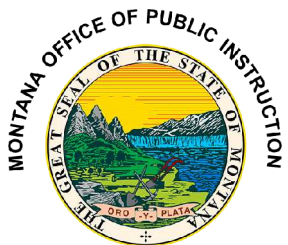


# Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Montana State Evaluation Report 2024-25



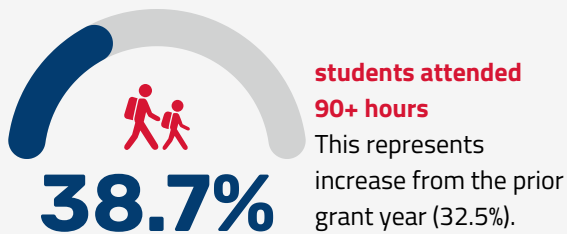
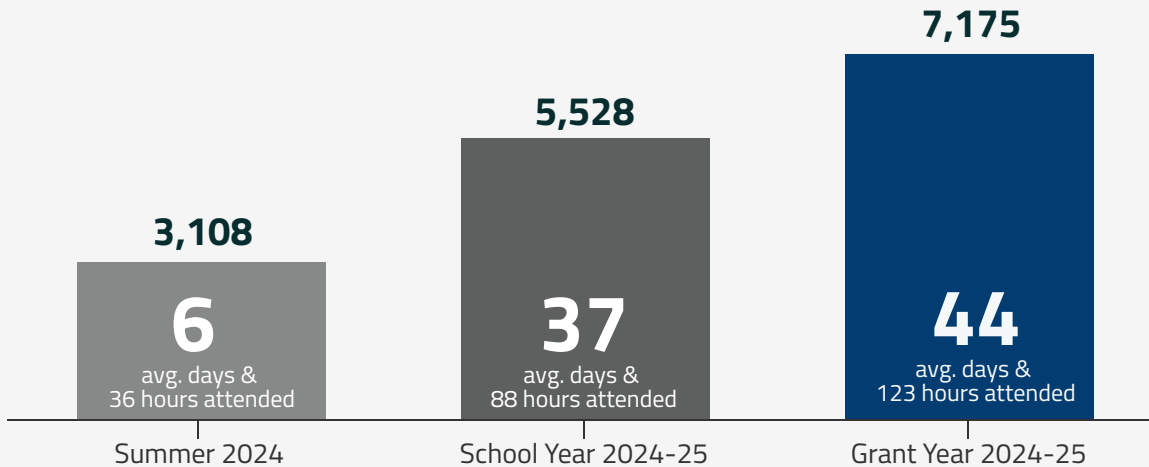
Report Prepared by  
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# 21st CCLC continued to provide essential support to students and families across Montana!

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 well-being.

Students that attend their district's 21st CCLC program often come from underserved and underrepresented populations. It is crucial that high-quality afterschool activities 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 7,175 students attended 21st CCLC programs during summer 2024 and the 2024-25 school year.**



## 2024-25 Grant Year



**34 Grantees**

Same as 2023-24. 22 grantees in Year 2 and 12 in Year 1 of the grant



**80 Centers**

vs. 89 centers in 2023-24



**7175 Students Served**

vs. 8,688 in 2023-24  
NOTE: There were also fewer centers and 12 new grantees.



