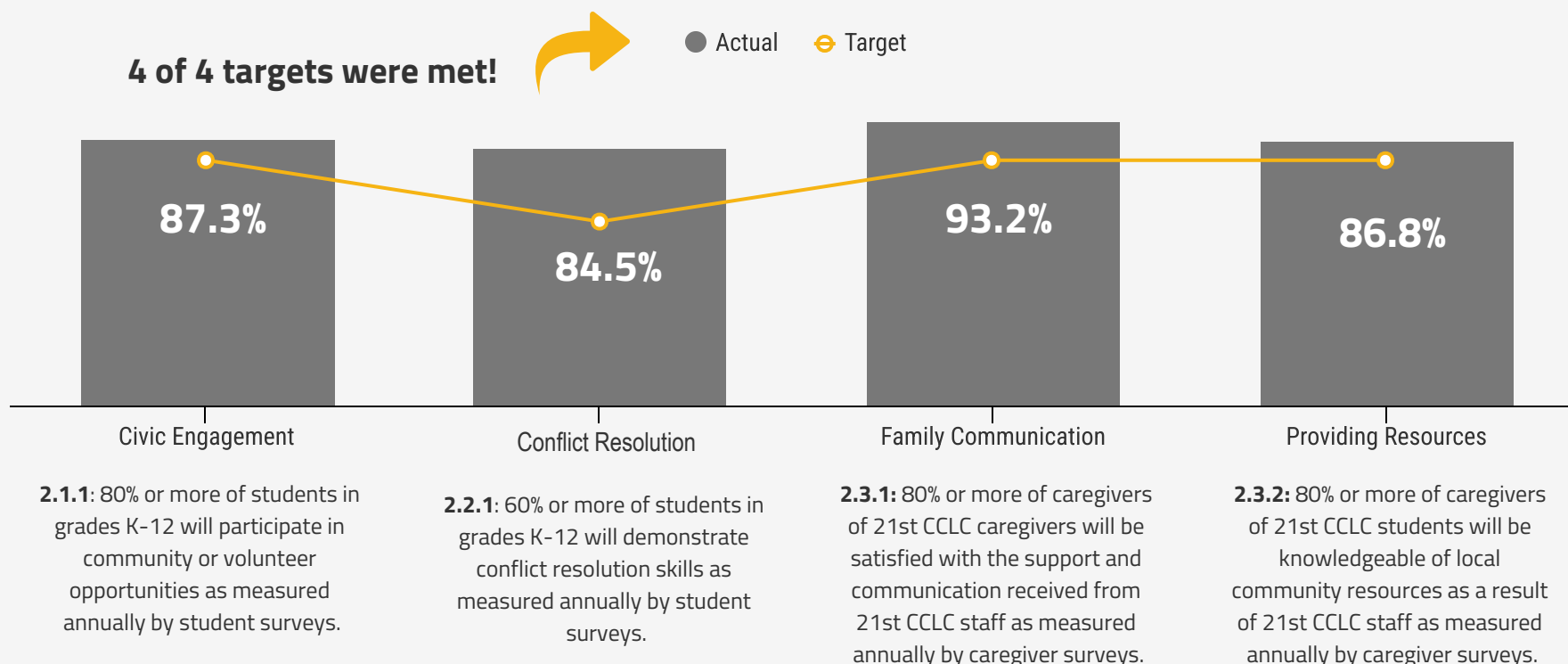
82% of students look forward to participating in their 21st CCLC program.

GOAL 2: 21st CCLC programs will work collaboratively with students and families to foster positive relationships and promote youth development.

Objective 2.1:
Students will demonstrate community & civic engagement.

Objective 2.2:
Students will demonstrate positive behaviors.

Objective 2.3:
Programs will offer engaging family activities that promote active engagement.



