


Connecticut 21st Century Community Learning Centers 2009-2010 Evaluation Report



Report Prepared for the State of Connecticut
Department of Education

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Snapshot of Connecticut 21st CCLC Programs in 2009-2010

- 21st CCLC funds supported **56 grantees** operating **92 sites** throughout the state.
- Collectively, programs had the **capacity to serve a total of 7,074 youth** (based on grantees' target numbers).
- Average budget per grantee for the year: **\$158,176**
- Average grantee-level program size: **125 students**
- Average per pupil allocation: **\$1370**
- Age group primarily served: **Elementary, 65 sites, 71%; Middle, 20 sites, 22%; High, 6 sites, 7%**
- Average site was **open 12 hours per week, 29 weeks total, and a total of 123 days**.

- Sites varied widely in the number of days and weeks that they were open.
- March and May were the months that most programs achieved full availability, perhaps because these months fall in the middle of the school year but do not include the spring vacation.
- From November to May, at least 66 sites (73%) were meeting the Connecticut State Department of Education's minimum requirement that programs serve, on average, at least 60% of their target number of students.

Programming for Youth Participants

General Trends

- Most sites ranked **"Providing a safe and secure place for youth to be,"** and **"Developing academic skills and improving academic achievement"** as their most important goals. These priorities are consistent with the basic function of after school programs as a form of child care and also with the 21st CCLC initiative's focus on closing the academic achievement gap.
- Site coordinators' descriptions of 21st CCLCs suggest that the **programs have a high level of structure**. Over 75% of programs reported having a formal lesson plan for most or all of their activities. Most sites maintained regular daily schedules and program activities. **However, relatively few reported offering youth opportunities for involvement in program and activity planning**. Furthermore, few programs indicated that they offered participants choices of activities or activities that were self-directed. The most frequent form of student input was asking students for suggestions in the form of surveys, focus groups, or informal discussions. The after school literature suggests that intentionally designed activities (i.e., thoughtfully-planned, sequenced, goal-focused) *and* a high degree of youth involvement are both associated with greater benefits. **Finding balance between these two areas may be a useful focus for program improvement efforts**.
- **Most programs reported practices that are sensitive to cultural differences**, as evidenced by program materials being available in languages other than English and most programs having interpreters available when necessary. The majority of 21st CCLC sites (N=83, 91%) reported that they offered at least a few activities that focused on ethnic identity development, culture, and/or diversity. Thirty-eight sites (42%) said that at least half of their activities had such a focus.

Academics

- As might be expected, **academics were a primary focus of 21st CCLC programs; the average site devoted about 50% of programming time to academics**. Although a substantial portion of time was focused on

academics, only slightly more than half of all sites had a designated education specialist or master teacher available to organize academic programming. Homework help was offered daily at the vast majority of sites (93%). Most sites also offered remedial assistance to students who needed it (92%), and a variety of different strategies were used to provide such assistance.

- Reading and literacy programming also was regularly offered at most 21st CCLC sites (79%). Less than half used an established, research-based program for their literacy activities.
- Most sites (85%) offered programming focused specifically on math, however, 17 sites did not. Fewer than half of the sites (43%) used a packaged, research-based program for their math-focused programming.
- Most sites (76 %) offered science-focused programming while 22 did not. A third (33%) used a research-based program for their science-focused activities.

Enrichment, Recreation, and Wellness

- Consistent with the 21st CCLC standards, programs also offered a broad array of additional activities and services focused on general enrichment, recreation, and wellness.
- The most regularly offered enrichment activities were focused on arts and computers. Two-thirds of all programs offered these activities one or more times per week. Although most sites (77%) offered mentoring and service learning opportunities, these were generally offered on a less frequent basis. Vocational programming was uncommon.
- Recreation and wellness activities were provided in all programs. Physical activities and games were offered on a regular basis in most programs (89%). Ninety-one percent of programs offered daily snacks to students.

Parent and Family Involvement

- Most sites indicated that they were very focused on engaging parents and families in their after school programs. Over half of the programs (57%) reported having a staff person assigned the role of parent/family coordinator. The most frequently used strategies to communicate with parents were relaying information through the student (89%), speaking with parents in person (88%), talking with parents over the telephone (79%), and mailing information home to parents (66%). Fewer programs made use of online (41%) or email (21%) technologies.
- Programs engaged in wide variety of planned events for parents and families. Some of the most frequently offered included field trips, cultural events, social events, and parents serving as volunteers. In contrast, the least common parent engagement activities were parents serving on advisory councils, adult education programs, and parent involvement in community service projects.

Relationships with Schools

- Most programs reported that they had regular contact with their partner schools. The school contact most often occurred through communication with school day teachers, academic support staff such as guidance counselors, and school principals. Most programs (85%) reported that they had a designated person staff who was in charge of communication with their partner school.
- While most sites reported positive relationships with their partner schools, a number of sites did share some challenges they had encountered in maintaining relationships with schools. These challenges included

difficulty with maintaining regular communication with school day staff, conflicting schedules, getting appropriate space in the school for after school programs, and managing off site programs.

Staffing and Professional Development

- Connecticut 21st CCLCs reported very little staff turnover. Of the 91 sites surveyed, 62 (70%) indicated that less than 10% of their staff turned over during the course of the year. A substantial majority (78 sites, 86%) had less than 20% of the staff turn over. Only 15 sites (16%) indicated that more than 20% of their staff turned over during the course of the year.
- A majority of sites reported that regular staff meetings were a part of their program operations. Nearly 70 sites (77%) met at least monthly.
- The average site had 60% of its training and PD activities take place onsite (remaining 40% was offsite).

Program Improvement Initiatives

- To inform improvement efforts, programs relied most heavily on participant feedback and individual student data. They were less likely to rely on program evaluation and quality advising to inform program improvement.
- Parent and family involvement was the most common area identified as being in need of improvement, with the vast majority of programs indicating that they were either very likely (50%) or somewhat likely (39%) to focus on it. Most coordinators described multiple strategies designed to improve such programming. By far, the most commonly reported strategy was to increase the frequency and/or type of parent and family programming offered (69 sites, 76%).
- Academic programming also was designated as a focus for many sites' improvement efforts. Almost half of sites (48%) reported they were somewhat likely to focus on improving this aspect of their programming. Over a quarter (26%) reported that they were very likely to focus on this area.



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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 2009-2010 academic year (July 2009 to June 2010). 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 community learning centers that provide students with opportunities for academic enrichment and other activities designed to complement students' learning. The centers also are expected to serve students' families by providing a safe place for children during out-of-school hours and by offering families literacy and related educational development activities. 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

Since 2002, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has funded eight cohorts of 21st CCLC programs. Connecticut 21st CCLC grants support five years of operation. Aligning with federal guidelines, grant awards range from a minimum of \$50,000 annually to a maximum of \$200,000 annually. To reach the intended target population for the 21st CCLC initiative, the CSDE requires that 21st CCLCs serve students attending schools with a high concentration of low-income students, defined as schools where at least 40% of the student population qualifies for free or reduced priced lunch. The CSDE awards 21st CCLC funding to local educational agencies, regional educational service centers, and community-based organizations, as well as combinations of these entities.

To evaluate its 21st CCLC programs operating in 2009-2010, the CSDE contracted with the University of Connecticut's Center for Applied Research in Human Development (CARHD). The purposes of CARHD's evaluation were to describe 21st CCLC services delivered in Connecticut during 2009-2010, as well as to assist the CSDE with monitoring and improving the quality of 21st CCLC programs. This process evaluation addressed the basic question: "What actually happened in Connecticut's 21st CCLCs?"

As part of their grant requirements, 2009-2010 Connecticut 21st CCLCs were required to report data about both program-wide operations and individual participants to CSDE through an online data management system (developed by Cayen Data Systems) and through a set of year-end documents, including an End of Year Report (EYR). The EYR was developed in consultation with CARHD and was designed to collect detailed information about how 21st CCLC services were delivered during 2009-2010. The present evaluation is a process evaluation that makes use of grantees' 2009-2010 EYR responses and select data from the online data system provided to CARHD by the CSDE.

This evaluation report contains seven sections. It begins with a description of the general characteristics—such as the program size, location, and days open—of participating after school programs. The second section describes the programming offered to 21st CCLC student participants. The third section addresses Connecticut 21st CCLCs' programming for parents and families. The fourth section provides information about 21st CCLCs' relationships with their partner schools. The fifth section summarizes 21st CCLC sites' staffing practices and professional development activities. The sixth section addresses programs' quality monitoring and improvement activities. The report concludes with a discussion of the evaluation results and provides recommendations based on evaluation findings.

Section One:

Overview of CT's 21st Century Community Learning Centers

During the 2009-2010 grant period, the CSDE funded 56 grantees serving students throughout the State of Connecticut. These grantees spanned five cohorts, with cohort 4 programs being in their fifth and final year of funding and cohort 8 programs being in their first year of funding. The budgets for these 56 grantees ranged from the minimum funding amount of \$50,000 per year to the maximum of \$200,000 per year. In 2009-2010, the average grantee had a budget of \$158,176. Across the 56 grantees, the target number of youth to be served daily by grantees ranged from as few as 35 youth to as many as 300. The average grantee planned to serve 125 students and had a per pupil allocation of \$1370 (figures ranged from \$333 to \$2297).

In Connecticut, 21st CCLC grantees are permitted to use their funds to operate sites at more than one physical location. During the 2009-2010 year, the 56 21st CCLC grantees ran a total of 92 sites throughout the state. Table 1 below lists the grantees and sites funded in each district. Figure 1 on the next page shows where 21st CCLC grantees were located throughout Connecticut. (See Appendix for a complete list of grantees and sites.)