**4,415 Family Members Served\***

vs. 4,185 in 2023-24

\*May include duplicates

## ON AVERAGE, 86 STUDENTS WERE SERVED BY 21st CCLC SITES

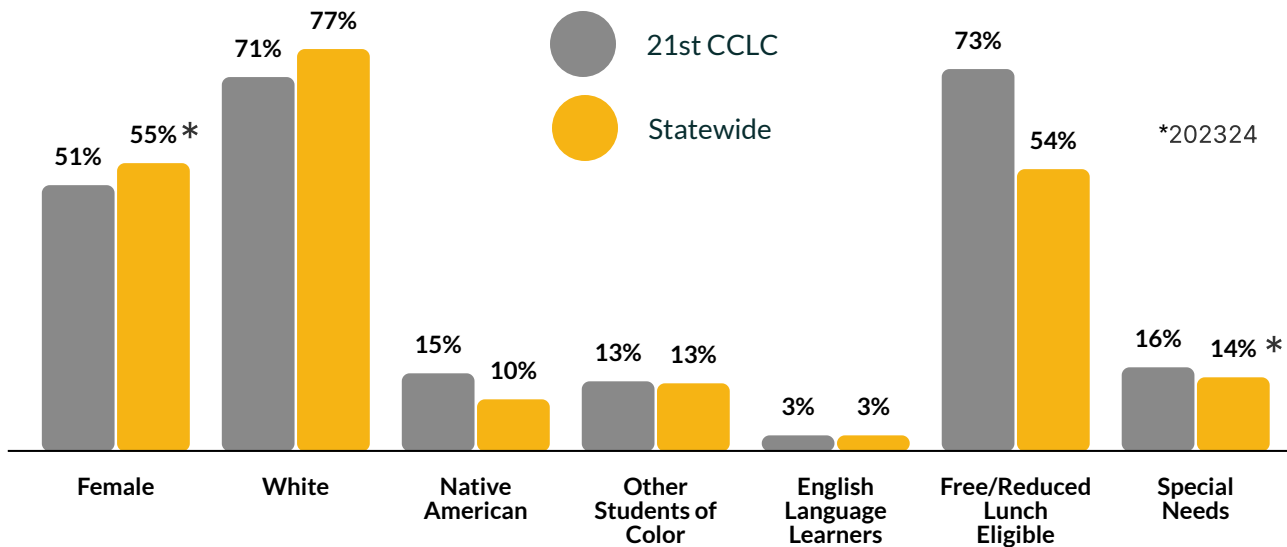
This was a decrease from the previous year (98 average served).

% of centers by size (# students served):  
1-50 students (45%), 51-100 (21%), 101-200 (29%), 201+ (5%)

% of centers by region: Southwestern (31%), Western (25%), North Central (25%), Central (13%), and Eastern (6%)

# 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 (76.6%) and the 21st CCLC (71.5%) populations of White students, which is offset by a higher representation of Native American students (10% statewide vs 15% 21st CCLC). Students receiving free or reduced lunch account for 73% of the 21st CCLC population (54% statewide), a positive figure given that low-income students are a focus group.



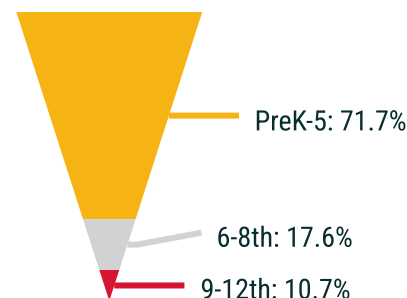
Rocky Boy 21st CCLC Students



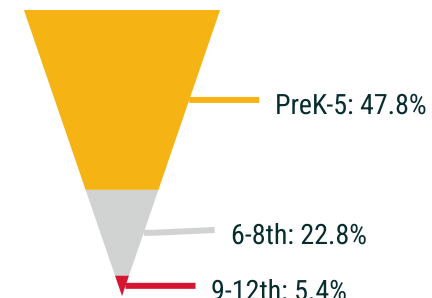
Elementary (grades PreK-5) make up the largest proportion of total attendees. Almost half of elementary students attended 90+ hours, compared to only 23% of middle school and 5% of high school students.

**44** Average # of Total Days Attended

## TOTAL STUDENTS



## % OF STUDENTS ATTENDING 90+ HOURS WITHIN EACH GRADE SPAN





4th Annual Family Dinner, Talent Show and Art Show at Big Timber

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

Activity Category	Summer 2024	2024-25 Percent	2023-24 Percent
Healthy and Active Lifestyle	31%	26%	24%
Academic Enrichment	18%	20%	19%
Well-rounded Learning, including credit recovery or attainment	23%	19%	22%
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, including computer science	13%	15%	17%
Literacy Education	7%	8%	8%
Career Competencies and Career Readiness	1%	4%	5%
Cultural Programs	2%	4%	5%
Telecommunications and Technology Education	2%	3%	0.3%
Drug and Violence Prevention and Counseling	3%	1%	0.6%
Expanded Library Service Hours	0%	1%	0.0%*

\*Offered by only 1 site



”It’s taught me a lot about the art industry and communicating/operating within and around it, and collaborating with other people.”

