Connecticut's 21st Century Community Learning Centers 2016-17 Evaluation Report

Report Prepared for the State of Connecticut Department of Education

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Overview of Site Characteristics

This report present findings on Connecticut 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) for the 2016-2017 academic year. The 21st CCLC program provides funding to school districts and community organizations that serve students attending schools with a high concentration of low-income students (i.e., schools with $\geq$ 40 percent of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch). 21st CCLC grants are designed to provide these students with opportunities for academic enrichment, activities that complement learning, and to encourage family engagement. During the 2016-17 academic year, the 21st CCLC program funded 34 grantees operating 110 sites across the state. This report focuses on the 108 sites that had outcome data on 80% or more of their after school students. The largest number of sites served elementary school students (44 sites, 40.7%), and a smaller number of sites served students from grades K-8 (27 sites, 25.0%), middle school (22 sites, 20.4%), and high school (15 sites, 13.9%).

Site Availability and Participant Attendance

All 21st CCLC sites were open for a minimum of three days per week, and the average site was open for 132 days over the course of the school year. On average, sites were open for slightly less than 3 hours per day, and most were open by the month of October. This report examines a number of attendance metrics, and where appropriate, examines federal and state attendance mandates. The federal 21st CCLC guidelines specify that students must attend a minimum of 30 days of after-school programming in order to be considered a regular attendee in the program. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) requires that sites' target number of students have a minimum of 60% average daily attendance at their registered after-school program. This means that the site's target number of students are expected to attend at least 60% of their expected days. In addition to these federal and state requirements, average daily attendance and average participant attendance rate are two useful metrics for assessing participant attendance.

Average daily attendance compares the number of youth attending a site on a given day with that site's target number of students to be served. Average participant attendance rate evaluates how successful sites were in having their participants attend the program on the days they were expected to attend. Overall, most sites achieved the benchmarks set out by the Federal 21st CCLC and the CSDE guidelines. 83.2% of students attended at least thirty days of programing **and the average proportion of target number of students attending at least 60 percent of their registered days was 106%.** Of note, three sites had values of >400%. When these were removed from analyses, the average proportion of target number of students attending at least 60 percent of their registered day changed to 95.9%. **Students had an average daily attendance of 102% and an average participant attendance rate of 78.8%.**

Programming for Youth Participants

The majority of sites offered students the opportunity to choose the activities they participated in, provided more time on projects of interest, and provided students the opportunity to initiate projects of interest at least once a week. Additionally, many sites offered students the opportunity to assume jobs and responsibilities related to running the program.

One hundred and six (98.1%) sites offered an average of 30 minutes or more of homework help on the days homework help was provided, and 105 sites (97.2%) offered some form of remedial assistance to students who required it. Of note, 21 CCLC requires all sites to offer homework help. Remedial assistance was offered through a number of strategies, the most common being small group tutoring with a certified teacher.

Relationships with Schools

Overall, the majority of programs reported communicating on at least a weekly basis with school day staff, and although the majority of sites (56.5%) reported that communication with partner school(s) was a "clear strength" of their program , some sites reported challenges in their relationships with partner schools. The most commonly reported major challenge was staffing changes at partner site(s), but it is important to keep in mind that only 4.6 percent of sites reported this as a major challenge. The most commonly reported minor challenge was access to space at the after school site reported by 17.6% of sites.

Staffing and Professional Development

The majority of sites held staff meetings on at least a monthly basis (n=81, 75.0%), and provided professional development (n=71, 65.7%) and support services to staff (n=103, 95.4%). The professional development and support offerings varied by site, but **43.5% of the sites indicated covering 15 professional topics provided on the end of the year survey at least once throughout the school year**.

Site coordinators were asked to list areas of programming they wanted to focus on for professional development in the upcoming school year. **The most commonly cited areas for improvement were parent and family programming and youth involvement, leadership, and engagement.**

Performance of 21st CCLC Program Participants

Twenty-first CCLC participants attended school at an average rate of 95.3 percent (range: 17.0 to 100%), which is equivalent to missing about 8.5 days in a 180-day school year.

During the 2016-17 school year, 938 21st CCLC students (12.6%) had at least one disciplinary infraction. Of the students who had at least one disciplinary infraction, the average number of incidents incurred per student with at least 1 disciplinary infraction was 2.3 incidents.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the results of the 2016-2017 evaluation of Connecticut's 21st CCLCs suggest that programs were operating in a manner that is consistent with both federal and state guidelines. Additionally, the school day attendance rates of 21st CCLC students was high with students attending an average of 95.3 percent of their registered school days. Only 12.6 percent of 21st CCLC participants incurred a disciplinary infraction during the course of the 2016-17 school year, and those who did averaged 2.3 incidents per student. Many sites continued to focus improvements on areas that were discussed in previous end-of-year evaluations.

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Introduction

This report presents the results of an evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLCs) operating in Connecticut during the 2016-17 academic year (September 2016 to June 2017). The 21st CCLC program was established by Title IV of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* and in 2001 was expanded through the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The purpose of the 21st CCLC program is to fund centers that provide students with academic enrichment, activities designed to complement learning, and to serve students' families. The specific purposes of 21st CCLCs are to:

(1) Provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services to help students, particularly students who attend low-performing schools, to meet State and local student academic achievement standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and mathematics;

(2) Offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, such as youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, art, music, and recreation programs, technology education programs, and character education programs, that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students; and

(3) Offer families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Part B, Sec 4201

To reach the intended target population for the 21st CCLC initiative, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) requires that 21st CCLC grants serve students attending schools with a high concentration of low-income students, defined as schools where at least 40 percent of the student population qualifies for free or reduced priced lunch. Grants support five years of operation, and annual grant amounts range from $50,000 to $200,000.

To evaluate 21st CCLC programs operating in 2016-17, the CSDE worked with the University of Connecticut's Center for Applied Research in Human Development (CARHD) to describe 21st CCLC services delivered during the school year. Three separate sources of data were utilized to complete this report. The first source of data was collected from an online data management system called AfterSchool21. This system contained information on program-wide and individual participant data. The second source of data was collected from the End of Year Survey (EYS) online survey completed by site coordinators in June 2017. The data from this survey included information on the day-to-day programming at each site. The third source of data was the State Department of Education which provided information on students' school day attendance and school day behavior.

The first two sections of the report describe Connecticut's 21st CCLC sites and the participants that they served. Sections three through five focus on sites' day-to-day programming. The sixth section describes the 21st CCLC participants' performance on school day attendance and school day behavior, and the final section of the report offers conclusions regarding the evaluation results and recommendations based on evaluation findings.

Section One:

Overview of Connecticut's 21st Century Community Learning Centers

During the 2016-17 grant period, the Connecticut State Department of Education funded 34 grantees operating 108 sites throughout the state. Table 1 (right) lists the number of grantees and sites funded in each district.[1] Figure 1 (bottom of page) shows grantee locations across the state.