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

% STUDENT AGREEMENT

- 83% are open to others' opinions and ideas
- 80% know how they are feeling
- 80% work well with others
- 75% know how to handle conflict

75%

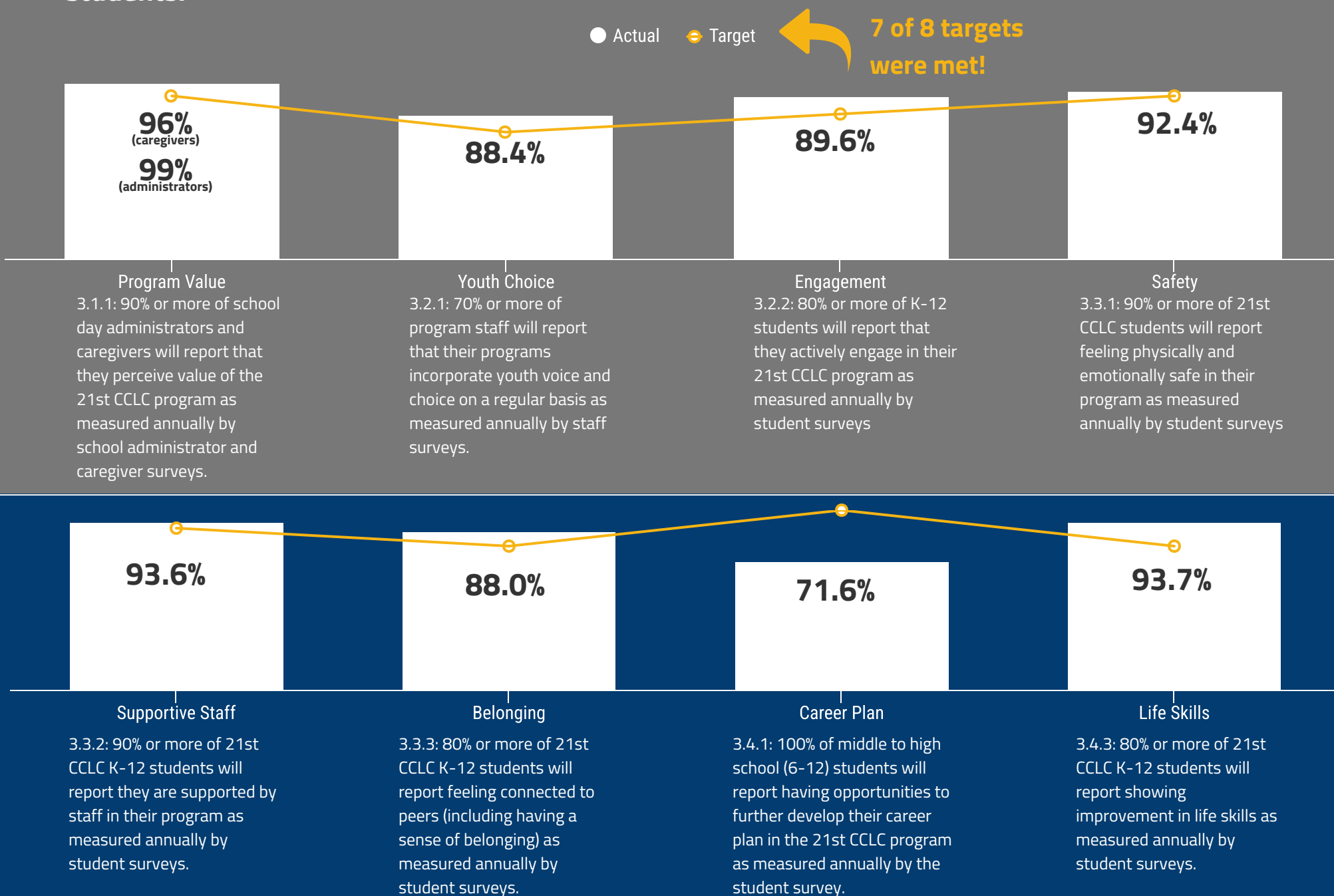


Among 21st CCLC students who had a school day attendance rate at or below 90% in the prior school year (N=1846), results show that approximately 75% of students improved their attendance during the 2022-23 school year!