Note regarding terminology: For the purposes of this report, physically separate locations are referred to as **'sites,'** while 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 use the term **'site coordinator'** to describe the staff person who completed the site's EYR. The **'target number'** refers to the number of youth to be served daily. The expectation is that the number of youth who attend consistently will approach or exceed this target number. CT 21st CCLC grant guidelines state that 21st CCLCs should not operate as drop-in programs.

Statewide Snapshot 2009-2010: Connecticut 21st CCLCs

- Total budget for Connecticut 21st CCLC programming in 2009-2010: **\$8,857,873**
- Total number of youth to be served daily: **7,074**
- Total number of participants *actually* served during 2009-2010 year: **7,583**
- Number of grantees who operated 21st CCLCs during the year: **56**
- Average grantee budget: **\$158,176**
- Average per pupil allocation: **\$1370**
- Average program size: **125 students**

Number of 09-10 Grantees By Cohort

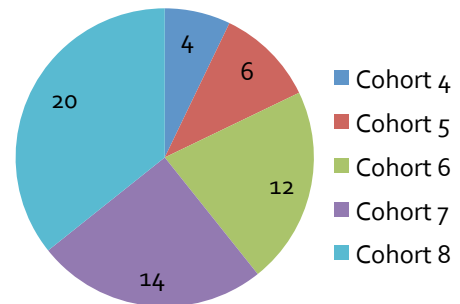
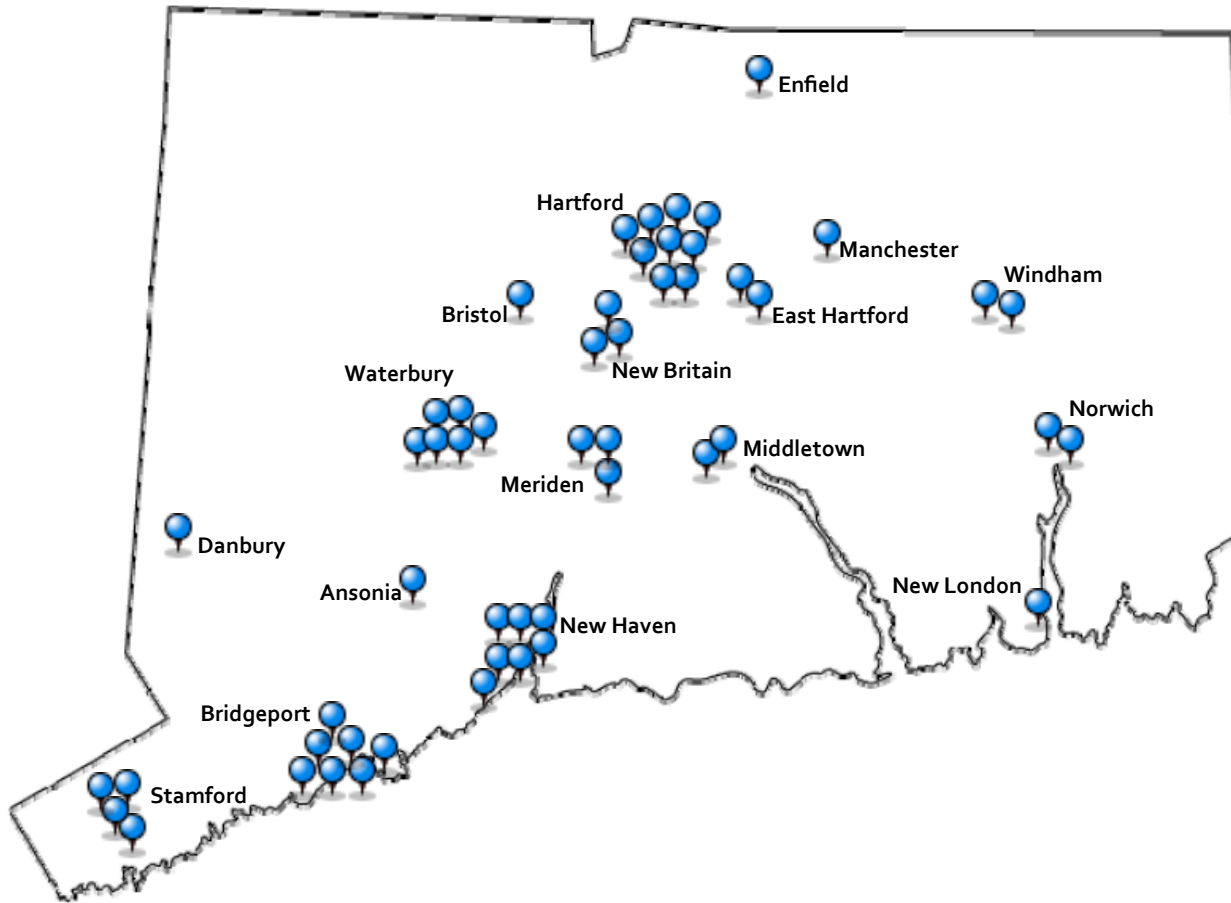


Table 1. 2009-2010 Grantees and sites by district

District	Grantees	Sites	District	Grantees	Sites
Ansonia	1	3	Middletown	2	2
Bridgeport	7	12	New Britain	4	7
Bristol	1	1	New Haven	7	14
Danbury	1	2	New London	1	2
East Hartford	2	5	Norwalk	1	1
Enfield	1	1	Norwich	3	5
Hartford	9	9	Stamford	4	4
Manchester	1	1	Waterbury	6	14
Meriden	3	4	Windham	2	5
TOTAL: 56 Grantees, 92 Sites					

Figure 1. Location of 2009-2010 Connecticut 21st CCLC Grantees



Site-Level Program Descriptions

Grantees were instructed to select someone who was “on the ground” at each site to complete the EYR. Although sites operated by the same grantee may have shared certain characteristics, such sites still may have differed in the activities they offered and also in the attendance patterns of their participants. The CSDE required that both ongoing data reporting and year-end data reporting be carried out separately for each site. The 2009-2010 reporting requirements instructed grantees to complete a separate EYR for each site. The remainder of this evaluation report describes Connecticut 21st CCLC operations at the site level. ***The CSDE received EYRs from all sites except for one (thus data are reported for a total of 91 sites).***

Sixty-nine sites (76%) were run by a community-based organization, and the remaining sites (N=22, 24%) were run by a school district. A majority of the sites (N=80, 88%) were located at a school. The majority of sites (N=65, 71%) identified elementary school as the primary age group served, whereas 20 sites (22%) primarily served middle school students and 6 sites (7%) mostly served high school students. (Site coordinators were asked to choose only one category regarding the age group served.)

CT 21st CCLC Site Availability

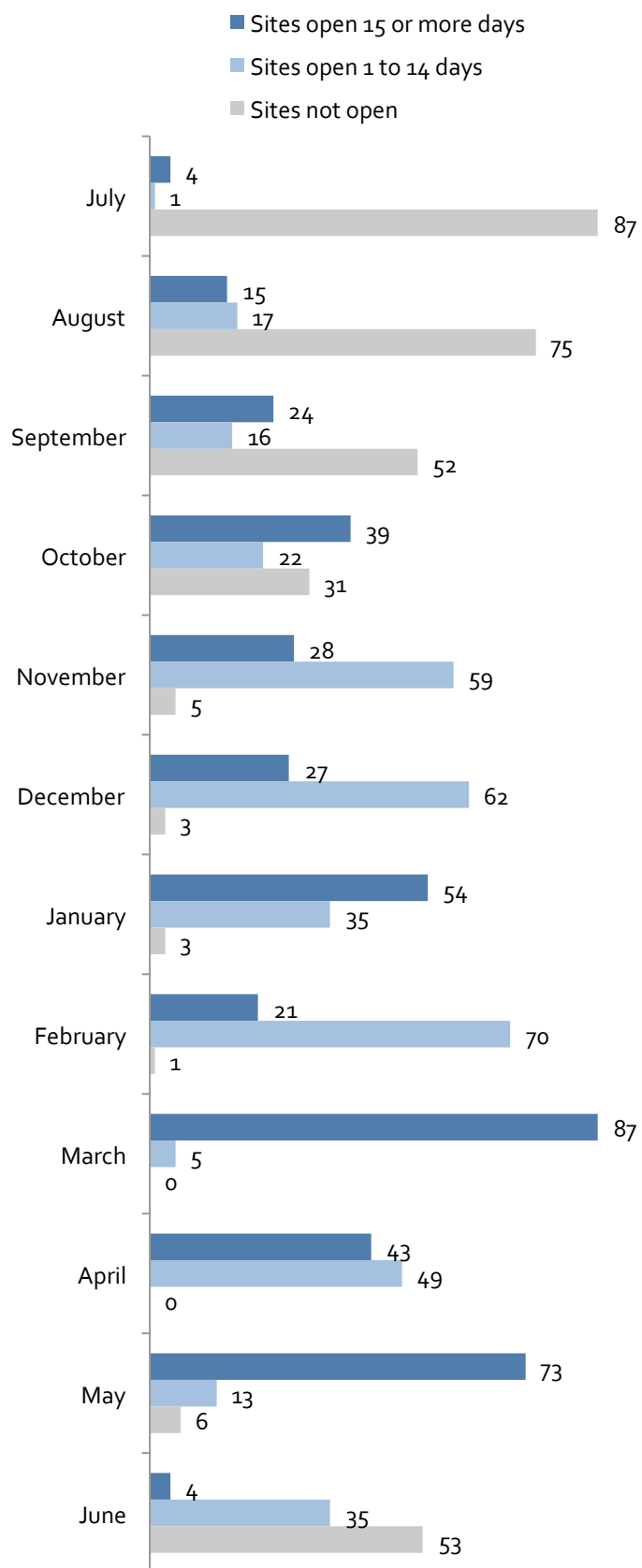
All programs reported that they were available at least four days a week, with the majority of sites (N=57, 63%) operating five days a week. The average site reported being available for just over 12 hours per week. Most programs were open after school only; twenty sites (22%) reported that they were open both before and after school. According to data available in the Cayen database, the average site was open for a total of 123 days over the course of the year, but programs varied widely in how many total days they were open (range: 52 to 208 days). The average number of weeks open across all sites was 29, but once again, programs varied widely in how many weeks they were open (range: 11 to 45 weeks).

