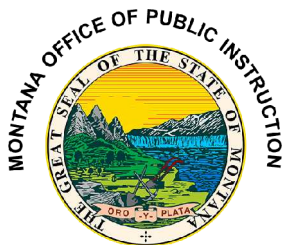


# Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Montana State Evaluation Report 2023-24



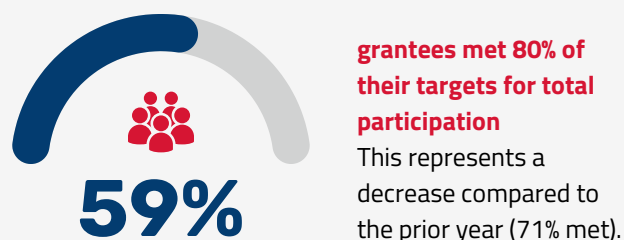
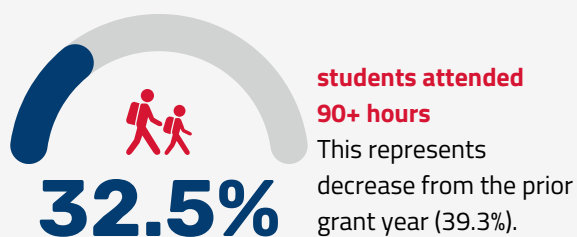
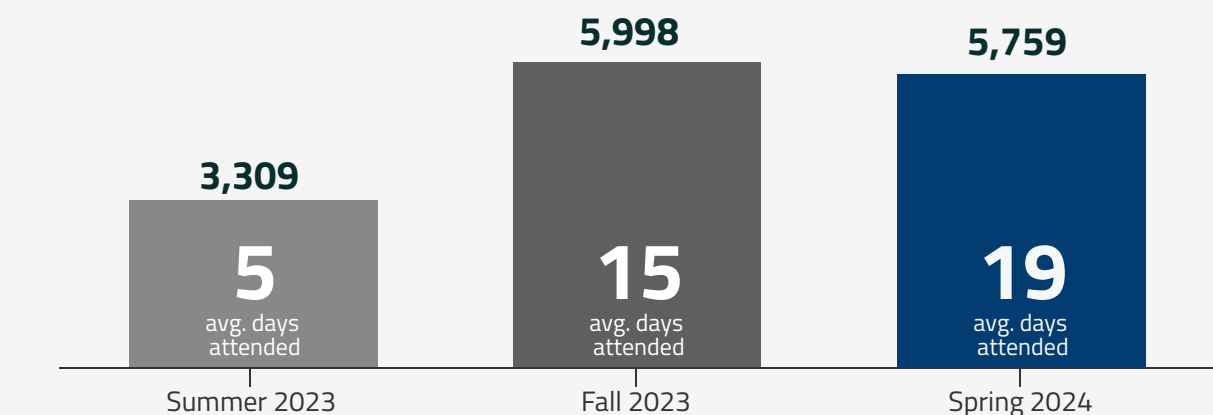
Report Prepared by  
Miriam Resendez  
State Evaluator  
[www.jemrllc.com](http://www.jemrllc.com)  
(800) 674-9676

# 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 8,688 students attended 21st CCLC programs during summer 2023 and the 2023-24 school year.**