"I love that we provide time for kids to be kids and have fun! They really enjoy coming to the afterschool program and it provides an awesome opportunity for students to practice prosocial leisure skills and build positive relationships with adults and peers outside of those they regularly interact with in the classroom."

21st CCLC Program Staff

GOAL 3: 21st CCLC programs will provide high-quality operations to promote active participation of students.



Results by Objectives: Comparing the 2021–22 and 2022-23 School Years

Comparisons of the 2022-23 results with those attained during the prior grant year show that with the exception of two indicators (1.1.2 and 3.4.1), all targets were met during both grant years. Moreover, gains were observed in half of the indicators as evident in the increased percentages compared to the previous year. These achievements are assessed through self-report measures, and demonstrate noteworthy gains in the areas of conflict resolution skills among K-12 students, increased community volunteering, and a stronger emphasis on youth voice and choice. As programs move forward, there's a collective effort to enhance the day-to-day collaboration between program administrators and staff, alongside a focus on expanding opportunities for 6th-12th graders to further refine and develop their career plans.

Measure (Indicator)	2022-23 Result	2021-22 Result
1.1.1: 70% or more of 21st CCLC elementary (K-5) students who need improvement will improve their engagement in learning as measured annually by the certified school day teacher survey.	85.5%	84.5%
1.1.2: 90% or more of program administrators will collaborate with school day staff on a regular basis as measured by the program administrator survey.	56.3%	69.0%
2.1.1: 80% or more of students in grades K-12 will participate in community or volunteer opportunities as measured annually by student surveys.	87.3%	80.7%
2.2.1: 60% or more of students in grades K-12 will demonstrate conflict resolution skills as measured annually by student surveys.	84.5%	62.5%
2.3.1: 80% or more of caregivers of 21st CCLC caregivers will be satisfied with the support and communication received from 21st CCLC staff as measured annually by caregiver surveys.	93.2%	95.6%
2.3.2: 80% or more of caregivers of 21st CCLC students will be knowledgeable of local community resources as a result of 21st CCLC staff as measured annually by caregiver surveys.	86.8%	89.3%

Measure (Indicator)	2022-23 Result	2021-22 Result
3.1.1: 90% or more of school day administrators and caregivers will report that they perceive value of the 21st CCLC program as measured annually by school administrator and caregiver surveys.	96.0% Caregivers 99.0% School Admin	97.0% Caregivers 100.0% School Admin
3.2.1: 70% or more of program staff will report that their programs incorporate youth voice and choice on a regular basis as measured annually by staff surveys.	88.4%	79.4%
3.2.2: 80% or more of K-12 students will report that they actively engage in their 21st CCLC program as measured annually by student surveys	89.6%	88.5%
3.3.1: 90% or more of 21st CCLC students will report feeling physically and emotionally safe in their program as measured annually by student surveys	92.4%	92.9%
3.3.2: 90% or more of 21st CCLC K-12 students will report they are supported by staff in their program as measured annually by student surveys.	93.6%	93.4%
3.3.3: 80% or more of 21st CCLC K-12 students will report feeling connected to peers (including having a sense of belonging) as measured annually by student surveys.	88.0%	88.4%
3.4.1: 100% of middle to high school (6-12) students will report having opportunities to further develop their career plan in the 21st CCLC program as measured annually by the student survey.	71.6%	69.6%
3.4.3: 80% or more of 21st CCLC K-12 students will report showing improvement in life skills as measured annually by student surveys.	93.7%	94.4%



Program Spotlight

Malta Kids Club and Harlem Public Schools

Malta Kids Club and Harlem Public Schools – A Winning Combination

Although the Malta Kids Club and the Harlem Public Schools are located 45 miles apart, both share a common thread – providing academic enrichment and well-rounded activities to underprivileged rural frontier Montana youth. Thanks to the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant, the programs have served 513 students over the past year with 81 of them attending more than 90 hours during the year. The Consortium programs have served students who are 53% female and 47% male, showing that activities being offered are appealing to both genders. 53% of the students served are listed as free/reduced lunch eligible, 11% are enrolled in special education, with 4% limited English Proficiency. The communities are still recovering from being hit hard by the Covid-19 Pandemic, yet the afterschool programs are beginning to flourish again.