Figure 2 (right) shows the availability of Connecticut 21st CCLC sites over the course of the 2009-2010 school year. In August, September, and October, many programs had still not opened. By November, a majority of programs (N=86, 93%) were open. In the months of December through May, most programs were open at least 8 days (which amounts to about half time). March and May were the months when the most programs achieved full availability. In March and May, at least 80% of programs (73 or more sites) were open 15 days or more during the month.

Summer and Vacation Programming

Thirty-four sites (37%) offered programming during the summer of 2009. Of these, the average site was open 4.5 weeks during the summer and was available 5.5 hours per day. Additionally, 6 sites offered vacation programming; the number of days open during vacations ranged from 1 day to 10 days.

Figure 2. Site availability by month



Participant Attendance

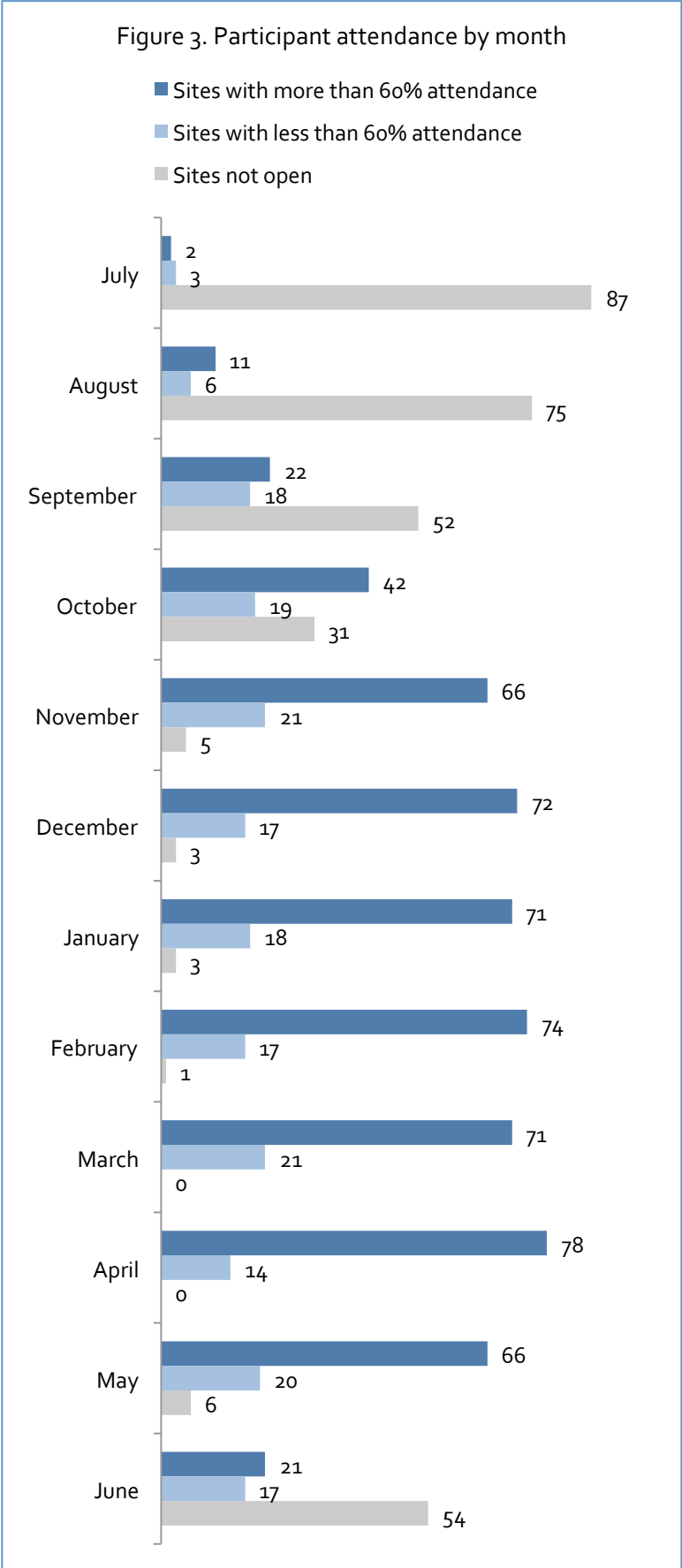
To measure the degree to which 21st CCLC sites are serving the number of youth they were expected to serve (based on the grant applications), the CSDE monitors sites' "average daily attendance." The average daily attendance for a month is calculated using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total \# of individual attendances in the month}}{\text{Target \# of youth * Days open in the month}}$$

The 'total number of individual attendances' refers the # of individuals who attended each day summed over the course of the month.

The CSDE has established a threshold of 60% average daily attendance as the minimum level that 21st CCLC sites are expected to maintain.

Figure 3 (right) provides an overview of daily attendance patterns at 21st CCLC sites for each month of the 2009-2010 school year and shows the number of sites meeting or not meeting the 60% threshold in each month. As reflected in Figure 3, fewer sites met the 60% threshold during the beginning and ending months of the year. Between November and May, at least 73% (66 or more sites) had average daily attendance rates above the 60% mark. The best month was April, when the highest number of sites (N=78, 86%) met or exceeded 60% average daily attendance.



Section Two:

Description of Programming for Student Participants

A primary purpose of the End of Year Reports required by CSDE was to collect rich information about how 21st CCLC activities and services were implemented. These activities and services—which provide youth with opportunities for academic, enrichment, and recreation—are central to the mission of the 21st Century program. To this end, the EYR included questions about the overall goals and characteristics of each site’s youth-focused programming, as well as questions about the specific services delivered in the domains of academics, enrichment, and recreation and wellness. This section summarizes the general characteristics of the programming and activities found at the sites. Included, as well, is information about the academic, enrichment, recreation, and wellness programming found at the sites.

Goals of 21st CCLC Programming

To gain a sense for the broad goals influencing 21st CCLC programs, the EYR provided site coordinators with a list of 10 goals and asked them to rank the goals in order of importance for their particular site. Table 2 below lists these 10 goals along with the average ranking across the 91 sites that completed the EYR.

Table 2. Connecticut 21st CCLCs’ ranking of importance of program goals

21 st CCLC Programming Goals (Average Rank) 1-Most Important, 10-Least Important	
1.	Providing a safe and secure place for youth to be (1.86)
2.	Developing academic skills and improving academic achievement (2.08)
3.	Improving participants’ behavior (4.55)
4.	Developing artistic, social, and cultural awareness (4.84)
5.	Developing physical fitness and healthy life skills, including drug use prevention (5.26)
6.	Providing opportunities for recreation (5.88)
7.	Providing leadership development opportunities for youth (6.46)
8.	Offering opportunities for civic engagement and community services (6.98)
9.	Supporting career exploration and development (8.22)
10.	Promoting college or career readiness (8.57)

On average, the goal of “providing a safe and secure place for youth to be” was rated as being most important to 21st CCLC sites. Sixty-one sites (67%) indicated that this was the most important goal on the list. Another goal that, on average, was ranked as a high priority was “developing academic skills and improving academic achievement.” This result suggests that, collectively, Connecticut 21st CCLCs are aligned with the 21st CCLC program’s emphasis on academic achievement. Goals that fell lower on the list of priorities included “offering opportunities for civic engagement,” “supporting career exploration” and “promoting college and career readiness.” Because the question was phrased such that respondents were forced to place the list in order, it is certainly possible that many 21st CCLCs actually do emphasize these goals, however, responses to the EYR suggest that other priorities may take precedence over these goals.

General Program Characteristics

As another means of learning about how Connecticut 21st CCLC sites are implementing their programming, the EYR included a series of questions that listed statements about after school programming and asked site coordinators to evaluate the degree to which the statement characterized programming at their particular site. The instructions for this section of the EYR stated: “To what degree does each statement characterize your programming?” Figures 4 through 9 below summarize how site coordinators responded to each statement.

Figure 4. The daily schedule remained constant from day to day. Over half of sites (N=50, 55%) said that this very much characterized their site’s programming. Only a handful of sites (N=13, 14%) endorsed this statement less strongly. These results may be interpreted in a number of ways. It may be that this handful of sites planned for more day-to-day variation in the schedule or may be that these programs had more difficulty in establishing a routine schedule.

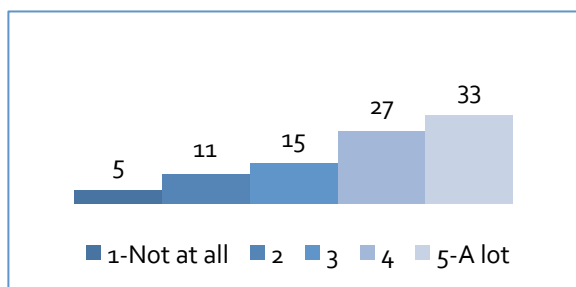
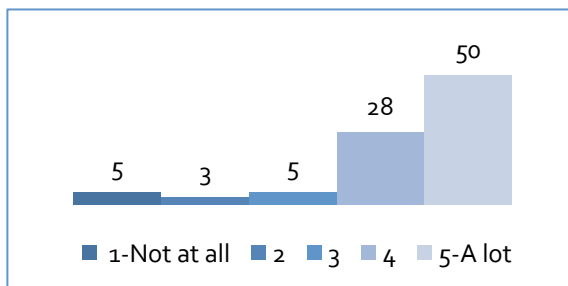


Figure 5. The program activities remained constant from day to day. Many programs indicated that their site was “a lot” like this statement, but 31 sites indicated their site was not as much like this, suggesting that day-to-day variation in activities is not uncommon for a portion of CT 21st CCLC sites.