Of the 108 sites funded for the 2016-17 school year, (95.4%) were located at a school. Forty-six sites (42.6%) reported serving elementary school students, 27 sites (25.0%) reported serving K-8 students, 23 sites (21.3%) reported serving middle school students, and 15 sites (13.9%) reported serving high school students. (Site coordinators were allowed to choose all categories that applied, so percentages can sum to more than 100).
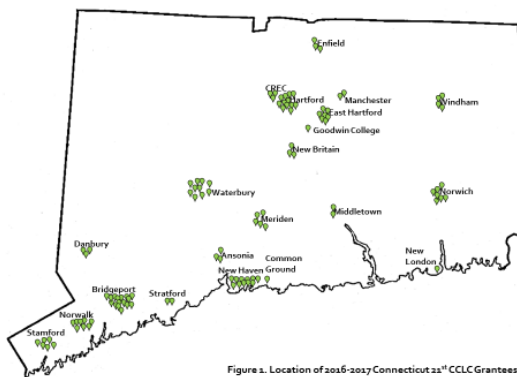

Figure 1. Location of 2016-2017 Connecticut 21st CCLC Grantees

Table 1. 2016-17 grantees and sites by district

District	Grantees	Sites
Ansonia	1	3
Bridgeport	2	16
Common Ground	1	1
CREC	1	3
Danbury	1	3
East Hartford	2	7
Enfield	1	3
Goodwin College	1	1
Hartford	9	12
Manchester	1	2
Meriden	2	5
Middletown	1	2
New Britain	1	3
New Haven	1	11
New London	1	1
Norwalk	1	8
Norwich	1	7
Stamford	3	6
Stratford	1	2
Waterbury	1	10
Windham	1	4
TOTAL	34	110

Note regarding terminology: *For the purposes of this report, physically separate locations are referred to as* **'sites,'** *and the term* **'grantee'** *is used to refer to the entity that is responsible for the management of the grant. The terms* **'program'** *and* **'center'** *are used interchangeably with the term* **'site.'** *Later sections of this report will use the term* **'site coordinator'** *to describe the staff person who completed the site's EYS. The* **'target number'** *refers to the number of youth the site planned to serve daily. The expectation is that the number of youth who attend consistently will approach or exceed this target number. Connecticut 21st CCLC grant guidelines state that 21st CCLCs should not operate as drop-in programs.*
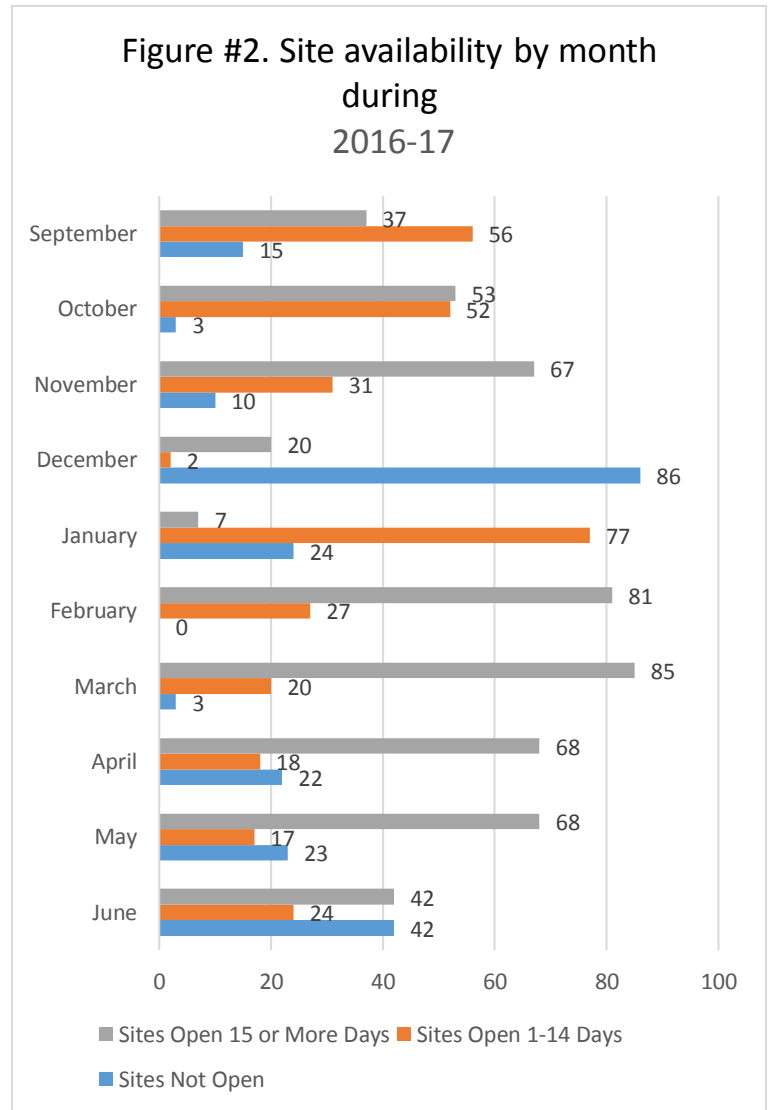
Site Availability during the Academic Year

All 108 programs reported being open at least three days a week during the 2016-17 school year, with the majority of sites open four (n=24, 23.1%) or five days a week (n=68, 63.0%). The average site was open 132 days (range 35 to 185 days), and for slightly less than 3 hours per day (range: 1 to 8 hours). 107 schools (99.1%) were open after school, 18 sites (16.7%) were open before school, and 6 sites (5.6%) were open during the weekends.

Figure 2 (right) shows the availability of Connecticut 21st CCLC sites over the course of the school year. More than half of the sites (n=68, 63.0%) were open in September, and most (n=90, 83.3%) were open by October. February and March were the months most programs achieved full availability, with at least 75 percent of programs (81 or more sites) open 15 days or more during those months. These start times reflect that newly funded sites opened in January 2017.

Participant Attendance Patterns Across Sites

Federal 21st CCLC guidelines have established that individuals who attend 30 days or more of after school programming during a school year are considered participants. During 2016-17, 7,741 students met this requirement. Of the 1,559 students who did not attend at least 30 days of after school programming, 50.0 percent attended between 15 and 29 days, and 50.0 percent attended less than 15 days. The data presented in this and subsequent sections are based on the group of students who attended 30 days or more of after school programming during a school year and who had outcome data. In order to assess attendance patterns, three metrics were used: average daily attendance, average individual student attendance rates at each site, and percent of participants attending at least 60 percent of the site's available days. All of these metrics reflect site-level attendance patterns. Individual student attendance patterns are discussed in Section Two of this report.

Figure #2. Site availability by month during 2016-17

Month	Sites Open 15 or More Days	Sites Open 1-14 Days	Sites Not Open
September	37	56	15
October	53	52	3
November	67	31	10
December	20	2	86
January	7	77	24
February	81	27	0
March	85	20	3
April	68	18	22
May	68	17	23
June	42	24	42

Average Daily Attendance

Average daily attendance (ADA) compares the number of youth attending a site on a given day with that site's target number of students to be served[2]. **The overall average ADA across all sites was 102 percent.** Compared to last year's overall average ADA across sites of 86.4 percent, sites in 2016-17 had a higher ADA.