## 2023-24 Grant Year



**34 Grantees**



**89 Centers**



**8,688 Students Served**



**4,185 Family Members Served**

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

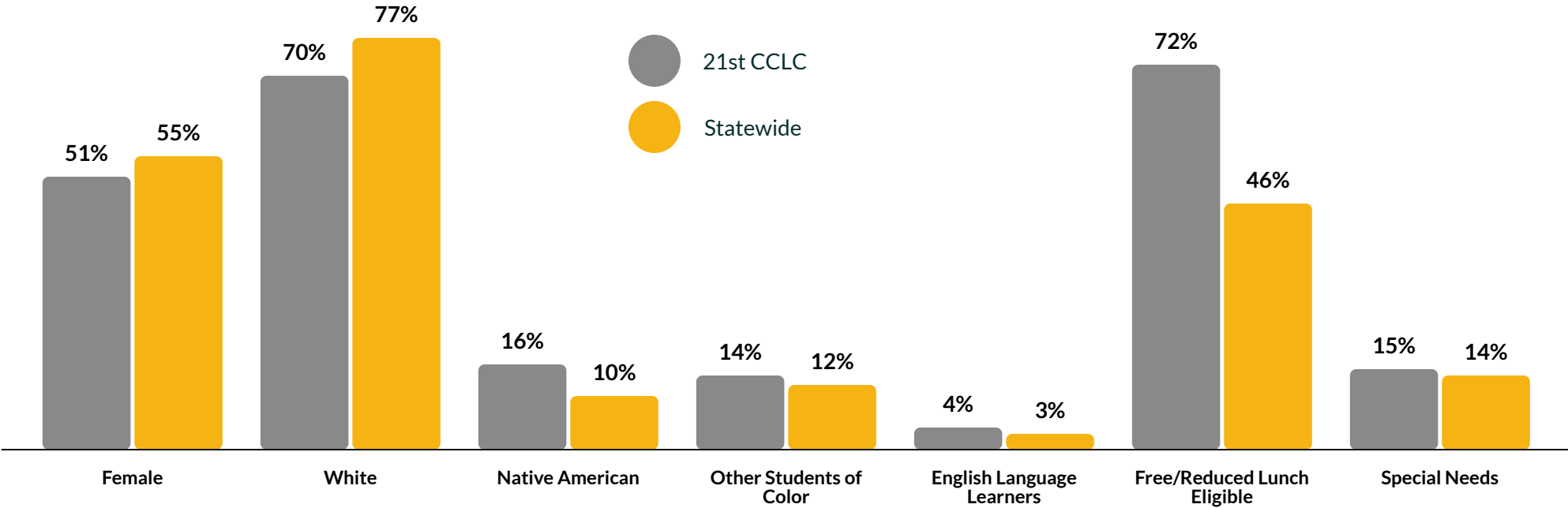
This was maintained from the previous year (98 average served).

% of centers by size (# students served):  
1-50 students (27%), 51-100 (33%), 101-200 (35%), 201+ (6%)

% of centers by region: Southwestern (36%), Western (26%), North Central (19%), Central (11%), and Eastern (8%)

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

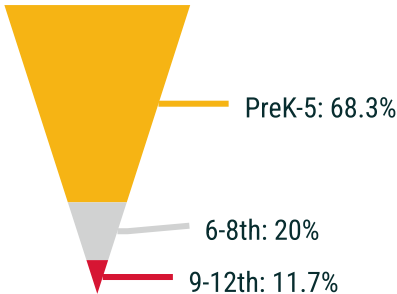
The demographic composition of the 21st CCLC participating students aligns with the overall state population, the majority identifying as White. However, there is a significant percentage difference between the statewide (77%) and the 21st CCLC (70%) populations of White students, which is offset by a higher representation of Native American students (10% statewide vs 16% 21st CCLC). Students receiving free and reduced lunch make up 72% of the 21st CCLC population (46% statewide) which is a positive high given that low-income students are a focal group.



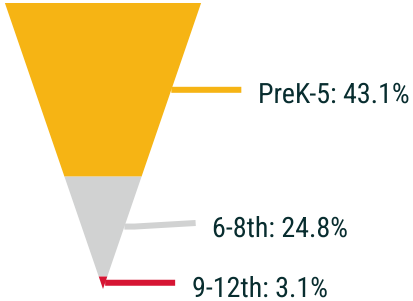
Elementary (grades PreK-5) make up the largest proportion of total and regular attendees (>90 hours) while high school (grades 9-12) make up the least.

**34** 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	2023-24 Percent
Healthy and Active Lifestyle	24%
Well-rounded Learning, including credit recovery or attainment	22%
Academic Enrichment	19%
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, including computer science	17%
Literacy Education	8%
Career Competencies and Career Readiness	5%
Cultural Programs	5%
Drug and Violence Prevention and Counseling	0.6%
Telecommunications and Technology Education	0.3%
Expanded Library Service Hours	0.0%*

\*Offered by only 1 site

**58** centers (65%) offered parent or family programming; this represents a big increase as compared to last year (11% offered). Types of activities offered included:

The most frequent activities offered across this year (measured by the % of activities were offered) were: Healthy and Active Lifestyle, Well-rounded Education Activities, Academic Enrichment (including homework help), STEM Activities, and Literacy Education.



The opportunities it has given me through robotics is amazing and more people should get involved.