Figure 6. Youth at this site regularly contributed to activity planning and program implementation. Compared with the characteristics discussed in Figures 4 and 5, this description was less strongly endorsed by site coordinators. The majority of sites (N=38, 42%) indicated that their site fell somewhere in the middle in terms of having youth contribute to planning and implementation. This result may, in part, be associated with the fact that a majority of sites were serving younger youth. The topic of youth involvement is discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections of this report.

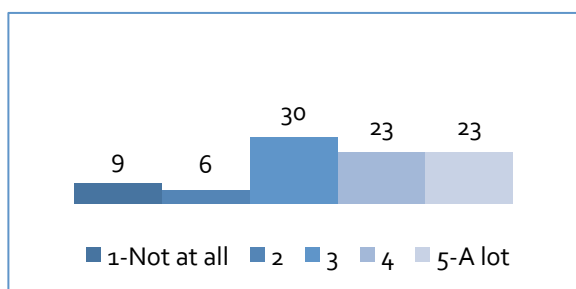
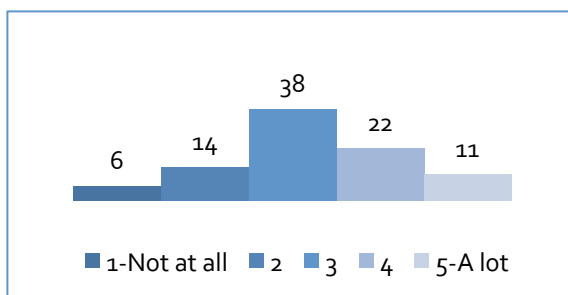


Figure 7. The physical space included pictures and other materials that reflect the participants and families served by the program. Compared to their responses regarding most other program descriptors, site coordinators were more likely to be neutral about whether the physical space for the program reflected participants and their families. Half of programs (N=46, 50%) indicated this descriptor characterized their program. These results may point to ways that some 21st CCLC can better make use of the physical space of the program to create a welcoming environment.

Figure 8. Written materials related to the program were available in languages other than English. Programs appear to vary in the degree to which they have materials available in languages other than English. The general trend, however, suggests that 21st CCLC sites in Connecticut are making materials available for participants and families who speak languages other than English.

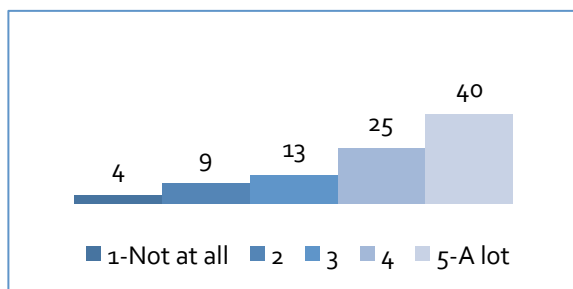
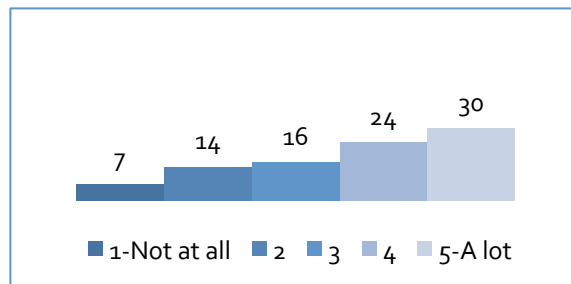


Figure 9. When necessary, interpreters were available to communicate with students and family members who spoke languages other than English. Across 21st CCLC sites, there appears to be a clear trend toward sites having interpreters available. Forty site coordinators (44%) said that their site was “a lot” like this descriptor. Less than 30% (N=26) of sites were neutral or indicated their site did not fit this description. Considered together, the results presented in Figures 8 and 9 indicate that a substantial portion of CT 21st CCLCs are taking into account the needs of those whose first language is something other than English.

Characteristics of 21st CCLC Activities

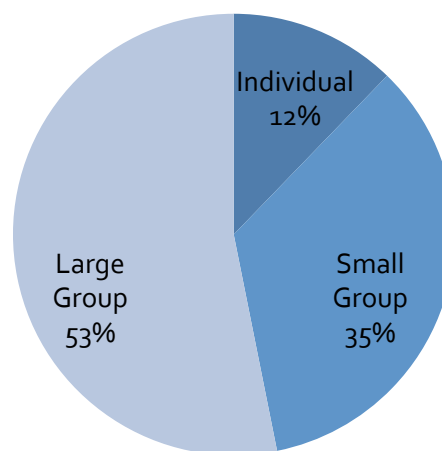
In addition to the questions about program-level characteristics discussed above, the EYR included questions about the characteristics of each site’s activities, such as the format of activities (e.g., individual versus group), the degree to which activities were required versus voluntary, and the degree of structure in activities.

Activity Group Size

Site coordinators were asked to approximate the percent of the site’s activities that fell into each format: large group, small group, and individual. Figure 10 (right) shows the percent of time that the average site spent in each activity format.

Large group activities appear to be the most common format. The average site offered just over half (53%) of its activities in a large group format. However, there was also variety among programs in the use of the large group format. The average site offered 35% of its activities in a small group format. Individual activities were least common. On average, sites indicated that about 12% of their activities fell into this category.

Figure 10. Average site's percentage of activities in each category



Activity Descriptions

Site coordinators responded to a series of statements about the characteristics of the activities being offered at their site. For each statement, respondents were asked to approximate how many of their site's activities fit the description.¹ Figures 11 through 15 below summarize the responses of the 91 Connecticut 21st CCLCs.

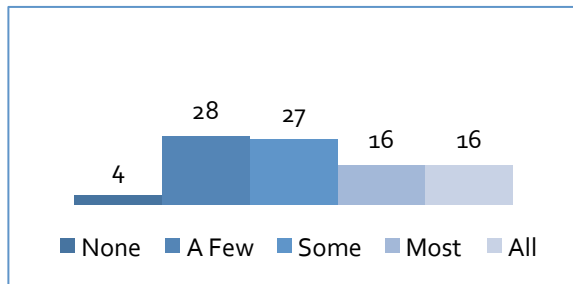


Figure 11. Students were able to choose whether to participate in the activity. Programs varied widely in terms of the degree to which participants selected their activities. Approximately a third of sites (N=32, 35%) said that for most or all of their activities, students chose whether to participate. Just under a third (N=27, 30%) said that approximately half of their activities were optional, and just under a third (N=28, 31%) said that a few activities were optional for participants.

Figure 12. Self-directed activities where participants assumed responsibility or took initiative for their learning needs. There was also variation in the degree to which activities were self-directed (where participants assumed responsibility or took initiative for their learning needs). Just under half of sites (N=41, 45%) indicated that few or none of their activities met this description. Thirty sites (33%) said that about half of their activities were self-directed, and twenty sites (22%) said that most or all of their activities met this description.

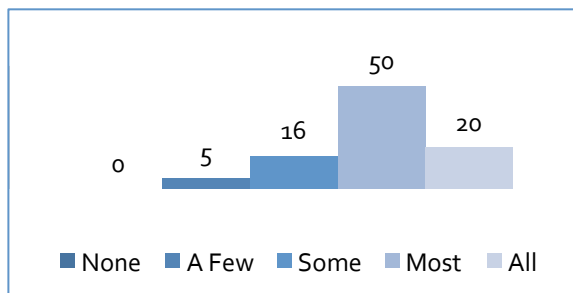
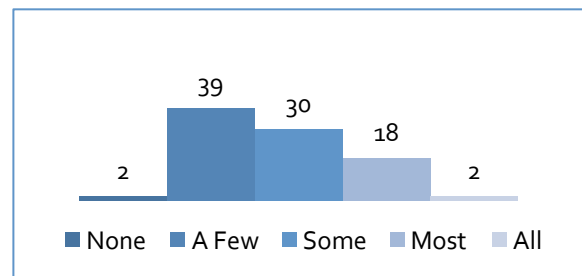
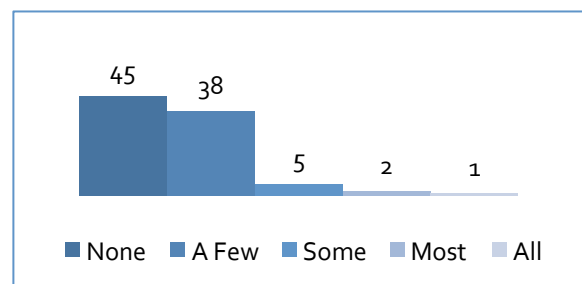


Figure 13. Activities had a formal lesson plan or structure. Seventy sites (76%) said that most or all of their activities had a formal lesson plan or structure. A relatively small number of programs (N=21, 23%) indicated that only some or a few of their activities had a formal lesson plan. The use of lesson plans is perhaps an important indicator of the level of intentionality or purposefulness of 21st CCLC activities.

Figure 14. Activities were for boys only or for girls only. After school literature indicates that programs often carry out certain forms of social development programming (usually focused on prevention of sexual and substance use risk behaviors) in boys-only or girls-only formats. Thus, the EYR included a question about same-gender activities. Nearly half of Connecticut 21st CCLC sites (N=45, 49%) reported that they had no same-gendered activities. Most of the remainder (38 sites, 42%) said they offered just a few activities in this format.



¹ Chi-square statistical tests indicate that the types of activities offered *did not* vary based on whether programs served primarily elementary, middle, or high school students.