Figure 3. Distribution of sites according to average daily attendance
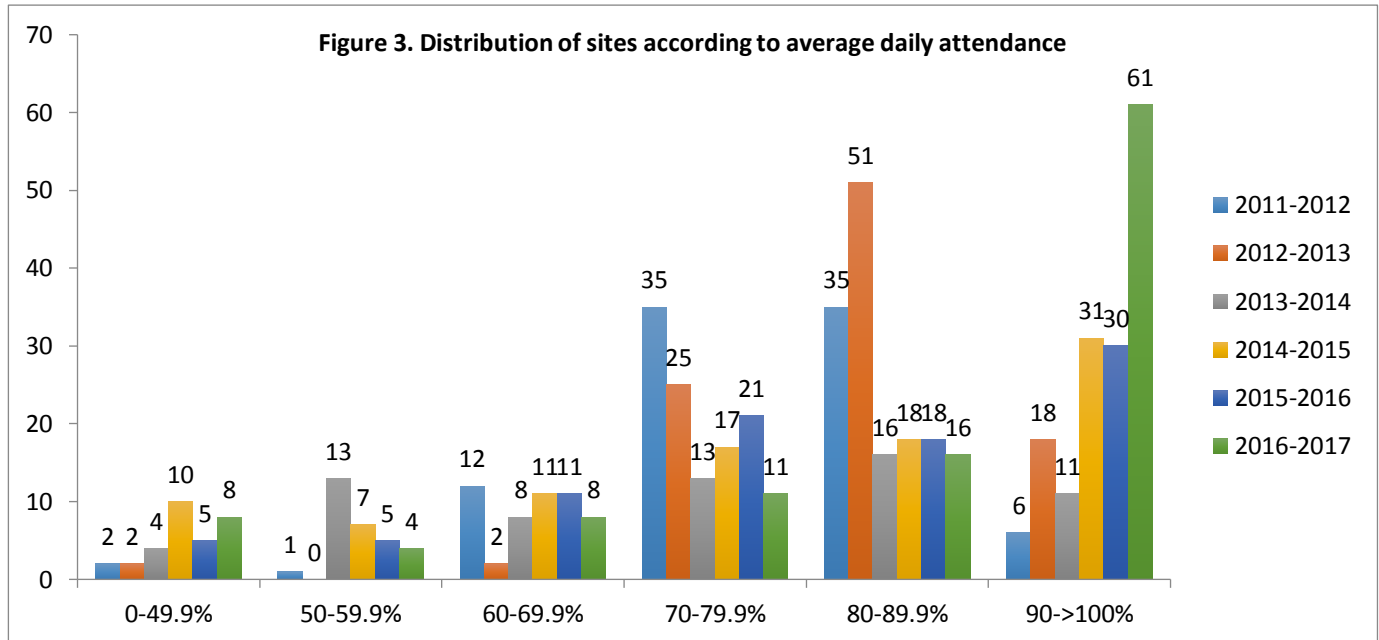
According to CSDE guidelines, 21st CCLC sites are expected to maintain a minimum of 60 percent ADA. In other words, each site is expected to have at least 60 percent of their targeted number of students in attendance on any given day. The 102% percent ADA average across all sites indicates that, overall, **sites exceeded the 60 percent target. Sites had a range of ADA from 14 to 427 percent (Figure 3, above), indicating that there were a number of programs that served a greater number of students than they originally targeted to serve, but that there was also a great deal of variability in attendance patterns across sites. Thirty-seven sites (34.3%) reported serving a greater number of students than they originally targeted.**

Average Participant Attendance Rate

ADA is useful in helping us examine how successful sites are at serving their targeted number of participants on a daily basis, but sites differ in the number of days they are open. Therefore, it is important to examine how often participants attended relative to the number of days for which they were

Figure 4. Distribution of sites according to average participant attendance rate

No. of sites

0-49.9%	50-59.9%	60-69.9%	70-79.9%	80-89.9%	90->100%
9	5	6	21	44	23

registered. In other words, it is important to assess **sites' average rates of participant attendance.**
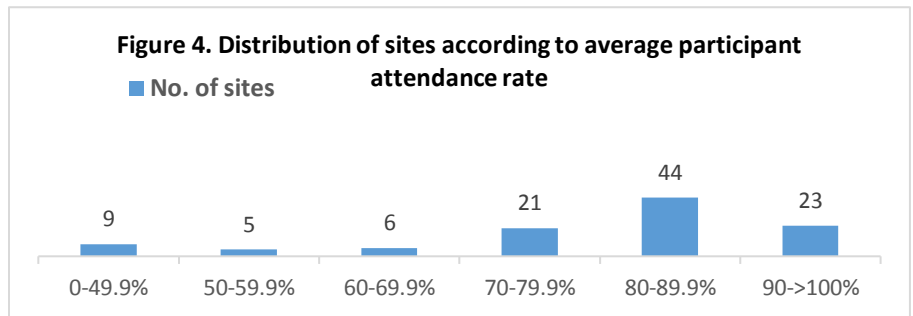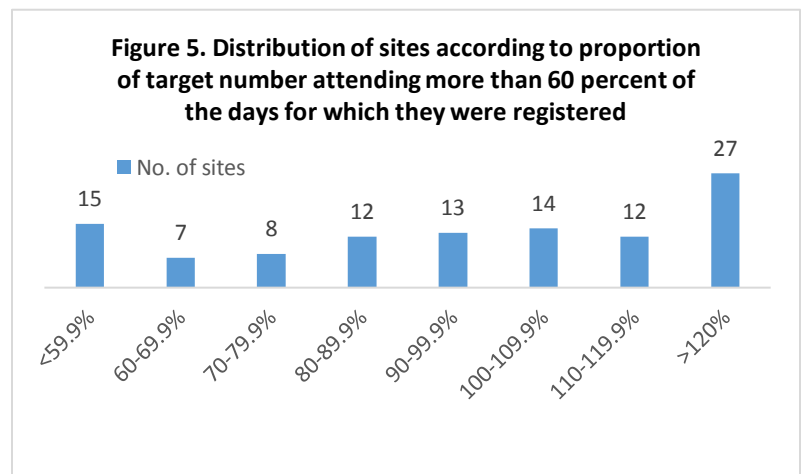
Average participant attendance rate was calculated for each participant by dividing the number of days he or she attended the program by the total number of days he or she was registered to attend during the 2016-17 school year. To obtain a site-level metric of average participant attendance rate, these individual percentages were averaged across all participants at each site. **At the site level, the average participant attendance rate was 78.8 percent, and it ranged from 15.6 percent to 107.4 percent.** Figure 4 shows the distribution of sites in terms of their average participant attendance rate.

The CSDE has also set out guidelines for average daily attendance rate. Specifically, CSDE requires that sites maintain a minimum ADA of 60 percent in order to remain in compliance. Therefore, sites should strive to an average daily attendance rate of at least 60 percent. Twelve sites did not attain or exceed this target. The vast majority of sites (n=59, 54.6%) had average daily attendance rate between 60 and 100 percent and 37 sites (34.3%) had an ADA above 100%. This review of sites' ADAs suggests that the majority of the sites are succeeding in maintaining an ADA of 60% or above.

Proportion of Target Number of Students Attending at Least 60 Percent of Registered Days

Finally, the last attendance metric examined was the proportion of participants at each site, relative to that site's target number, that attended at least 60 percent of days (the target set by the CSDE). In other words, this tells us **how successful were sites in having their target number of students attend at least 60 percent of the days for which they were registered.** This shows not only whether

Figure 5. Distribution of sites according to proportion of target number attending more than 60 percent of the days for which they were registered

No. of sites

<59.9%	60-69.9%	70-79.9%	80-89.9%	90-99.9%	100-109.9%	110-119.9%	>120%
15	7	8	12	13	14	12	27

students are attending regularly, but also if the number of students attending regularly is comparable to the site's target number.