21st CCLC Student



- family movie nights
- health and wellness activities
- arts and cultural events
- digital literacy workshops



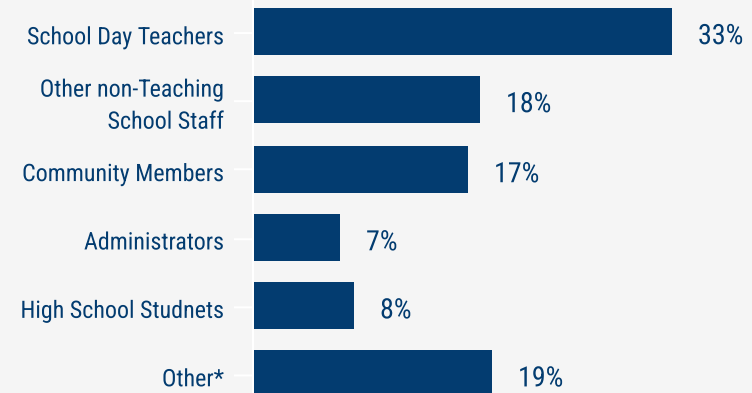
# The majority of 21st CCLC centers were open during the school year, on average, for 12 hours after school per week for approximately 5 days per week .



21st CCLC programs were operated by 1070 staff members, which is an increase from the prior year (n= 880). The total number of centers operating stayed the same from the prior year (89). Centers have continuously worked to overcome the challenge to hire and retain staff, a pattern that emerged following the pandemic.



## Percentage of Staff by Category



\*College 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.



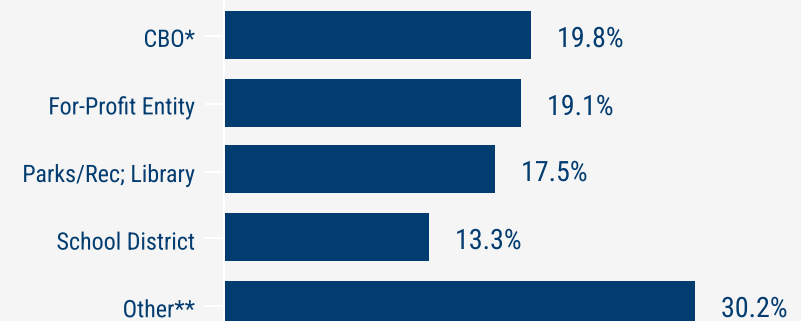
**12** average # of partners per grantee

383 partners were reported with a range of 1-46 partners per grantee. This represents an decrease as compared to the prior year (n=544). CBOs, for-profit entities, local government agencies, and public schools made up the majority of partnerships.

\*Community-Based Organization

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

## Partners by Percentage



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

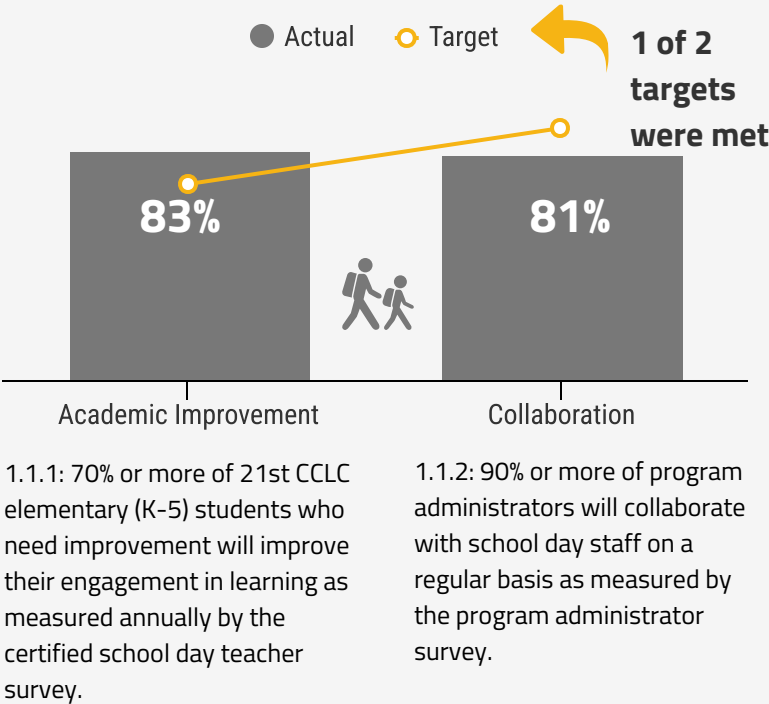
**GOAL 1:** 21st CCLC programs will show improvements in core academics.