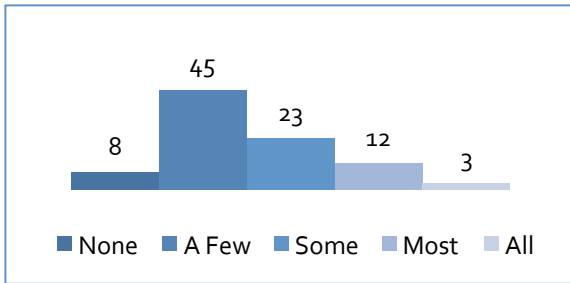


Figure 15. Activities focused on ethnic identity development, culture, and/or diversity. Connecticut’s 21st CCLCs serve a racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse population. The majority of 21st CCLC sites (N=83, 91%) reported that they offered at least a few activities that focused on ethnic identity development, culture, and/or diversity. Thirty-eight sites (42%) said that some (at least half) of their activities had such a focus. Interestingly, 15 programs (16%) said that most or all of their activities incorporated a focus on ethnic identity development, culture, and diversity.

Youth Involvement in Activity Planning and Implementation

In this year’s EYR, site coordinators were asked to describe how youth participants were involved in activity planning and implementation during the 2009 – 2010 school year. *Youth involvement* consists of young people’s participation in and active contribution to organizational decision-making.

Eighty-four site coordinators (91%) described ways in which 21st CCLC participants were involved in the programming at their site. Seven coordinators indicated that youth were not involved, and one coordinator did not provide an answer to this question. Overall, nine categories of youth involvement were identified, and the number of responses in each category is shown in Table 3 below.

	No. of Sites
Feedback: Giving Suggestions	53
Choice in Activities	18
Involvement in Activity Creation and Planning	15
Feedback: Evaluation of Activities and Programming	12
Youth/Student Council/Leadership Groups	11
Involvement in Activity Implementation	10
Advertising Program or Events	2
Recruitment of New Participants	1
Youth Representatives on General Advisory Council	1

Table 3. Forms of youth involvement in activity planning and implementation

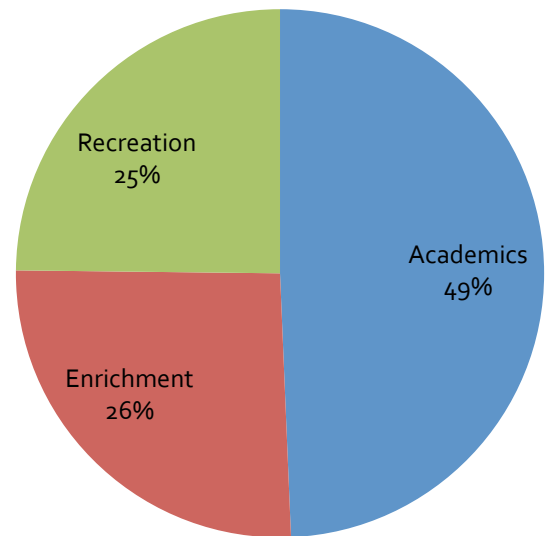
Many site coordinators wrote that one way in which youth were involved was providing feedback about the site’s programming and operations, through either giving suggestions or providing evaluations. This feedback was solicited in a variety of ways. Forty-seven site coordinators (55% of those who reported on youth involvement at their site) indicated that youth completed **surveys**. Nineteen sites held **formal group discussions** such as focus groups, whereas 10 site coordinators reported gathering **informal verbal feedback** from participants. At 2 sites, youth participated in **one-on-one interviews**.

Core Programming in Academics, Enrichment, and Recreation and Wellness

Through their responses to the EYR, Connecticut 21st CCLCs provided information about how they delivered programming in the core domains of academics, enrichment, and recreation/wellness. Site coordinators reported how programming time was allocated across these three major areas. Figure 16 (right) shows how the average program allocated its time. **On average, nearly half of programming time was dedicated to academics, and approximately a quarter of the time was spent both on enrichment and on recreation/wellness.**

In each of these core domains, 21st CCLC sites provided a range of information about how programming was delivered, including how often activities were offered, which participants were targeted, and in what format the various activities were delivered. The "General Academics" subsection summarizes what sites reported regarding their homework help and remedial assistance. The next three subsections summarize what programs reported regarding their reading and literacy, mathematics, and science programming. The final subsection summarizes what programs reported regarding their enrichment, recreation, and wellness programming.

Figure 16. Average site's allocation of time across core programming domains



General Academics

A primary aim of the 21st CCLC programs is to provide academic opportunities that assist students attending low-performing schools with meeting academic achievement standards in core academic subject areas. As part of this aim, 21st CCLCs are expected to provide tutorial services in the form of homework help and remedial assistance. The EYR asked programs to describe their approach to providing these essential academic services.

Staff Oversight of Academics

Fifty-one sites (slightly over half) had a staff member designated as an education specialist or master teacher in charge of academics. At the majority of sites with such a designated person (32 of the 51), the duties were assigned to a regular staff member who also had other duties. At 9 of the sites, the education specialist or master teacher was a full time position. Another 9 sites managed these responsibilities with a part-time position and 2 sites assigned these duties to a volunteer.

Homework Help

Research has demonstrated that students' homework completion plays a critical role in their academic success, as students who complete homework assignments have higher grades than students who do not (Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006). In order for students to reap the benefits of doing homework, they must have consistently scheduled and sufficient time to complete it (Cooper *et al.*). In this year's EYR, site coordinators reported that, on average, 38 percent of academic time was spent on homework help. The percentage ranged from 5 to 100 percent. The most common answer was 50 percent. Table 4 below shows the general characteristics of how sites provided homework assistance.

Table 4. Characteristics of sites' **homework help** programming (number of sites in parentheses)

Frequency	Participation	Format	Supervision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily (85) • A Few Times Per Week (7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required of All Students (72) • Required for Some Participants (5) • Optional for All Participants (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Groups of Students (43) • Students Working Individually (33) • Large Groups of Students (11) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified Teachers (46) • Other Paid Staff (42) • Unpaid Staff or Volunteers (2)

At most sites (N=85, 93%), homework help was offered every day and all students were required to attend. Most sites had students work on their homework individually (N=33, 36%) or in small groups (N=43, 47%). Most often, students were supervised by either certified teachers (N=46, 51%) or other paid staff (N=42, 46%).

Activities for Students Who Completed Their Homework Early

Site coordinators also reported on the activities offered to students who completed their homework before the designated time had ended. Table 5 below provides a summary of these activities. Many sites offered more than one activity; thus, the number of sites adds up to more than 92. Silent and independent reading was the most common activity. Two-thirds of sites (N=62, 67%) required students to read silently. Reading was the only activity reported by 10 sites. Ten sites provided answers that could not be categorized (e.g., "staff made other activities available").

Table 5. Activities for students who completed their homework early

	No. of Sites (% of Total)
Reading: Silently & Independently	62 (67%)
Skill-Building Activities: Worksheets, CMT prep	21 (23%)
Work on ongoing projects (schoolwork or enrichment)	16 (17%)
Academic Games: Jeopardy, Stratedice	13 (14%)
Computer Time: Academic and Enrichment Games	13 (14%)
Word Games: Word Searches, Crossword Puzzles, etc.	9 (10%)
Writing Activities: Journal Entries, Newsletter Articles	8 (9%)
Helping Other Students	6 (6%)
Board Games and Puzzles	5 (5%)
Physical Activity: Outside or Gym Time	3 (3%)
Arts: Drawing, Crafts Activities	3 (3%)

Remedial Assistance

Because the 21st CCLC initiative emphasizes serving students in under-performing schools, an important element of the academic programming is its focus on students needing remedial help. **Eighty-five Connecticut 21st CCLC sites (92%) indicated that they offered remedial assistance.** On average, programs indicated that about 30 percent of their students were designated as needing remedial assistance, however, sites varied widely in the percentage of students needing remedial assistance (range: 0% to 100%).

During the 2009 – 2010 school year, sites used a variety of strategies to identify students in need of remedial assistance. Table 6 on the next page shows the number of sites utilizing each type of strategy. Site coordinators marked all of the methods used; many marked more than one and consequently the total percentage adds up to over 100.

Table 6. Methods used to identify students in need of remedial assistance. *Strategies marked with an asterisk (*) were those listed in the "other" category by some programs.*

	No. of Sites (% of Total)
Teacher Recommendations	77 (84%)
Low Test Scores	65 (71%)
Low Grades	64 (69%)
Behavior or Discipline Issues	50 (53%)
Poor Homework Completion Rates	46 (50%)
Low Family Income	11 (12%)
*Parent Request	5 (5%)
*Students in Special Education or Those With Individualized Education Plans	5 (5%)
*English Language Learners	3 (3%)
*Guidance Counselor or Case Manager	1 (1%)

Site coordinators also reported the strategies they used to address students' remedial needs. **Fourteen different types of strategies were reported.** Many sites used more than one strategy. Some of the most frequently mentioned strategies for addressing remedial needs included:

One-on-one tutoring (32 sites). A third of sites (35%) cited one-on-one tutoring as a means of addressing participants' needs for remedial assistance. Most responses simply mentioned tutoring but did not describe the service in detail. Ten sites indicated that teachers provided their site's one-on-one tutoring and six sites mentioned that non-teachers (such as volunteer college students) provided their tutoring.

"Students are paired with mentors from the University of New Haven who provide academic support as well as social/emotional support on a weekly basis. We had about 65 mentors from UNH this school year."

"During the academic support block, students were matched specifically with learning specialists and content area language arts and math teachers who worked with them during the day and were able to support them in the afterschool program."

"Based upon the data for each participant from report cards and CMT or CAPT records, teachers identified weaknesses and incorporated instructional strategies into the lesson plans."