This metric was calculated using a two-step process. First, the total number of students whose individual rate of attendance was over 60 percent was computed for each site, and then, this number was divided by the site's target number. As can be seen in Figure 5 (above), 93 sites (86.1%) had their target number of students attend at least 60 percent of their registered days, and 15 sites (13.9%) did not meet this requirement. Additionally, 52 sites (58.1%) had percentages above 100. This indicates that the site had more students than their target number of students attend at least 60 percent of their registered days.

Section Two:

Description of Participants and Individual Attendance Rates

In order to be considered a 21st CCLC participant, students had to attend at least 30 days of after school programming in 2016-17. The data presented in this section pertain to these students who had outcome data on the following variables.

Demographic Information about Participants

Gender

During the 2016-17 school year, 50.9 percent of 21st CCLC participants were female. This percentage is comparable to the percentage of female students who participated in the 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15,and 2015-16 school years (50.2%, 50.5%, 49.6%,50.4%, and 50.2 respectively).

Grade Level

Twenty-first CCLC programs served students from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade, and information about grade level was available for 7,738 participants (99.9%). Figure 6 (right) shows the distribution of participants by grade. As the figure indicates, the highest numbers of participants were in grades PK/K, 2, 3, 4, and 6.

Free/Reduced Lunch Status

Information about students' eligibility for free/reduced lunch was available for 6,952 of the 7,741 participants (89.8%). The percentage of 21st CCLC participants who were eligible for free/reduced lunch was 84.2 percent. This is comparable to the percentage of students who were eligible in 2015-16(80.3%), 2014-15 (81.2%),2013-14 (88.2%), 2012-13 (88.0%), and 2011-12 (88.3%).

Figure 6. Percent of 21st CCLC participants by grade in school: Comparison of 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17

■2016-17 ■2015-16 ■2014-15 ■2013-14 ■2012-13 ■2011-12
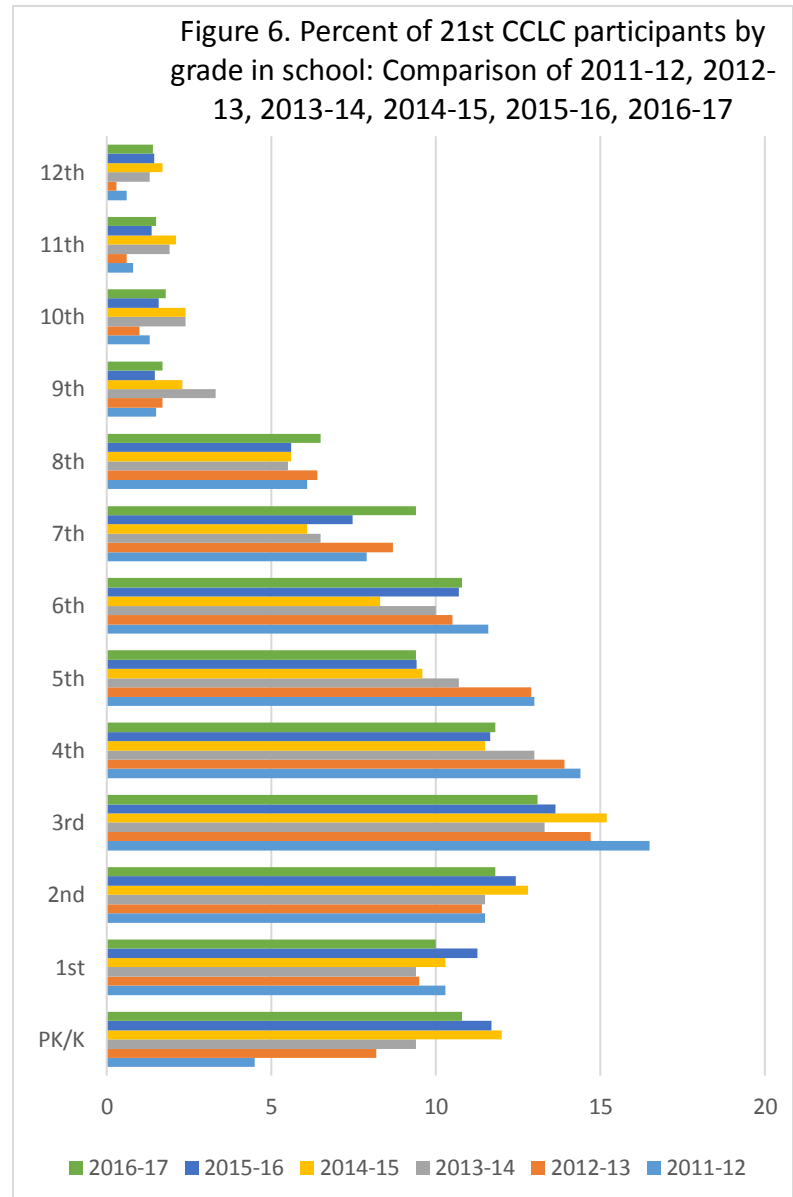
Racial/Ethnic Background

Information concerning the racial/ethnic background of the students was available for 7,735 participants (99.9%). Figure 7 (below) shows the racial/ethnic background of 21st CCLC participants. The majority of students were Hispanic/Latino (45.6%), followed by Black (34.5%) and White (12.7%). Finally, 2.4 percent were American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, or Pacific Islander. These percentages were relatively constant over the four-year period.

Figure 7. Racial/ethnic background of 21st CCLC participants: Comparison of 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17
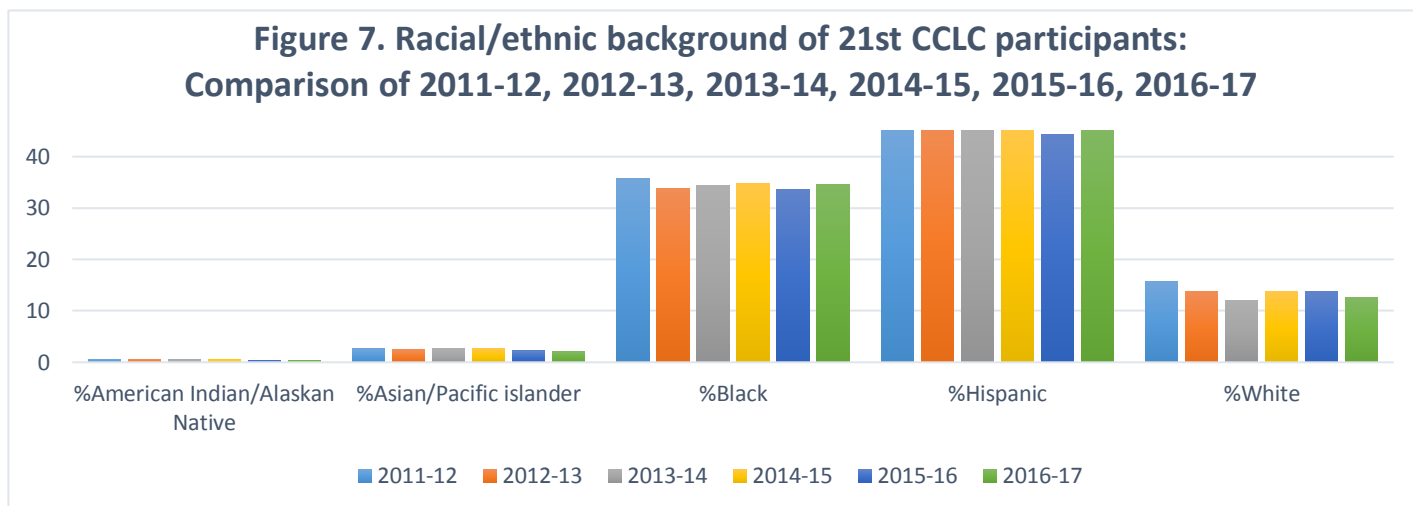
Individual Rates of Attendance