## OBJECTIVE 1.1:

### Students will demonstrate proficiency in core academics.

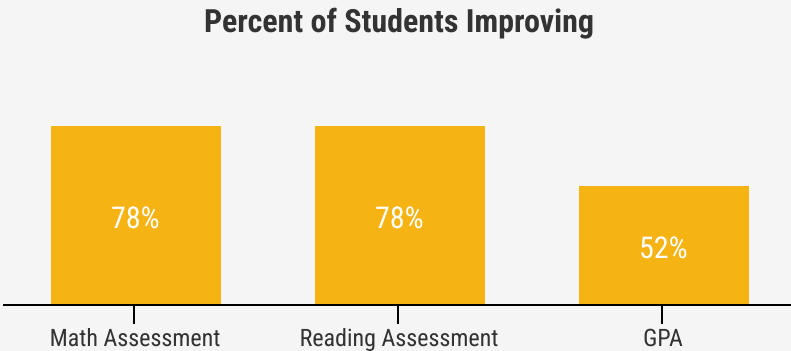
Goal 1 is associated with improving academic performance. The goal of Objective 1.1.1 to improve learning engagement in 70% or more of K-5 students in 21st CCLC programs was met.

While the data indicates that most program administrators (81%) do communicate with school day staff, the goal of 90% outlined by Objective 1.1.2 is still not met.



Across all 21st CCLC students in grades 4-8 who were not proficient in reading and/or math in 2023, 78% demonstrated improvements from Spring 2023 to 2024 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=261), results show that approximately 52% of students demonstrated maintenance or increases in their GPA.



## STUDENT VOICES

*"It's super fun and I get to hang out with my friends. Also, I get to explore my interests and hobbies. I wish there were more stuff to do. Like exploring nature arts and crafts and science or math and PE."*

*"You could improve the after-school program by having more activities. If you have no work there aren't many things to do for the older kids. It is mostly stuff for the younger kids."*

## CAREGIVER FEEDBACK

*"My daughter has developed wonderful social skills and has many, many, friends! She enjoys the fun activities and is given the opportunity to expand her imagination and artistic skills."*

*"Before participating in this program, my child was struggling with mental health issues and was not engaging with others in a positive way. The interactions they had with other children and staff really brought them out of their shell. I saw a huge change in their outlook on life and behavior. I am so grateful for the support the staff provided and the opportunities for growth. This program is amazing, and I hope it continues for a long time."*

**100%** of parents agreed that students benefit from participation in 21st CCLC programs.

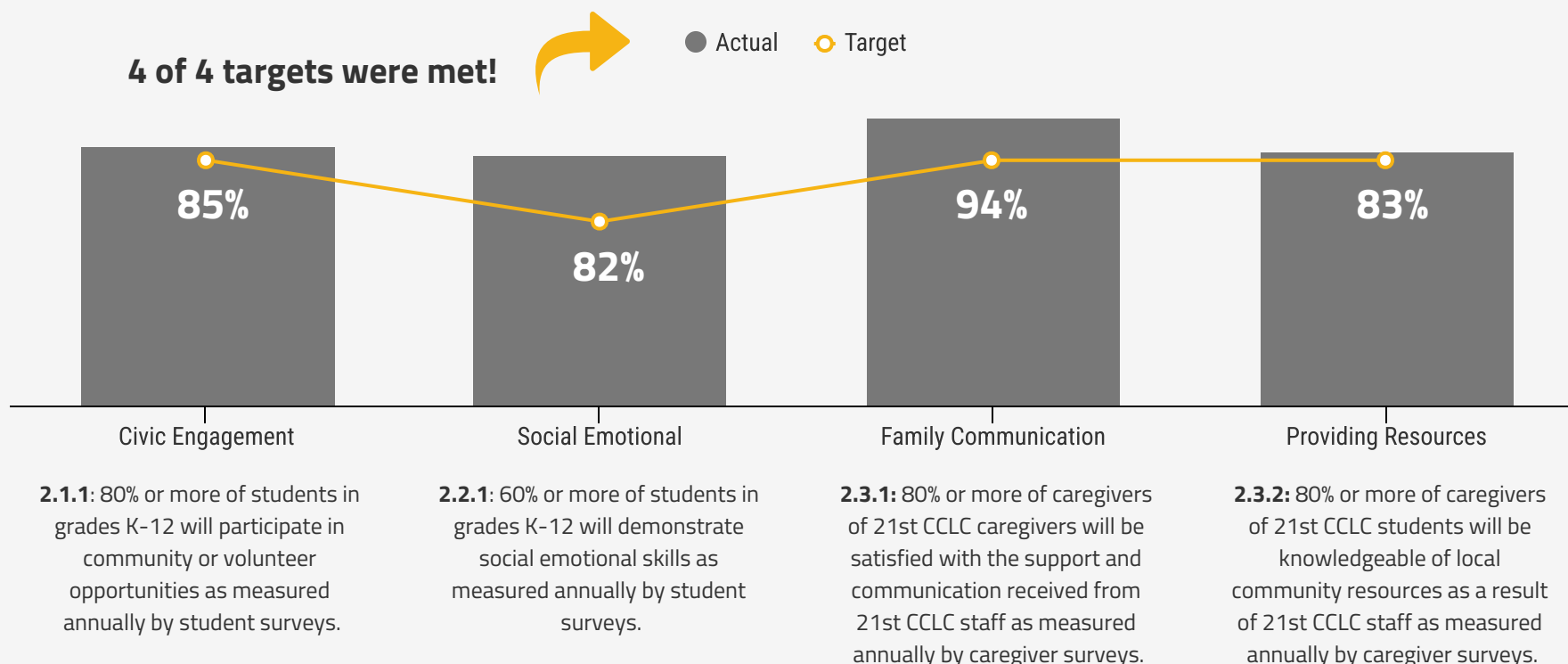
**86%** of students look forward to participating in their 21st CCLC program.