"Initially students were grouped by the May DRA scores and lesson[s] addressed students ability level. They were regrouped by grade level at the end of December to facilitate CMT preparations. In mid-March, students were regrouped according to the January DRA scores."

Differentiated instruction and data-based identification of need (24 sites). A number of sites explained that they used data, such as students' grades and standardized test scores, to identify areas of need and develop individualized plans. Some sites (N=9) also mentioned they used student data to organize participants into specific homework groups focused on specific needs.

In addition to the strategies already mentioned, site coordinators also reported that they used a variety of strategies to meet the remedial needs of their participants. The most commonly mentioned types of strategies are listed below, along with an example of each:

- **Small group tutoring or homework groups (19 sites)**
"We had small tutoring groups with a literacy teacher."
- **Additional activities or tutoring (18 sites)**
"The instructional consultant of the school picked the students with low reading levels to participate in our reading tutorial program. The program was twice a week for a total of three hours a week."
- **Communication/collaboration with school staff (11 sites)**
"The tutor reports to the program coordinator about students' performance. This report is also discussed with the students' home room teachers who made recommendations to enhance progress if necessary."
- **Referral to other services, such as Supplemental Education Services (11 sites)**
"We also worked closely with the school to ensure that these students participated in Supplemental Education Services."
- **Description of specific activities or programs used (6 sites)**
"Some students were recommended for programs to increase academic skills at their own pace, such as the computer program, First in Math."
- **Some form of parent involvement (6 sites)**
"Some students and their parents participated in a Literacy Program twice a month called 'Enlighten the Mind.'"
- **Contracts or homework logs/checks (5 sites)**
"Students were given individualized behavior plans which include receiving daily signatures from academic teachers verifying homework and progress."
- **Extra time for homework completion (5 sites)**
"Extra time was given if needed to complete homework assignments."
- **Nonspecific "extra help" with homework (4 sites)**
"We partnered with the school's Homework Club to provide extra homework assistance when needed."
- **Peer mentors/tutors/helpers (3 sites)**
- **Help with overall study skills and strategies (2 sites)**

Reading and Literacy Programming

As part of their academic offerings, 21st CCLC grantees are required to provide literacy-focused activities, which the Connecticut State Department of Education (2008) defines as including reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and presenting. **During the 2009 – 2010 academic year, 85 (93%) sites offered programming specifically devoted to reading and literacy; 6 did not.** Table 7 below gives an overview of sites' reading and literacy programming.

Table 7. Overview of sites' reading and literacy programming²

Frequency	Participation	Type of Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily (35) A Few Times Per Week (37) Weekly (9) Monthly (2) A Few Times a Semester (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required of All Students (64) Students Choose Whether to Participate (20) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instruction (17) Enrichment (14) Both Instruction and Enrichment (52)

Most sites provided reading and literacy activities either daily (N=35, 38%) or a few times a week (N=37, 41%). Over 70% of sites (N=64) required participation in their reading and literacy activities. At most sites (N=52, 57%), participants were required to attend reading and literacy activities that were a combination of instruction and enrichment, and these activities happened at least a few times a week. Site coordinators also were asked about the content of their reading and literacy programming. Some sites (N=38, 41%) used a packaged, research-based program for their literacy activities. Examples include KidzLit, Spiral up Phonics, and Readers' Theater. Some sites also utilized computer-based literacy activities including Lexia reading software and Test Prep Fun.

Highlights that CT 21st CCLC Site Coordinators shared about their reading and literacy programming:

"Students in fifth through eighth grades studied the lives and styles of artists/book illustrators. As a culminating lesson, students used these inspirations to create original works of art. Sixth and seventh grade students read and studied plays by a variety of playwrights. They then worked in small groups to create their own plays. Students were able to design props and backdrops and perform their plays in front of an audience."

"Each participant chose a book from a pool of over 500 books donated to the program by the Village for Children and Families. Students read and discussed books with staff prior to the event. During the event, students read to their parents, and parents read to their children using the book they chose. Staff, students and parents had a great celebration and shared the delicious food and drinks provided by both staff and parents. Each participant, including students and parents, walked away with the book that they read."

"Some of our students had the opportunity to receive tutoring online with tutors across seas. Many of these students enjoyed talking to their tutors online and learning from people from India and other countries. Many times we could not get them off of their headsets."

"Because this is a high school program, many students that have trouble reading were embarrassed, and therefore tended to not ask for help. The smaller class sizes and individualized instruction made it easier for students to ask for help and receive help tailored to their specific needs and interests."

² Respondents were not required to answer questions about participation and type of programming; therefore, these variables are sometimes missing responses for some sites.

Mathematics Programming

As a core academic subject, mathematics is expected to be a focus of 21st CCLC academic programming. **During the 2009 – 2010 school year, 75 sites (85%) offered programming focused specifically on math, whereas 16 did not.** Table 8 below gives an overview of sites’ math-focused programming.

Table 8. Overview of sites’ **mathematics** programming

Frequency	Participation	Type of Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily (24) • A Few Times Per Week (40) • Weekly (7) • Monthly (4) • A Few Times a Semester (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required of All Students (43) • Students Choose Whether to Participate (33) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction (12) • Enrichment (15) • Both Instruction and Enrichment (49)

At most sites (N=40, 44%), participants attended math activities a few times per week. About half of sites (N=43, 47%) required participation in mathematics programming. For most sites (N=49, 54%), the mathematics activities included a combination of instruction and enrichment. Site coordinators were also asked about the content of their mathematics programming. Some sites (N=39, 43%) used a packaged, research-based program for their math-focused programming. Examples include Apangea Math, Fast Math, KidzMath, Dimension, Mathletics, Math Explorer, and Everyday Math. Some sites also used math-focused computer programs, such as Test Prep Fun and ALEKS.

Highlights that CT 21st CCLC Site Coordinators shared about their mathematics programming:

“Dimension M is a program developed by Tabula Digita. It is a web based educational video game that is standards based and researched driven. The mission is to engage students so they concentrate on strengthening their math skills. This was such a great program and we could not get our kids off the computers. Our students participated in the national Dimension M conference and played against students all over the country and 2 of our students placed 1st and 2nd in their divisions. We also held a ‘battle’ of students versus parents. The parents were able to participate and get in on the fun.”

“We’ve played Math Boggle and awarded points for the trickiest equations, solved Math riddles as session openers, and practiced fractions by polling our classmates to see who likes various kinds of pizza -- and drew posters to represent our findings. The students worked weekly on ALEKS, our Math software program, to complete, progress and add ‘pieces’ to their ‘pies.’ For every 4 topics mastered, the students received a raffle ticket, redeemable at the end of the year celebration.”

“The students became detectives and learned how to do blood spatter, finger printing, foot print casting, and many more exciting activities. Each student learned forensic skills to be able to solve a cumulative activity involving a crime scene. This program is loaded with math, science, and engineering skills.”

“Kidz Math is a nationally recognized curriculum focused on numeracy. It comes with various games which supports students to strengthen their math skills in addition, subtraction, division and multiplication.”

Science Programming

As a core academic subject, science was included in the programming domains that site coordinators were asked to describe. **Seventy sites (76 %) offered science-focused programming during the 2009 – 2010 school year; 21 did not.** Table 9 below gives an overview of what sites reported about their science programming.

Table 9. Overview of sites' science programming

Frequency	Participation	Type of Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily (8) • A Few Times Per Week (21) • Weekly (23) • Monthly (2) • A Few Times a Semester (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required of All Students (40) • Students Choose Whether to Participate (30) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction (5) • Enrichment (22) • Both Instruction and Enrichment (43)

At most sites, science programming occurred at least on a weekly basis and students were required to attend. Most programming was a combination of both instruction and enrichment. Site coordinators also were asked about the content of their science programming. Some sites (33%) used a packaged, research-based program for their science-focused programming. Examples include Science Explorers, Hands on Science, Little Scientist, and Mad Science. Some sites brought in outside providers such as the Children's Science Museum, or participated in competitions like Invention Convention.

Highlights that CT 21st CCLC Site Coordinators shared about their science programming:

"Students in the World in Motion class were able to build Fuel Cell cars and compete with peers. One of our most behaviorally challenged students was able to design the fastest and well-structured car. He was proud of his work and has continued to show improvement in his behavior."

"The Environmental Leaders Club focused on what sustainability is, how sustainable our school is and what we can do to make ourselves more sustainable. Students focused on creating school-wide action plans in the areas of waste management, energy use, and sustainable site design. Furthermore, they took their proposals and outside presentations to their peers and community, and presented at the 'CT Future Problem Solvers Seminar,' whose theme was 'Building Green.'"

"Students in grades 5-8 who participated in the Science Club decided on a problem and did research to investigate it. The Scientific Method was applied and a display board was created to demonstrate the process. Students were selected to represent our site in the city wide Science Fair. 42% of the projects that were submitted by 21st Century students won the school Science Fair. Of those projects, 80% of them placed 1st – 3rd in the City-Wide Science Fair."