21st CCLC Student

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



**67** centers (84%) offered a total of 216 parent or family events (30 in summer and 186 during the school year). This is an increase from last year when 65% of sites offered these activities. Top themes in family offerings included:



- Showcasing student work and achievements - eg. Cheer Club performance, family art shows
- Community building and social connection - eg. Meet and Greet, community gatherings
- Academic engagement and family learning - eg. reading fluency nights, math game nights, family STEM nights.
- Support services and resource distribution - eg. free school supply and hygiene kits, Thanksgiving basket raffles

# The majority of 21st CCLC centers were open during the school year, on average, for 16 hours after school per week for approximately 4 days per week .

21st CCLC programs were operated by 994 staff members, which is similar to the prior year (n= 1080). Centers have continuously worked to overcome the challenge to hire and retain staff. To address these challenges, OPI has identified staff development as a top priority area and is supporting 21st CCLC staff with sharing of training opportunities via weekly digital newsletters, conducting site visits at least twice during the 5 year cycle, and offering training opportunities during biannual regional meetings and summer conferences.



Great Falls Spring 2025 Regional Meeting



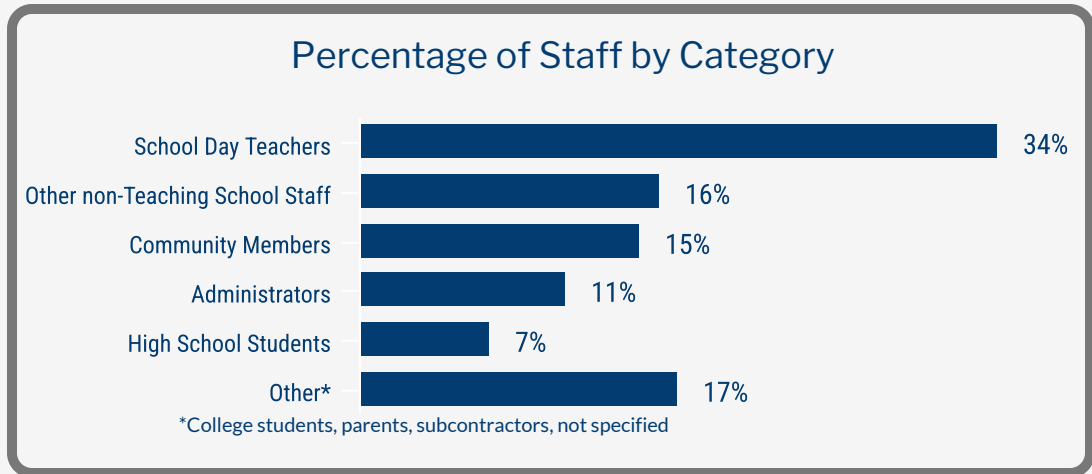
of staff were paid, the remaining 6% were volunteers



of staff were school/district personnel, including teachers, non-teaching school staff and admin



of staff were community members, college students, parents, or sub contractors



## PARTNERSHIPS

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

**51%**  
provided programming



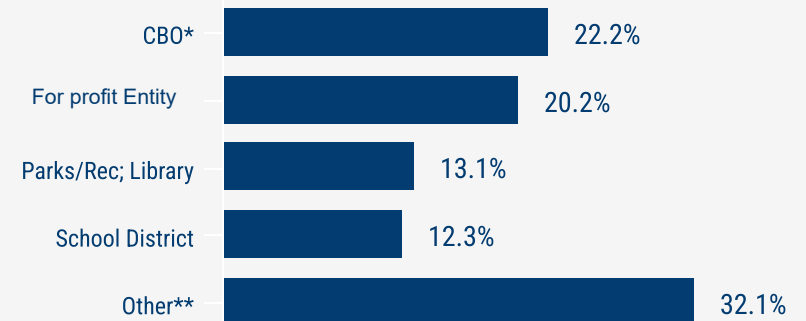
**21%**  
provided goods

**12** average # of partners per grantee

266 partners were reported with a range of 1-37 partners per grantee. This represents a decrease as compared to the prior year (n=388). CBOs, for-profit entities, local government agencies, and public schools made up the majority of partnerships.