## 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

- 81% are open to others' opinions and ideas
- 87% know how they are feeling
- 89% work well with others
- 87% know how to handle conflict

**67%**

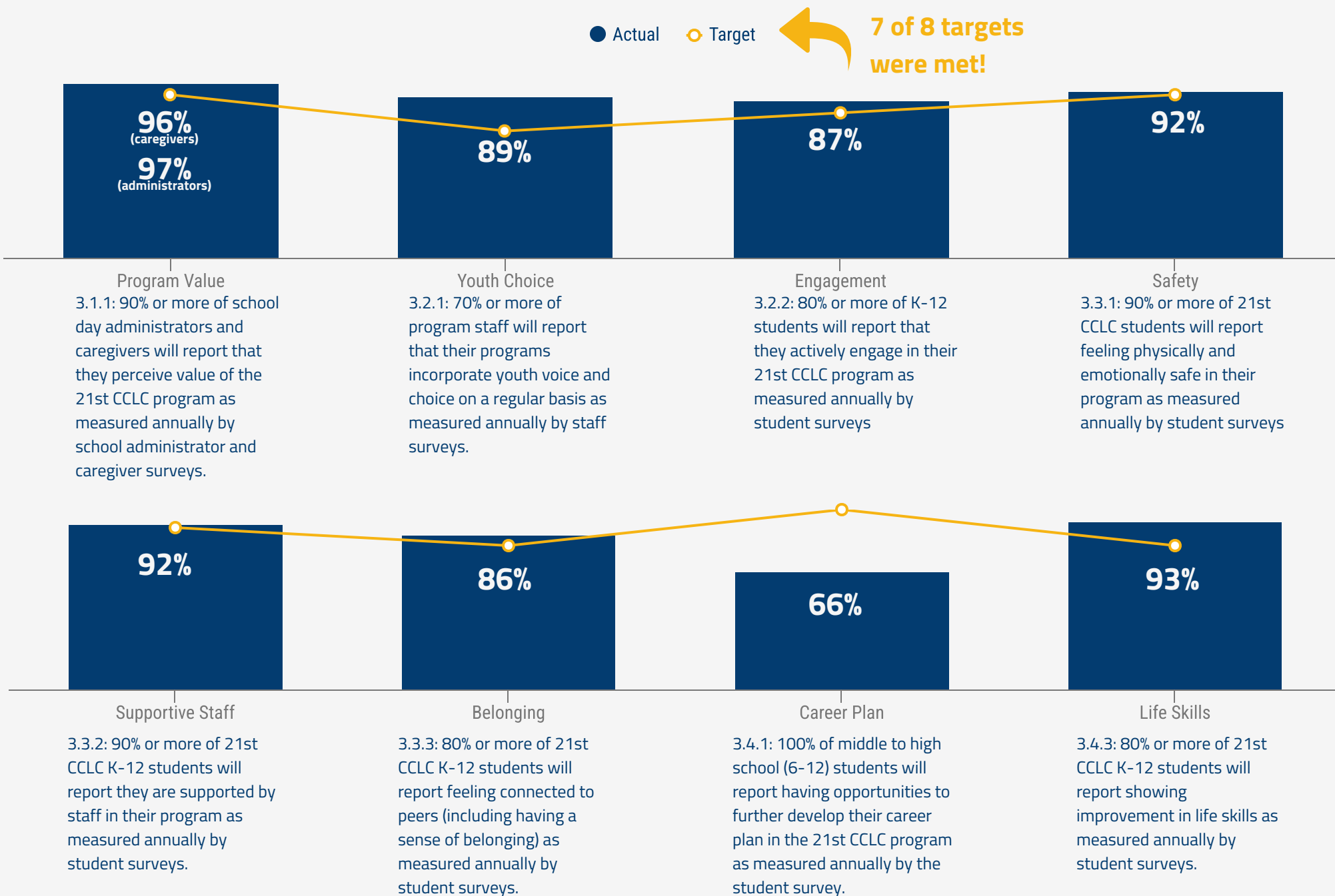


Among 21st CCLC students who had a school day attendance rate at or below 90% in the prior school year (N=1639), results show that approximately 67% of students improved their attendance during the 2023-24 school year!

*"This year's programming was geared towards improving students' emotional and social skills, as well as critical thinking and problem solving. Students were allowed to effectively and healthily express negative emotions, and we taught how to channel negative emotion into positive action."*

—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 2023–24 and 2022-23 School Years

Comparisons of the 2023-24 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 three 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 school day staff collaboration, caregiver satisfaction with communication, 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 school staff, alongside a focus on effective communication with caregivers.

Measure (Indicator)	23-24 Result	22-23 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.	83%	85.5%
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.	81%	56.3%
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.	85%	87.3%
2.2.1: 60% or more of students in grades K-12 will demonstrate conflict resolution skills as measured annually by student surveys.	82%	84.5%
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.	94%	93.2%
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.	83%	86.8%

Measure (Indicator)	23-24 Result	22-23 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% Caregivers 97% School Admin	96.0% Caregivers 99.0% 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.	89%	88.4%
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	87%	89.6%
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%	92.4%
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.	92%	93.6%
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.	86%	88.0%
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.	66%	71.6%
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%	93.7%

# Program Spotlight

## MAPS Media Institute

*"I came to MAPS because I had nowhere else to go to learn film. From day one, I was treated like my thoughts and opinions really matter."*