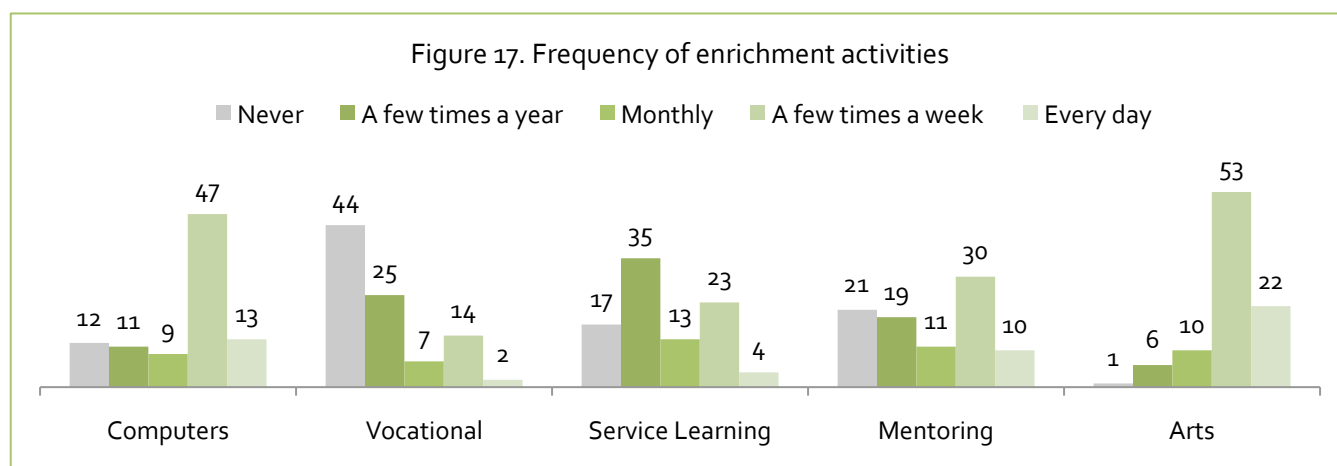
"In a demonstration of Bernoulli's Principle (Air Ball), students first learned about the scientific method. The students were then asked, 'how can you move a table-tennis ball from one cup to the other without touching the ball, touching the cups, or using any tools or materials?' Students gave ideas on how it could be done and started conducting experiments. Students then looked at what worked and didn't work. This activity brought excitement to many students when they tried blowing the ball from one cup to another. Students then tested how far they could get the cups apart. Students were able to draw conclusions that blowing a short, hard gust of air at an angle toward the ball would push the ball from one cup to another."

General Enrichment, Recreation, and Wellness

In addition to academic programming, 21st CCLC grantees must provide a broad array of additional activities and services. Enrichment activities may include arts-related programming, entrepreneurial education, and character education, such as programming focused on participants' social and emotional development. These activities should be designed to reinforce and compliment the regular academic program of participating students. This year's EYR included questions about whether, and how often, sites provided certain categories or types of general enrichment, recreation, and wellness activities.

Enrichment Programming

Figure 17 below shows how often sites provided a variety of enrichment-focused programming, including computer time, vocational programming, service learning opportunities, mentoring, arts, and other types of programming.



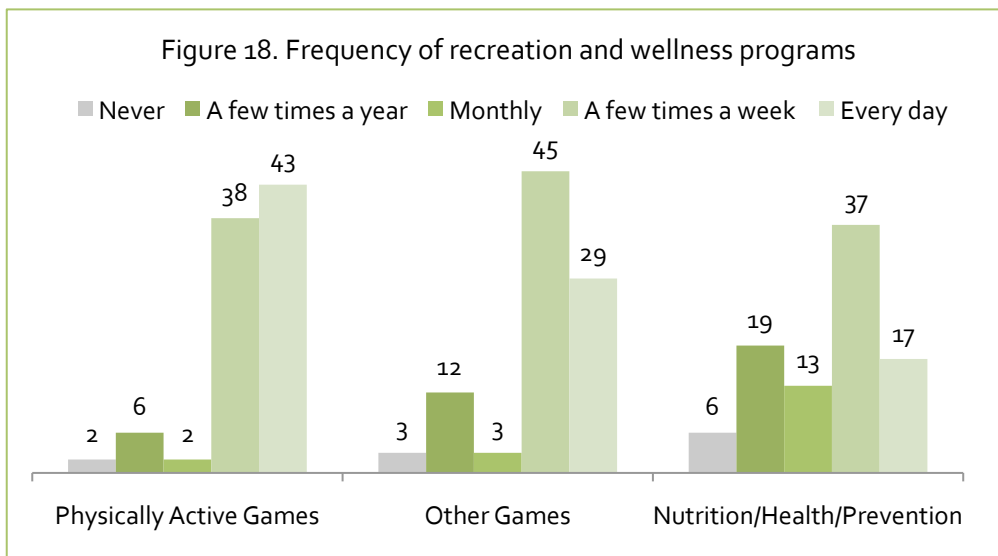
According to the information reported in Figure 17, CT 21st CCLC sites were more likely to offer frequent (at least weekly) enrichment activities focused on computers and the arts. At least two thirds of sites reported offering computer and arts activities one or more times per week. Mentoring and service learning activities were included by at least 70 sites (77%), however, these types of enrichment were more likely to occur on a less frequent basis. It is noteworthy that vocational programming was least commonly available. Almost half of programs (N=44, 48%) did not include vocational programming at all. An additional quarter of programs (N=25, 27%) made such activities available just a few times a year.

Social Development

Alongside its focus on academics, the 21st CCLC program emphasizes the importance of young people's access to a range of opportunities that support their holistic development, including social and emotional development. The afterschool literature suggests that high quality, social development-focused, afterschool programming is important for promoting both academic achievement and social/emotional development (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). Thus, social development programming was an important dimension to assess in evaluating Connecticut's 21st CCLCs. During the 2009 – 2010 school year, **72 sites (79%) offered activities specifically focused on social development**. Of these sites, 62 used a specific curriculum, whereas 10 sites created their own activities. Twenty sites (22%) did not offer activities specifically focused on social development. Thirty-eight sites (40%) offered this programming separately for boys and girls.

Recreation and Wellness

Although 21st CCLC programming emphasizes academics, Centers are expected to provide opportunities for physical activity, recreation, and health and wellness. Figure 18 below shows how often sites provided recreational and wellness programming, including physically active games, other types of games, and nutrition/health/prevention programs.



A large percentage of sites (N=43, 47%) offered physically active games every day. Most of the remaining sites (N=38, 42%) included physical activities a few times a week. A substantial proportion of programs (N=54, 59%) included nutrition, health, or prevention activities at least weekly if not more often.

Snacks

Nutrition is an important component of after school participants' overall wellness and offering snacks to participants is one way to promote wellness. **Eighty-four sites (91%) offered snacks for participants.** Fifty-two sites (56%) received federal reimbursement, whereas 28 sites (30%) used their own funds for snacks. Four sites (4%) funded snacks through donations, and 4 other sites used school funds. These numbers add up to more than 84 because sites could select more than one funding source for snacks.

Section Three:

Parent and Family Programming

In addition to providing student-focused activities, 21st CCLC sites are required to involve students' parents and families in their programs. The parent/family involvement component of 21st CCLC programming includes providing direct services to parents (e.g., family literacy activities, opportunities for parent educational development), as well as promoting parents' involvement in both their child's school and the after school program. 21st CCLC legislation explicitly requires centers to provide families with "opportunities for literacy and related educational development" (Elementary and Secondary Education Act). The importance of parent and family involvement is reflected in the fact that Connecticut 21st CCLCs are required to allocate a portion of their budget for this purpose.

Parent and Family Coordinators

Sites were asked to report whether they had a designated person responsible for parent and family involvement. **Fifty-two sites (57%) reported that they had a parent/family coordinator.** At most of these 52 sites (N=32; 62%), the parent/family coordinator duties were assigned to a staff member who had other regular responsibilities as well. At another 10 sites (11%), the parent/family coordinator was the site coordinator or building director. At 12 sites (23%), this responsibility was managed with a part-time position. Four sites (8%) dedicated a full-time position to these responsibilities, and 4 other sites (8%), relied upon a volunteer to serve as family/parent coordinator.

Communicating with Parents and Families

This year's EYR included questions about the methods that sites used to get in touch with parents in order to develop relationships, share information about the participating child, and provide information about programming available at the site. Site coordinators were provided with a list of six strategies and were asked to indicate whether their site used each strategy. They were provided with an option to list "other" methods not in the original answer choices. Table 10 below shows a summary of site coordinators' responses.

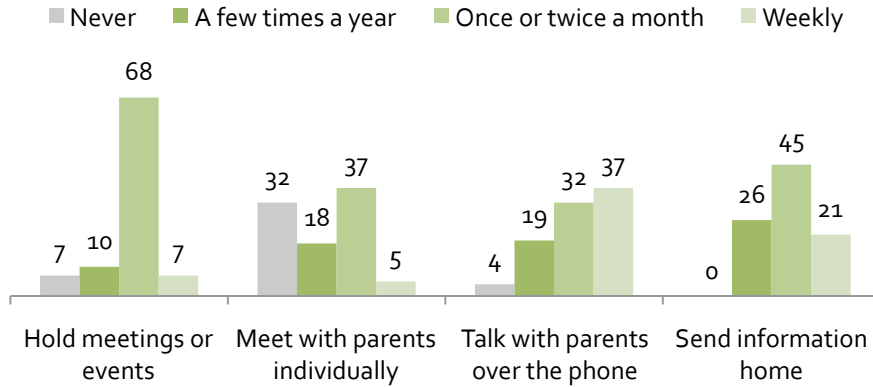
Table 10. Types of communication with parents and families

	No. of Sites (% of Total)
Relayed Information through Participant	89 (97%)
Spoke to Parents in Person	88 (96%)
Talked to Parents over the Phone	73 (79%)
Mailed Information to Parents	61 (66%)
Provided Information Online	37 (40%)
Emailed Information to Parents	19 (21%)
Other	27 (30%)

At most sites, staff relayed information through the participating child and spoke to parents in person. Staff members also commonly spoke with parents over the phone or mailed information to them. Less commonly used strategies included making information available online (such as through a website) or emailing information to parents and families. Under the "other" option, 9 site coordinators (10%) mentioned posting programming information at the school site (e.g., on a bulletin board), 5 reported using a phone system such as ConnectEd or Parent Link, and 4 listed open

houses. Three site coordinators reported that they relayed information through the Parent/Teacher Organization at the partner school. At two sites, information was provided at Parent/Teacher conferences, and another two site coordinators mentioned participating in all school events (including conferences). Finally, one site had information included in communications sent through the partner school, and one site relayed information through personal visits to students' homes.