The rate of attendance was computed for each participant by dividing the number of days he or she attended the site by the total number of days for which he or she was registered and was compared across different demographic characteristics. **The average participant attended 82.2 percent (range: 12 to 100%) of the total number of days for which he or she was registered. Girls had a slightly higher attendance rate (82.9%) compared to boys (82.9%),** but this difference was not statistically significant[3]. Whether or not students received free/reduced lunch was significantly[4] related to individual rates of attendance. Students who did not receive free or reduced lunch had a significantly higher mean rate of attendance (86.2%) than students who received free or reduced lunch (81.4%). Individual attendance rates significantly differed based on participants' racial/ethnic background [5]. Asian students attended at a statistically significant higher rate (85.2%) than Hispanic/Latino students (81.3%). This result translates to a difference in program attendance of approximately five days. There were no other significant differences in program attendance between ethnic /racial backgrounds.

Section Three:

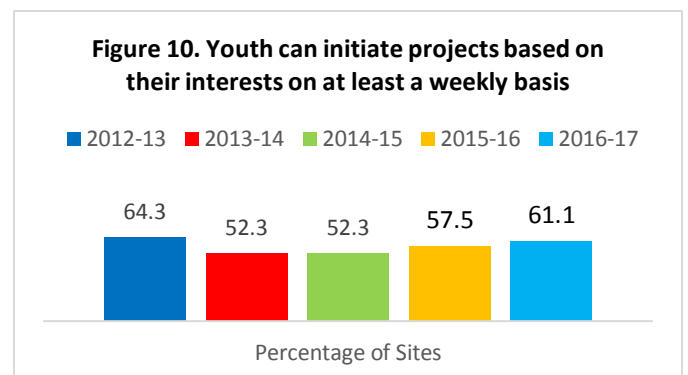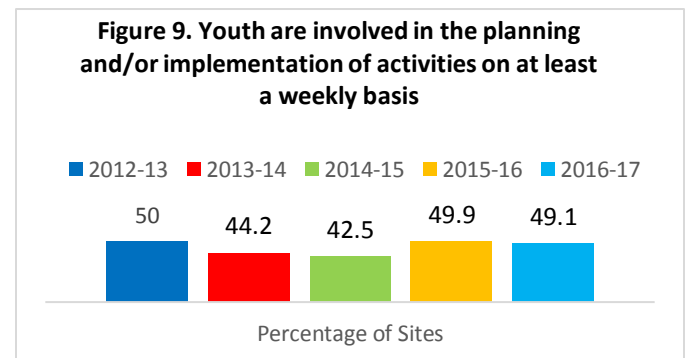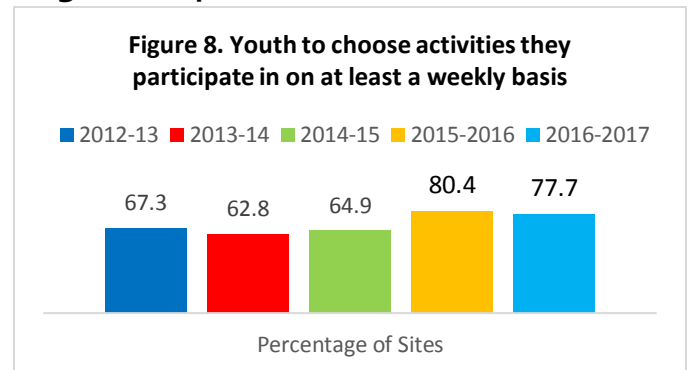## Description of Programming for Student Participants

A main purpose of the EYS is to collect detailed information concerning the implementation of 21st CCLC activities and services. The provision of academic, enrichment, and recreational activities and services are central to the mission of the 21st CCLC program. This section is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on how sites involve youth participants in the design and implementation of their programming. The second part focuses on the sites' academic programming.

Involving Youth in Program Planning and Implementation

The EYS focused on strategies sites utilized to involve youth in program planning and implementation as a way to evaluate youth's opportunities to engage in the program. Figures 8 through 10 (right) compare site coordinators' responses to some of these questions across the last three school years. The vast majority of sites (n=94, 87.0%) surveyed students about programming at least a few times a year, with over half of the participating sites allowing students to choose activities they participate in (n=84, 77.7%), spend additional time on activities of interest (n=93, 86.0%), initiate projects based on their interest (n=66, 61.1%), and assume specific responsibilities for running the program (n=77, 71.3%) at least once a week.

Academic Programming

Because a primary aim of the 21st CCLC programs is to provide academic opportunities to aid students in meeting academic achievement standards in core academic subject areas, the 21st CCLC programs are expected to offer homework help and remedial assistance. Programs' approaches to providing these essential services are described below.

Figure 8. Youth to choose activities they participate in on at least a weekly basis

■ 2012-13 ■ 2013-14 ■ 2014-15 ■ 2015-2016 ■ 2016-2017

67.3 62.8 64.9 80.4 77.7

Percentage of Sites

Figure 9. Youth are involved in the planning and/or implementation of activities on at least a weekly basis

■ 2012-13 ■ 2013-14 ■ 2014-15 ■ 2015-16 ■ 2016-17

50 44.2 42.5 49.9 49.1

Percentage of Sites

Figure 10. Youth can initiate projects based on their interests on at least a weekly basis

■ 2012-13 ■ 2013-14 ■ 2014-15 ■ 2015-16 ■ 2016-17

64.3 52.3 52.3 57.5 61.1

Percentage of Sites

Homework Help

Research has demonstrated that students' homework completion plays a critical role in their academic success (Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006). Further the CSDE requires that all sites provide homework help. One hundred and seven sites (99.1%) reported that they offered homework help to their participants and 106 (98.1%) sites offered 30 minutes or more of homework help on the days homework help was provided. The sites offered an average of 51 minutes (range 20 to 180 minutes) of homework help on the days that homework help was provided. All sites had at least one staff member to assist students with homework, and 87 sites (80.6%) had at least one certified teacher available to help with homework. The majority of sites (57.4%) reported that there was at least one staff member directly involved with homework help for every ten students.

Remedial Assistance

One hundred and six sites (98.1%) indicated that they offered remedial assistance. Site coordinators were asked how they identified students in need of remedial assistance at their site. Figure 11 (right) shows the percentage of sites using each strategy during the 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2016-17, 2015-16,and 2016-17 school years. Site coordinators were also asked to report the primary strategy used to address participants' needs for remedial assistance. Table 2 (below) shows the number and percentage of sites that identified each strategy as their primary strategy used.