### MAPS MEDIA INSTITUTE • 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

On behalf of the MAPS Board of Directors and our incredible team, thank you for making 2024 another extraordinary year. Whether you partnered with us, joined our programs, supported us financially, or championed our mission, your contributions have made all the difference. Your generosity and trust has helped us keep all of our programs completely free of charge, ensuring accessibility for every young person we serve.

In 2024, we expanded our year-round programs in Ravalli and Lewis & Clark Counties and deepened our educational outreach through MAPS Media Lab projects across Montana. A key milestone was opening our third year-round program, serving youth and families in the Fort Belknap Indian Community.

To see these projects in action, we invite you to watch our 2024 Highlight Reel, a 6-minute video produced by MAPS-Ravalli youth filmmakers at [mapsmediainstitute.com](https://mapsmediainstitute.com).

Looking ahead to 2025, we're committed to expanding media arts education opportunities across Montana. Thank you for supporting our 20-year journey of empowering and inspiring the next generation!

### NUMBERS SERVED

Wishing you a peaceful close to this year and a creative, productive 2025!

With gratitude, Clare Ann Harff, MAPS Executive Director

YOUTH PARTICIPANTS  
**302**

ADULT FAMILY MEMBERS  
**287**

ONLINE PARTICIPANTS  
**197**

AVG AFTERSCHOOL INSTRUCTION HOURS  
**128**

AVG MEDIA LAB INSTRUCTION HOURS  
**50**

ARTISTS INVOLVED  
**17**

### NEW YEAR-ROUND PROGRAM: FORT BELKNAP INDIAN COMMUNITY

**Multi-Year Funding:** Secured five-year federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant with endorsement from Tribal Council, three school districts, and cultural leaders

**MAPS Fort Belknap Studio:** Established dedicated media arts facility with iMac/iPad lab, sound and film studio, and community gathering space

**Youth Programming:** Launched year-round out-of-school time program empowering youth through media arts while preserving cultural heritage



**Fort Belknap Water Resources Department:** Created award-winning video series on tribal water rights and conservation

**Cultural Identity Project:** Developed yearlong documentary film class exploring the impact of Indian Boarding Schools in collaboration with Nakoda elder Donovan Archambault Sr.