\*Community-Based Organization  
\*\*Faith-based, Health-based, College/University, not specified

### Partners by Percentage



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

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

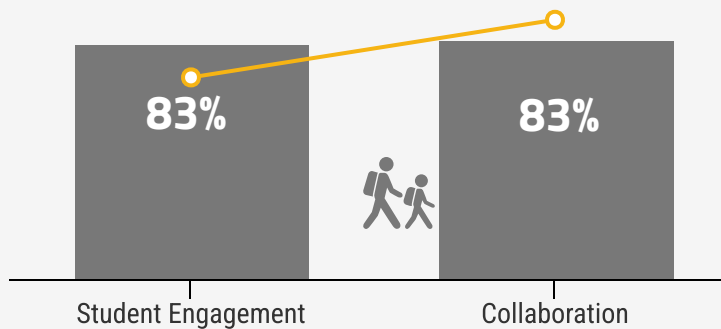
## OBJECTIVE 1.1: Students will demonstrate proficiency in core academics.

Goal 1 is associated with improving academic performance. This goal is measured by six objectives measuring student engagement, collaboration between program and school day staff, and several academic-related outcomes that compares students' prior year performance to the current year (state assessment performance, GPA, and school attendance rates).

Results show that most of the academic objectives were met.

5 of 6 targets were met!

● Actual ○ Target



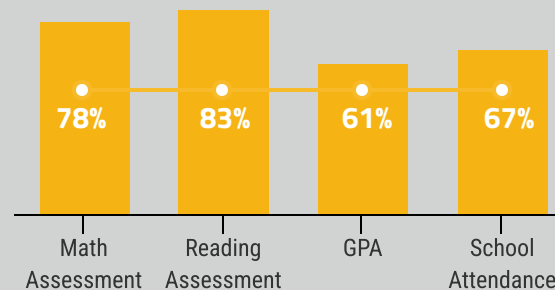
1.1.1: 70% or more of 21st CCLC elementary (K-5) students who need improvement will improve their engagement in learning as measured annually by the certified school day teacher survey.

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.

## Performance on Federal (GPRA) Measures

Across all 21st CCLC students in grades 4-8 who were not proficient in reading and/or math in 2024, 78% demonstrated proficiency in math and 83% in reading in Spring 2025 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=227), results show that approximately 61% of students demonstrated maintenance or increases in their GPA. 67% of students who had an attendance rate less than 90% during the prior year also demonstrated an increase in school year attendance (n=867).



## STUDENT VOICES

"Thank you for letting me and my friends be ourselves even if we're weird or not. And thank you for the good food and always feeding us."

"I love it here and I need this to be part of my life."

"Since winter, this has been my place after school. Everyone here is real kind. I got my grade up in math thanks to [staff]'s tutoring, and in English because of [staff]'s help. I've learned a lot, and it's just a really good vibe here."

## CAREGIVER FEEDBACK

"Allowing my husband and myself to work while knowing she is in a safe environment along with doing lots of different crafts and activities that my daughter enjoys."

"My girls come home with a new story every day, they love the involvement and it's a great end to their school day."

"My little one loves going here. He has trouble speaking sometimes and they offered him a speech teacher, I just love that. Thank you for doing that."

**99%** of parents agreed that the 21st CCLC program supports their family and would recommend their program.

**89%** 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.

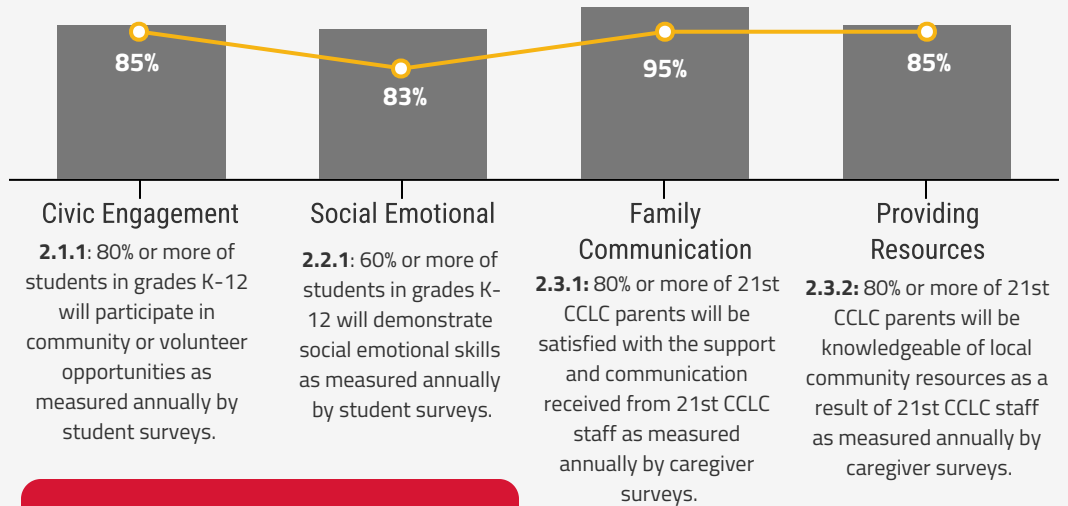
**Objective 2.3:**  
Programs will offer engaging family activities that promote active engagement.