Figure 11. Percentage of sites using strategies to identify students in need of remedial assistance: Comparison of 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17
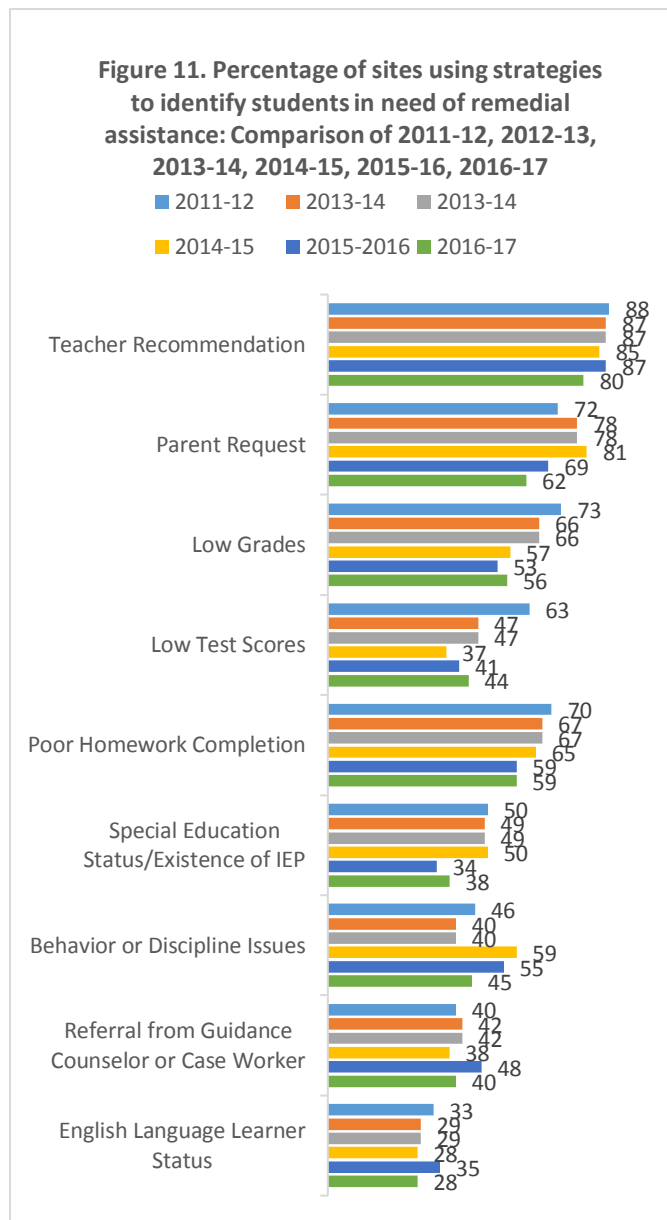
Table 2. Strategies used to address students' needs for remedial assistance	
Strategy	**# of sites (% of total)**
Small group tutoring with a certified teacher	42 (38.9%)
Small group tutoring with other paid staff/volunteers	19 (17.9%)
One-on-one tutoring with a certified teacher	18 (16.7%)
One-on-one tutoring with other paid staff/volunteers	9 (8.5%)
Other	14 (13.2%)

Section Four:

Relationships with Partner Schools

A primary goal of the 21st CCLC program is to provide students with academic programming that is aligned with the learning objectives in core academic subjects and with enrichment opportunities that complement school day learning (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). In order to achieve this goal, grantees are expected to partner with school day staff and to ensure high quality communication between 21st CCLC program site staff and school day staff. Although grantees are only required to partner with one school, some grantees partner with school day staff from multiple schools.

Communication with School Day Staff

Site coordinators were asked how often they communicated with school day staff. Figure 12 (below) shows how often sites communicated with specific school staff personnel.

Figure 12. Frequency of Communication with School Staff
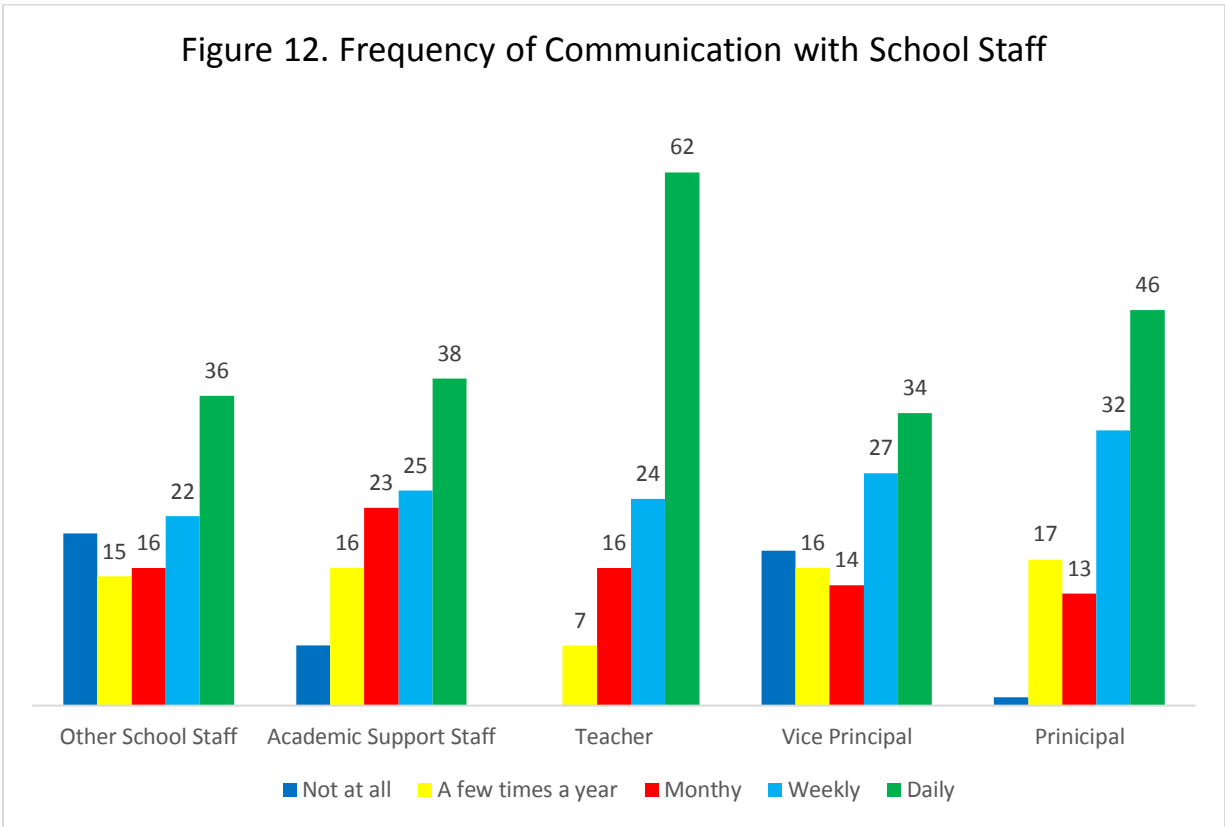
Challenges to Maintaining Positive Relationships with the School

Overall, sites did not report many major or minor challenges in maintaining positive relationships with partner schools. Table 3 (right) shows the percentage of sites reporting each area as a major or minor challenge. Less than 5 percent of sites reported any area as being a major challenge, and less than 17 percent of sites reported any area as a minor challenge.