**Community Partnerships:** Strengthened relationships with Tribal Council, Tribal agencies, cultural leaders, and local school districts



1

### LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY PROGRAM

**Out-of-School Time Program:** Delivered 32 weeks of afterschool programming and a 3-week summer session to youth across Helena and East Helena

**Neighborhood Mural Project:** MAPS students designed and painted a community mural to beautify our Helena neighborhood

**Queen City Bike Kitchen:** Produced a promotional PSA to highlight National Bike Month and sustainable transportation



### RAVALLI COUNTY PROGRAM

**Out-of-School Time Program:** Delivered 32-week afterschool and

5-week summer programs serving youth from five Bitterroot Valley districts and the homeschool community

**Bitterroot Water Partnership Collaboration:** Facilitated a 14-week narrative photography class, culminating in a public exhibition that showcased community members' connections to river conservation



### MAPS MEDIA LAB

**Fort Belknap Indian Community Water Resource Department:** Worked with tribal

Knowledge Keepers, high school youth, and Aaniiih Nakoda College students to create an eight-part Water Education Video Series documenting community water rights, infrastructure challenges, and cultural preservation through interviews with tribal elders, ranchers, and leaders

**Blackfeet Community College:** Trained college students in documentary filmmaking while capturing the historic International Blackfoot Research Conference, preserving vital cultural and academic presentations

**Billings School District Indigenous Education Department:** Funded by the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council to create "Walking Between Two Worlds," a powerful documentary where urban Native Indigenous youth explored cultural identity through a weeklong film class, Knowledge Carrier interviews, and storytelling workshops

**STOKE:** Facilitated a film workshop with Townsend youth to create a promotional video showcasing this rural nonprofit



### CLIENT PROGRAM

**Montana Office of Public Instruction:**

Worked with youth in documenting 21st Century Community Learning Center programs across Boulder, Lewistown, and Rocky Boy, creating four films promoting the importance of out-of-school programming through a yearlong video project



2

# Next Steps

The 2023-24 grant year has shown great success for Montana's communities. Dedicated 21st CCLC program administrators and staff worked diligently to provide each and every student with top notch programming aimed at creating student opportunities for mental, academic, social, and emotional developmental. As part of 21st CCLC grant sustainability it's crucial to identify areas for growth and to ensure that the program is aligned to the evolving needs of the students and staff supported by the grant. The following are suggestions for next steps in improving the 21st CCLC grant.



## Staff Training & Professional Development

Professional development for after school educators should focus on the following areas for improvement:

1. Providing engaging programming for 6-12th grade participants and increasing their opportunities for career planning;
2. Building student and family engagement; and
3. Strengthening communication and collaboration with school day educators, other 21st CCLC staff, students, and their families.

The Afterschool Alliance also has a [Staff Professional Development & Trainings Toolkit](#) that contains helpful resources and online training opportunities.



## Career Planning Opportunities

After-school programs play a pivotal role in improving the academic outcomes for students in grades 6-12. Therefore, it's essential to provide students with the freedom, adaptability, and time to explore their interests. It is recommended that centers consider utilizing the following resources:

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



## Increasing Student & Family Engagement

Centers, and the activities they offer, must be built on the continued momentum of engaging programming that captures student interest and includes opportunities for family engagement by implementing the following:

- Increased programming for exploration and student choice.
- Variety of programming to meet a variety of student needs.
- Obtain feedback from families on events they would enjoy, day/time preferences, and barriers to participation.
- Tailor programs to address specific family needs.
- Employ communication log to track interactions with family.



## School Communication & Collaboration

Effective communication and collaboration within schools serve as cornerstones for fostering a learning environment that supports student academic and behavioral success. Key recommendations for collaboration include:

- Foster collaboration through shared planning
- Build school support for afterschool programs being aware
- Cultivate informal connections and trust
- Address differing goals with a holistic approach