Cowboy Academy Family Safety Night at Meadowlark Elementary

**5 of 5 targets were met!**

● Actual ○ Target



*“Our year had success in student retention. Our attendance was great throughout the year and we had new students registering on a regular basis. Our program was successful because we allowed our students to help plan our activities, so they were always excited to participate.”*

—21st CCLC Program Administrator

**80%**



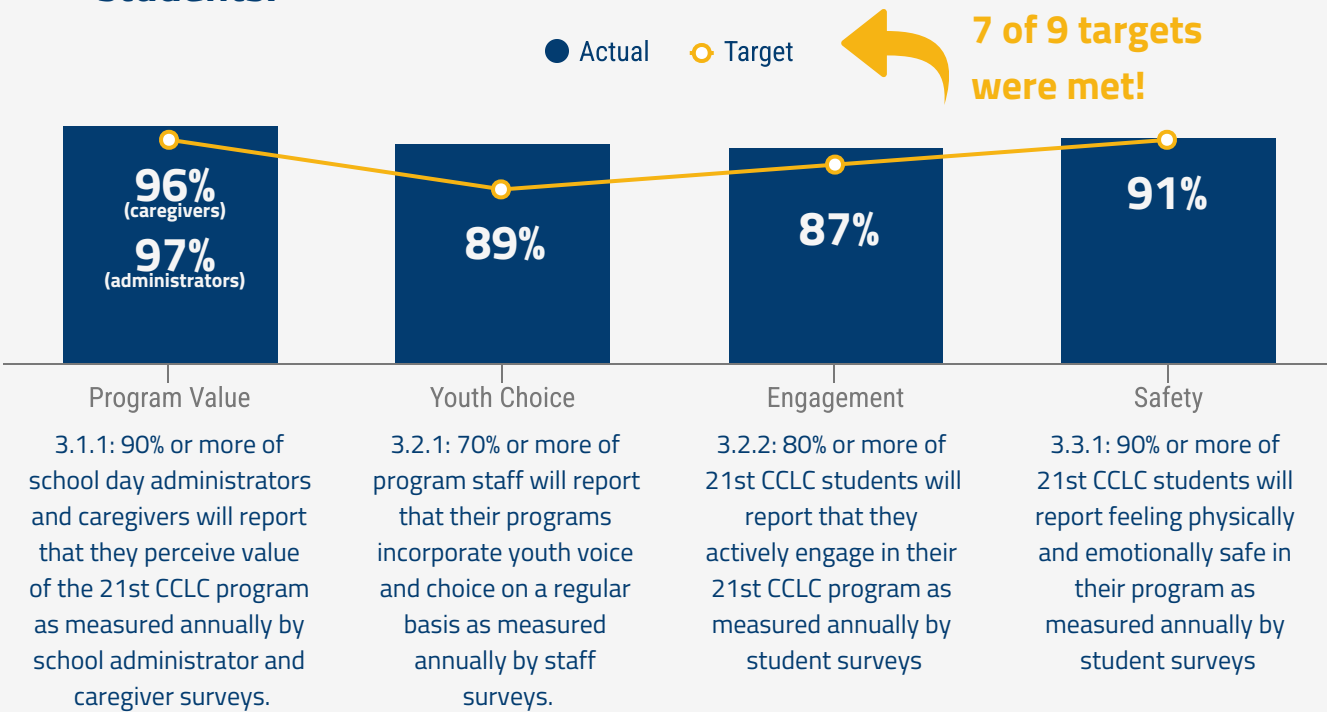
2.2.2: Among 21st CCLC students who had a suspension in the prior school year (N=189), results show that 80% of students had less suspensions the following school year. Therefore, the target of 50% was also met!