Table 3. Sites' report of the major and minor challenges of maintaining positive relationships with partner school(s)		
	Major Challenge # of sites (% of total)	Minor Challenge # of sites (% of total)
Commitment/support from school day staff	2 (1.9%)	12 (11.1%)
Communication with school day staff	1 (0.9%)	11 (10.2%)
Ability to meet with school day staff	5 (4.6%)	13 (12.0%)
Consistency of student expectations	4 (3.7%)	16 (14.8%)
Access to data/information from school day staff	3 (2.8%)	10 (9.3%)
Participant recruitment from schools	3 (2.8%)	7 (6.5%)
Access to space at after school site	3 (2.8%)	19 (17.6%)
Staffing changes at partner site(s)	4(3.7%)	8 (7.4%)

Section Five:

Staffing & Professional Development

The importance of having high quality staff is consistently emphasized throughout the after school literature. Interactions between program staff and participants are considered to be the primary mechanism through which young people benefit from afterschool programs (e.g., Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Huang et al., 2008). Therefore, the services provided by 21st CCLC programs are driven by having well-trained, stable, and supported staff.
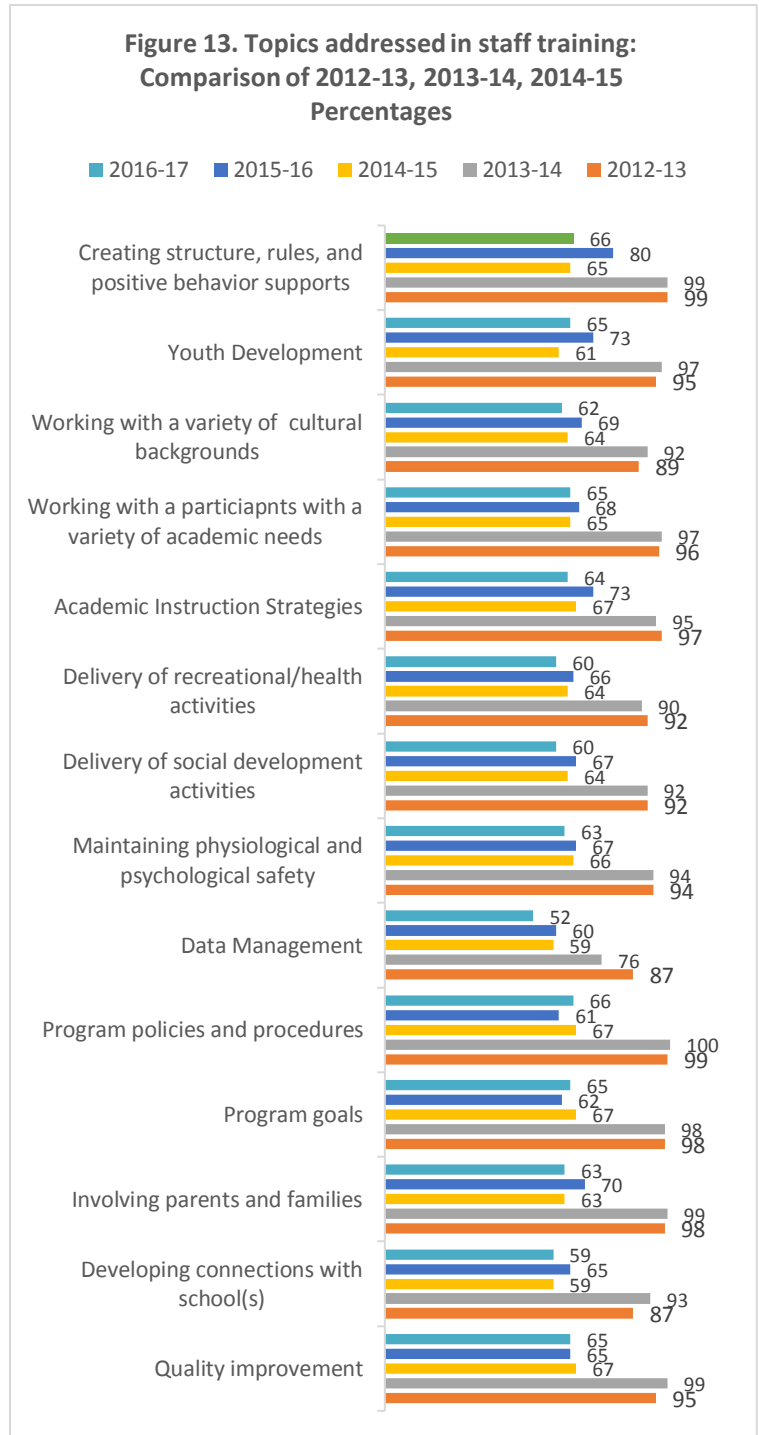
Staff Meetings, Support, and Professional Development

Staff Meetings

A productive and successful way to improve the quality of staff members and program implementation is to hold regular staff meetings, trainings, and professional development events. **More than half of the sites held regular staff meetings at least once a month (n=66 sites, 61.1%).** Of those sites, 24 sites (22.2%) reported holding staff meetings on a weekly basis. Additionally, 27 sites (25.0%) reported holding staff meetings once every 2-3 months and 12 sites (11.1%) reported holding a staff meeting once a year.

Staff Training and Professional Development

Site coordinators were asked to select how often they covered a variety of different topics in their staff training or professional development events. Figure 13 summarizes and contrasts the topics covered in each of the past three years. 46.3% percent of sites reported covering all 15 topics during this past school year.

Figure 13. Topics addressed in staff training: Comparison of 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15 Percentages

Legend: 2016-17, 2015-16, 2014-15, 2013-14, 2012-13

- Creating structure, rules, and positive behavior supports: 66, 80, 65, 99, 99
- Youth Development: 65, 73, 61, 97, 95
- Working with a variety of cultural backgrounds: 62, 69, 64, 92, 89
- Working with a participants with a variety of academic needs: 65, 68, 65, 97, 96
- Academic Instruction Strategies: 64, 73, 67, 95, 97
- Delivery of recreational/health activities: 60, 66, 64, 90, 92
- Delivery of social development activities: 60, 67, 64, 92, 92
- Maintaining physiological and psychological safety: 63, 67, 66, 94, 94
- Data Management: 52, 60, 59, 76, 87
- Program policies and procedures: 66, 61, 67, 100, 99
- Program goals: 65, 62, 67, 98, 98
- Involving parents and families: 63, 70, 63, 99, 98
- Developing connections with school(s): 59, 65, 59, 93, 87
- Quality improvement: 65, 65, 67, 99, 95

Staff Support

Site coordinators were asked to select all types of support offered to their staff in order to improve after school programming delivery. Overall, the majority of sites offered some form of additional support to their staff, and only five sites (4.6%) reported providing no additional support to their staff. Table 4 (below) provides the number and percentage of sites that offered each type of support to staff members during the 2016-17 school year.

Table 4. Strategies for providing support for staff	
Strategy	# of sites (% of total)
Curriculum planning provided by educational coordinator	33 (30.6%)
Coaching of site staff	62 (57.4%)
Co-teaching with site staff	48(44.4%)
Evaluation of site staff	53 (49.1%)
Student data evaluation shared by education coordinator	29 (26.9%)
Education coordinator leading specific lessons/activities with students	33 (30.6%)
Paid planning time	40 (37.0%)
Professional development	62 (57.4%)
Staff meetings	86 (79.6%)

Specific Areas Targeted for Additional Professional Development and Support

Site coordinators were asked to identify the three major topics they wanted professional development efforts to be focused on. Table 5 (right) lists the main categories of coordinators' responses.