Living in rural frontier Montana, students are not given the same opportunities as larger populations to learn job skills or careers. The Nita M. Lowey 21st CCLC Grant, gave Malta Kids Club students the opportunity to learn about a variety of careers over the past year. In June 2022, middle school students learned about Crime Scene Investigation careers through hands-on activities. CSI Investigation Station covered everything from fingerprinting to investigation mock “Clue” crime scenes. Students were thrilled to learn about blood splattering patterns to identify what type of weapon may have been used (red paint!). According to one of the students, “We did a lot of fun science experiments and learned about blood types and why only certain types of blood can be used for transfusions.” Overall the program had a positive impact on all students who attended, getting them excited about the possibility of a career in Crime Scene Investigation. Career Exploration is one of the programs Malta Kids Club would like to be able to expand in the upcoming years.

Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Learning grants have truly made a difference in the lives of students and families over the past five years in both the Malta and Harlem communities.



Next Steps

Throughout the 2022-23 grant year, Montana's 21st CCLC program administrators and staff displayed remarkable dedication, striving to guarantee that every young individual gains entry to educational and emotionally supportive programs, setting them on a path for future success. Identifying areas for growth within the 21st CCLC grant is crucial to ensure the program's alignment with the evolving needs of the students and staff. Below are suggestions for next steps in improving the 21st CCLC grant.



Staff Recruitment and Retention

For centers that are looking to recruit staff, the [National Education Association](#) suggests the following strategies to recruit and retain personnel:

- Increased salary and benefits
- Offering mental health supports
- Place a focus on educator voice and autonomy
- Develop career ladders
- Offer inclusive supportive workspaces

The Afterschool Alliance also has a [Staff Recruitment Toolkit](#) that contains helpful tips and resources.



Career Planning Opportunities

After-school programs play a pivotal role in preparing students for the workforce of the future. Therefore, it's essential to provide students with the freedom, adaptability, and time to explore their interests.

- [Afterschool Alliance – Career Pathways Toolkit](#)
- [NC CAP – Future Pathways Toolkit](#)
- [JFF – Career and College Exploration Experiences: Planning for Success](#)



Increasing Family Engagement

Caregivers play an important role in facilitating relationships between students, school day staff, and 21st CCLC program staff.

- Communicate with family members to build trusting relationships. Consistent and constructive communication with families is important for successful family engagement.
- Cultivating connections with families is vital for fostering equitable and culturally sensitive programs.
- Establish connections between families, program personnel, educational institutions, and local community organizations.



Supporting Student Social-Emotional-Behavioral Needs

Incorporating social-emotional learning has been critical for 21st CCLC programs. However, staying updated with evolving literature is crucial to ensure centers align with the latest evidence-based practices. Below are resources that include information on the best methods for social-emotional learning.

- [Harvard GSE – Navigating SEL for Teens](#)
- [Wallace Foundation – Navigating SEL from the Inside Out](#)
- [Transforming Education – SEL Toolkit](#)
- [National Education Association – Other Resources for SEL and Student Mental Health](#)



Partnerships

The U.S. Department of Education's guidance for the 21st CCLC program strongly encourage grantees to form partnerships with other organizations or agencies within the community.

- [Expanding Minds – The Value of Partnerships in 21st CCLC](#)
- [You for Youth – Strategic Partnerships \(and other valuable resources\)](#)
- [Afterschool Alliance – School and Community Partnerships](#)



School Communication and Collaboration

Effective communication and collaboration within schools serve as cornerstones for fostering robust family engagement, which is pivotal for student success.

- [SEDL – Building Supportive Relationships in Afterschool](#)
- [DOE – Creating Holistic Partnerships Between School and Afterschool](#)