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

**% STUDENT AGREEMENT**

80% are open to others' opinions and ideas  
87% know how they are feeling  
89% work well with others  
88% know how to handle conflict

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

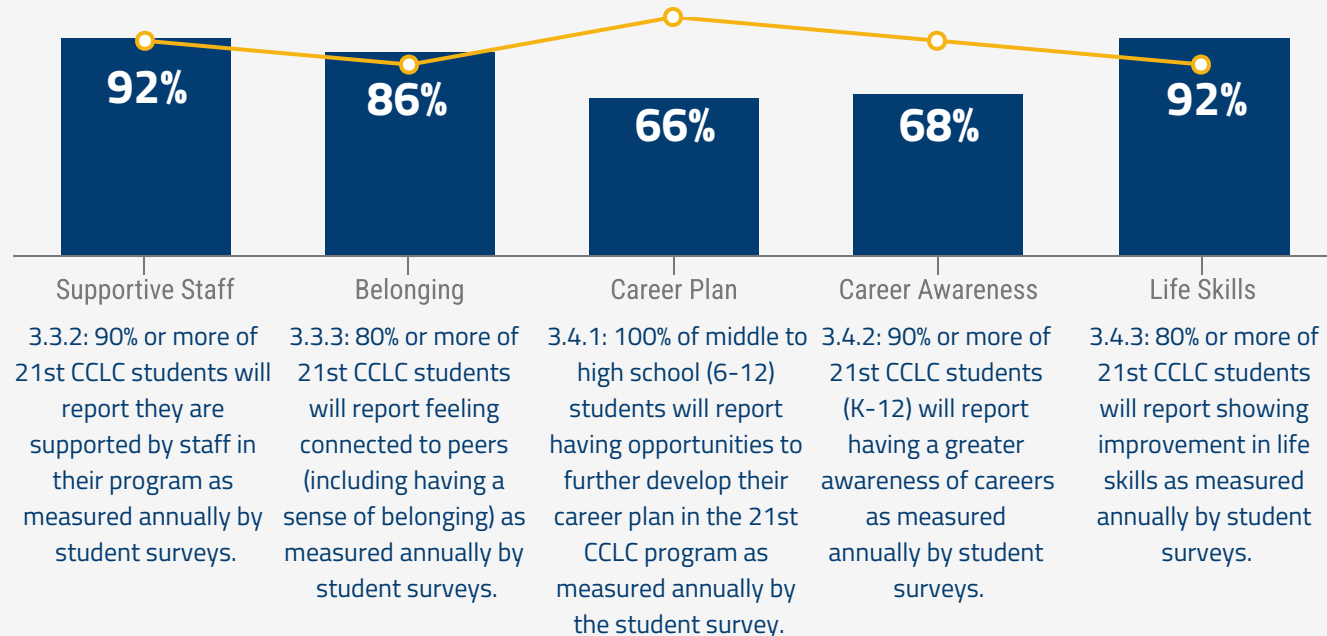


3.1.1: 90% or more of school day administrators and caregivers will report that they perceive value of the 21st CCLC program as measured annually by school administrator and caregiver surveys.

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.

3.2.2: 80% or more of 21st CCLC students will report that they actively engage in their 21st CCLC program as measured annually by student surveys

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



3.3.2: 90% or more of 21st CCLC students will report they are supported by staff in their program as measured annually by student surveys.

3.3.3: 80% or more of 21st CCLC students will report feeling connected to peers (including having a sense of belonging) as measured annually by student surveys.

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.

3.4.2: 90% or more of 21st CCLC students (K-12) will report having a greater awareness of careers as measured annually by student surveys.

3.4.3: 80% or more of 21st CCLC students will report showing improvement in life skills as measured annually by student surveys.



Through the Families First grant, Frenchtown Elementary partnered with a local laundromat for a Spring Fresh family event where students learned to cook meals for their families while doing their laundry. A Frenchtown school counselor shared, "We are looking forward to our continued partnership with these community cornerstones!"