Table 5. Site coordinators' reported targets for additional professional development and support 2016-17				
Area	Total	First	Second	Third
Parent and family programming	42	23	6	13
Academic programming	25	5	11	9
Variety of activities	39	20	11	8
Recruitment, retention, & attendance	21	8	10	3
Organization/planning, communication/feedback	10	4	4	2
Community partnerships	15	4	5	6
Staffing (e.g., recruitment, retention, development)	25	9	7	9
Behavior management	39	13	11	15
School partnerships	10	3	3	4
Youth involvement, leadership, and engagement	33	5	17	11
Health and wellness	12	1	5	6
Social/youth development	33	9	13	12
Data management	9	4	1	4

Section Six:

School Performance of 2016-17 21st CCLC Participants

Two measures were chosen as performance indicators for students participating in 21st CCLC programs: school day attendance and school day behavior. Due to the federal guidelines concerning after school participation, in order to be included in the following analyses, students had to have attended the 21st CCLC after school program for at least 30 days. Overall, 7,741 students met the attendance requirement.
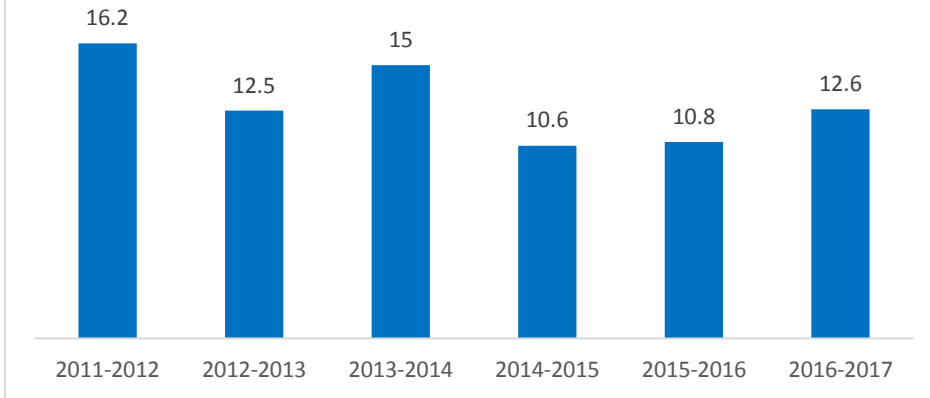
Performance Measure 1: School Day Attendance

The first performance measure examined was school day attendance. Attendance rates were calculated using CSDE school day attendance data for individual program participants. This attendance rate reflects the number of days a student was present as a percentage of the total days he or she was enrolled in school. Data on school day attendance were available for 7,507 21st CCLC participants (97.0%). School attendance for individual 21st CCLC participants varied from 17 to 100 percent. The average attendance rate was 95.3 percent, which is equivalent to missing about 8.5 days in a 180-day school year.

Performance Measure 2: School Day Behavior (Disciplinary Infractions)

The second performance measure provided information about 21st CCLC participants' in-school behavior, represented as disciplinary infractions. Data on disciplinary infractions was available for 7,669 21st CCLC participants (99.1%). During the 2016-17 school year, 938 21st CCLC participants received at least one disciplinary infraction. Therefore, 12.6 percent of 21st CCLC participants had at least one disciplinary infraction during the 2016-17 school year. Of the students with at least one infraction, the number of incidents each student incurred ranged from 1 to 29 with an average of 2.3 incidents per student. Twenty-three 21st CCLC participants received 10 or more disciplinary infractions.

Figure 14. Percentage of students with one or more disciplinary infractions

Year	Percentage
2011-2012	16.2
2012-2013	12.5
2013-2014	15
2014-2015	10.6
2015-2016	10.8
2016-2017	12.6

Section Seven:

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the 2016-17 evaluation of Connecticut 21st CCLCs suggest that programs were operating in a manner that is consistent with both federal and state guidelines. Most programs provided homework help every day and had services in place for students who demonstrated need for remedial assistance. Most sites reached participant attendance targets, and many were exceeding them. However, there was a small proportion of sites that did not meet participant attendance requirements; fifteen sites did not have their target number of students attend at least 60 percent of their registered days.

This year's results are relevant to several themes identified during previous years' evaluations. These include program availability, age-appropriate youth involvement opportunities, and partnerships between after school programs and schools. These are discussed below.

Program Availability

Over the past five years, 21st CCLC sites have made significant efforts to improve site availability by meeting their target number of days open. The results of this evaluation suggest consistent efforts in this regard with only slight variations from year to year. Over the last five years, the sites have been open an average of 123, 130, 124, 125, 136, and 132 days respectively. This year's data further indicate that over half of the sites were open in September with the vast majority of sites being open by January.

Age-Appropriate Youth Involvement Opportunities

In the after school literature, there is evidence to support a link between young peoples' level of involvement in their organizations and positive outcomes. These outcomes include leadership skills, teamwork, communication skills, strategic thinking, self-confidence, personal wellness, enhanced sociopolitical awareness, social capital, social responsibility, and hopefulness (Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005).

This year's results suggest that over half of the programs provided opportunities for youth to be involved during program hours. Specifically, over half of the sites allowed students to choose activities they participated in, allowed students to spend additional time on activities of interest, allowed students to initiate projects based on their interests, and allowed students to assume specific responsibilities for running the program on at least a weekly basis.

Partnerships between 21st CCLC Programs and Schools

The results of the 2016-17 evaluation suggest that sites were, overall, well connected with their partner schools. Less than five percent of the sites reported any major challenges with their partner school, but the most commonly reported major or minor challenge was the ability to meet with school day staff. Given the generally high level of collaboration between after school sites and schools, it seems reasonable to expect continued improvements in this area.

Staff Support Systems

The most commonly utilized forms of support for staff were holding staff meetings, professional development opportunities, and coaching site staff to provide support for other staff members. However, we know little about staff responses to these various support efforts. That is, do staff members experience these efforts as beneficial to them? This is an area for further inquiry.

Performance of 21st CCLC Program Participants

Overall students in the 21st CCLC programs attended an average of 95.3 percent of their registered school days which is equivalent to missing about 8.5 days in a 180-day school year. This is an encouraging finding since attendance during the school day is a necessary first step for educating children and adolescents. As well, only 12.6 percent of the 21st CCLC participants incurred a disciplinary infraction across the 2016-17 school year.

Some limitations of the current evaluation should be noted. At the time of this report, there was not a suitable comparison group available for the performance indicators of interest discussed in this report. As a result, it is not possible to conclude if participation in the 21st CCLC program led to improved outcomes as compared to a similar group of students who did not participate in the 21st CCLC program.

Finally, including other outcome measures to supplement information from the two performance indicators may strengthen future outcome evaluations. Gathering information on students' social and emotional outcomes should be considered for future evaluations, as has been suggested in previous years.

Section Eight:

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The Elementary and Secondary Education Act as Reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 6319.

Footnotes

[1] Table includes all 110 sites that were funded in 2016-17, including the two sites that were not included in analyses due to missing data

[2] The "average daily attendance" value for each site was calculated using the following formula: (Total Number of Individual Attendances) / (Target Number of Youth to Be Served*Total Number of Days Open). An 'individual attendance' refers to one student attending on one day.

[3] Using an independent samples t-test, there was not a statistically significant difference in rate of program attendance according to gender [$t(7231)=.254$, $p=.441$].

[4] Using an independent samples t-test, there was a statistically significant difference in the rate of program attendance according to free and reduced lunch status with those not eligible for free/reduced lunch attending at a higher rate [$t(6731)= -8.605$, p=.000].

[5] Using a univariate analysis of variance, there were statistically significant differences in the rate of program attendance based on ethnic background [$F(5,7006)= 3.595$, $p=.003$].