## Results by Objectives: Comparing the 2024–25 and 2023-24 Grant Years

Comparisons of the 2024-25 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 seven 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 student conflict resolution. 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)	24-25 Result	23-24 Result	Measure (Indicator)	24-25 Result	23-24 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%	83%	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.	95%	94%
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.	83%	81%	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.	85%	83%
1.1.3: 50% or more of students in grades 1-12 who need improvement (90% or below in school day attendance in prior years) will maintain or improve their school day attendance one year later as measured by OPI-supplied attendance data.	67%	67%	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	96% Caregivers
1.1.4: 50% or more of students in grades 4-8 who need improvement (not proficient on state assessment in prior year) will maintain or improve their performance on the math state assessment one year later by state assessment data (GPRA).	78%	78%	3.1.1: 97% School Admin	97% School Admin	97% School Admin
1.1.5: 50% or more of students in grades 4-8 who need improvement (not proficient on state assessments in prior year) will maintain or improve their performance on the ELA state assessment one year later by state assessment data (GPRA).	83%	78%	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%	89%
1.1.6: 50% or more of students in grades 7-8 and 10-12 who need improvement (less than 3.0 GPA in prior year) will maintain or improve their GPA one year later as measured by program-supplied GPA data (GPRA).	61%	52%	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%	87%
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%	85%	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	91%	92%
2.2.1: 60% or more of students in grades K-12 will demonstrate conflict resolution skills as measured annually by student surveys.	83%	82%	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%	92%
2.2.2: 50% or more of students in grades 1-12 who had an in-school suspension in the prior year will show a decrease in the number of suspensions one year later as measured by OPI-supplied suspension data.	80%	73%	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%	86%
			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%	66%
			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.	92%	93%

# Program Spotlight

## Huntley Project K-12

*"I know my daughter likes Kid Connection as she always has a choice to stay or ride the bus and she always wants to stay, I know my kid is safe and taken care of" - Parent*

### Kid Connection Family Game Night

*By: Kelly Higareda*

We are thrilled to share the wonderful success of our recent **Huntley Project Kid Connection Family Game Night** – an evening filled with laughter, creativity, and connection!

Our amazing students put their imaginations to work and created one-of-a-kind games using cardboard, recycled materials, and everyday items. From homemade board games and carnival-style challenges to creative trivia and obstacle courses, every game was designed and built by the students themselves. It was truly inspiring to see how much thought, effort, and creativity they poured into each one.

What made the night even more special was having so many families come together to play and participate. Watching parents, siblings, and students laugh and play side-by-side was a reminder of how powerful simple moments of connection can be. The room was full of smiles, cheers, and proud moments as students explained the rules and showed off their creations. We are so proud of our students for their innovation and teamwork, and we are incredibly grateful to all the families who joined us and helped make the evening so memorable.



# Next Steps

The 2024-25 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 academic, social, and emotional development. As part of 21st CCLC grant sustainability, it's crucial to identify areas for growth and to ensure that programs are aligned to the evolving needs of the students and staff are 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 be ongoing, job-embedded, and connected to identified program outcomes, including, but not limited to:

1. Youth development basics (positive relationships, disciplinary protocols, behavior management strategies, and trauma-informed practices).
2. Social-emotional learning, cultural competency, and behavior management.
3. Increasing student engagement through hands-on activities, project-based learning, and student voice/choice.

The [21st CCLC National Technical Assistance Center](#) has ready-made slide decks, recorded modules, and tools aligned to afterschool quality.



## College and Career Readiness

College and career readiness in out-of-school time programming is crucial for equipping students with essential soft skills, technical expertise, and real-world experiences that enhance employability and academic motivation. These programs bridge the gap between classroom learning and future employment, offering mentorship, career exploration, and increased social capital. Recommendations include:

- Focus on core readiness skills
- Integrate career exploration
- Connect to college pathways
- Leverage Montana programs and partners



## Increasing Family Engagement

Family engagement in out-of-school time programs is crucial for enhancing student academic performance, improving behavior, and boosting attendance. It builds a bridge between home and program, creating a safe, supportive environment that increases student confidence and provides working parents with peace of mind. Suggestions for improving family engagement includes:

- Strengthening everyday communication and building in two-way communication so families can respond and not just receive information.
- Offer flexible ways for families to participate (5-minute activity at home, help at one event, donate materials, etc.) and vary timing and format for activities.
- Create family-centered events that combine fun with practical value (i.e. family game night, cultural celebrations, student showcases featuring student leadership)



## Increasing Student Engagement

Increasing student engagement in out-of-school time programming is critical for improving academic outcomes, fostering positive social behaviors, and providing a welcoming environment that reduces dropout rates and risky behaviors. High-quality engagement boosts motivation, helps close achievement gaps for underserved students, and supports overall development. Key recommendations for boosting engagement include:

- Making programming student-driven and fun
- Reduce barriers for families (e.g., transportation, operating hours, etc.)
- Strengthen school and community partnerships
- Provide attendance-focused incentives