Figure 19. Frequency of communication with parents and families



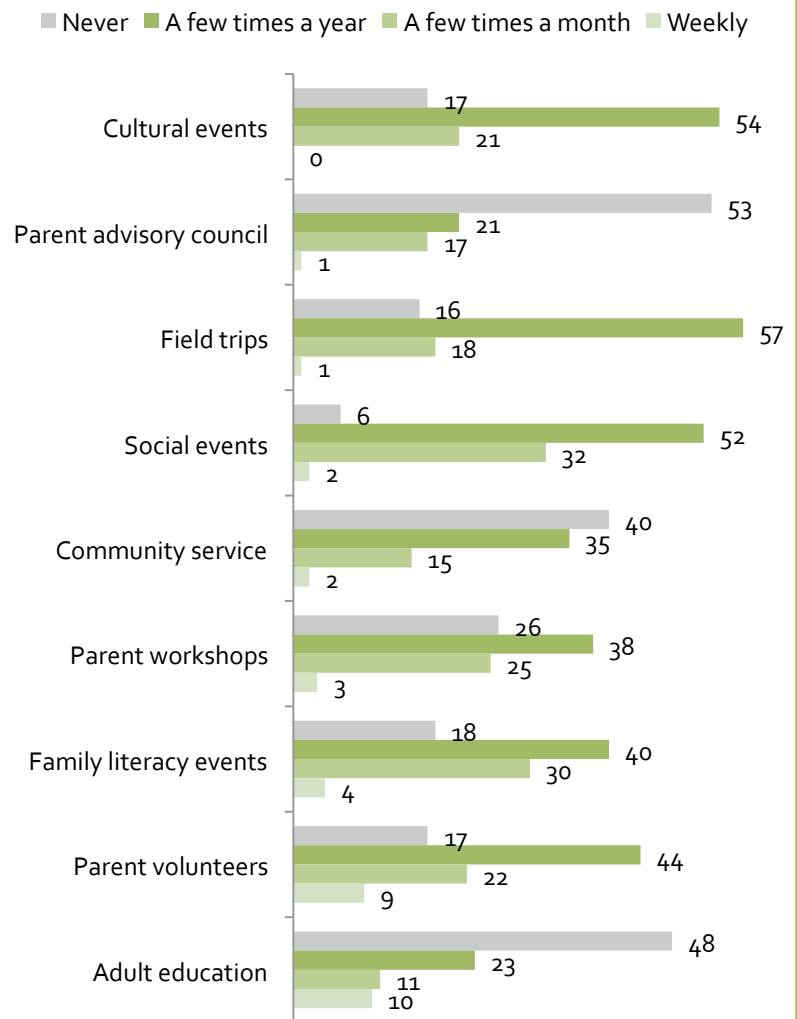
In addition to reporting **whether** they used certain methods, site coordinators also reported **how often** they, or someone from their site, used particular methods. Figure 19 to the left shows how often various parent communication strategies were used. Sites varied in the degree to which they used most strategies. However, there was a consistent trend of sites holding meetings or events for parents once or twice a month.

Events for Parents and Families

Beyond simply communicating with parents and families, 21st CCLC sites are expected to provide programming specifically targeting the needs of parents. In this year’s EYR, site coordinators reported how often they provided five different types of family and parent events. They could also write in events under the “other” category). Figure 20 (right) summarizes how sites varied in terms of how often the offered various parent and family events. **It is noteworthy that parent advisory councils and adult education were never used by a large percentage of programs.** Across all types of parent activities, most sites offered each of the activities a few times a year.

Nineteen site coordinators (21%) also reported “other” types of events and activities in their parent and family programming. “Other” types of events included community resources referrals, food and clothing banks/drives, technology workshops, art exhibits, recognition of a parent of the month, and parent participation in student activities.

Figure 20. Frequency of parent and family events



Parent and Family Funding from the 21st CCLC Grant

Each 21st CCLC site is provided funding specifically for parent involvement. This year’s EYR included a question asking site coordinators to describe how these funds were used during the 2009 – 2010 school year. **Grant-funded activities for parents and families fell into four broad categories:** on-site events for families that included both parents and children and sometimes siblings; parent-only events; off-site events for families, including both parents and children; and materials and supplies for parent- and family-focused programming. Table 11 (right) shows the number of site coordinators mentioning each type of activity. **Three site coordinators reported not using the funds for this purpose during the 2009 – 2010 school year.**

Table 11. Use of family/parent funds

	No. of Sites (% of Total)
On-site events for families	58 (64%)
Parent-only events	34 (37%)
Off-site events for families	25 (27%)
Materials and supplies	10 (11%)

On-site events for families

The majority of sites (N=58, 63%) used grant funds to provide activities and events for families at the 21st Century Community Learning Center site. Often, these funds were used to purchase materials and supplies specifically for these events, such as food, raffle prizes, and books for literacy nights. For example, one site coordinator wrote: **“The funds went towards monthly parent/family events at the school. The funds paid for food/beverages for parents, a Spanish translator, raffle prizes and professional speakers/guests.”**

Off-site events for families

Many sites (N=25, 27%) used funds for off-site activities, such as field trips or events held at local venues such as parks. Sites were able to pay parents as chaperones on field trips or provide tickets to events and locations, such as museums, for parents and children to attend or visit. For example, one site coordinator wrote: **“We tried to introduce families to new cultural experiences. We took our families to Mystic Aquarium, Circle-Line Cruise and a Broadway Show. Many of our families would not have experienced any of these events if we did not provide the opportunity.”**

Parent-only events

Many sites (N=34, 37%) provided events for parents only, including various types of classes, speakers, and workshops. For these events, funds were used to pay speakers and presenters as well as to provide refreshments and meals, transportation to the events, childcare for parents, and materials such as notebook and handouts. Some parent-only events focused on the parents’ role in their children’s lives, whereas other sites hosted parent-only events that focused on the development and needs of the parents themselves. For example, **7 sites provided English as a Second Language classes for parents.** Other sites provided speakers and workshops related to other topics such as technology.

“We hosted four parent night events with a local agency. They provided the speaker while we provided the location, meal, and babysitting services. The topics were based on how to communicate with your teenager.”

“Parents attended nine hours of instructions and upon completion received a free computer for their home with two years of free Internet.”

Materials and supplies

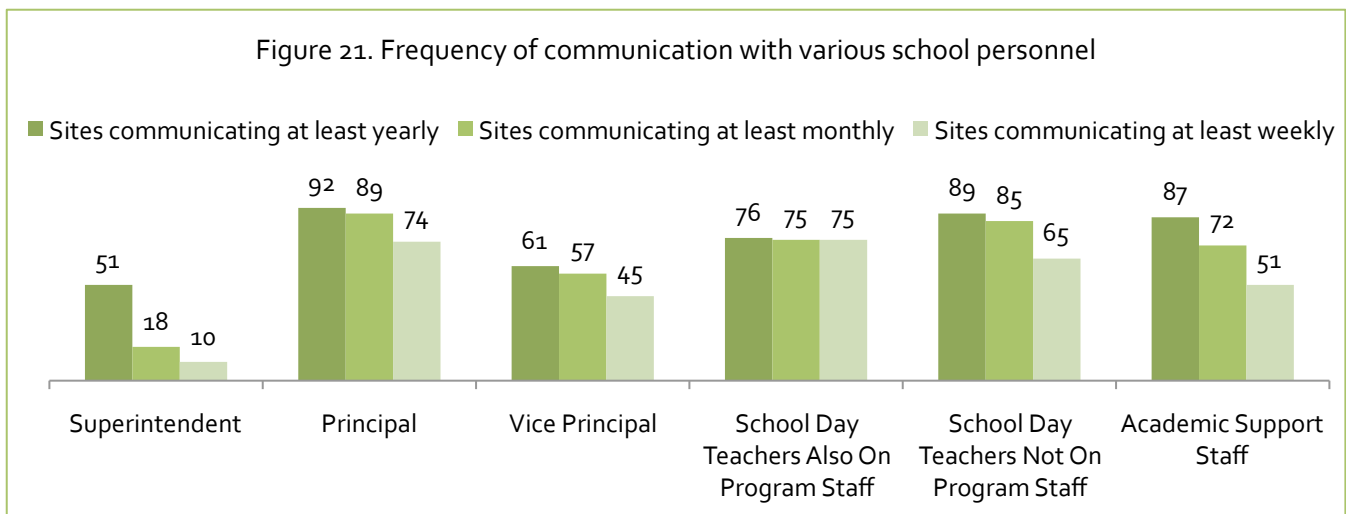
At 10 sites, these funds were used for general materials and supplies (rather than for supplies for specific events). This included **supplies for communications to parents** (such as for the production of a parent newsletter), as well as other types of supplies, such as the purchase of a cell phone for communicating with parents.

Section Four: Relationships with Partner Schools

A primary goal of the 21st CCLC program is to provide students in under-resourced schools with enrichment opportunities that complement participants' school day learning (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). 21st CCLCs are expected to provide academic programming that is aligned with learning objectives in the core academic subjects. Indeed, as discussed below, many 21st CCLCs were incorporated into their partner school(s)' school improvement plan. Essential 21st CCLC academic programs, such as homework help and remedial instruction in reading and math, extend directly from participants' experiences and performance during the school day. Additionally, many of the 21st CCLC programs are physically located in their partner school, meaning that the operation of the program involves coordinating the physical resources of the school. For all of these reasons, communication between after school staff and participants' schools are important for ensuring high quality after school programming. The 2009-2010 EYR asked 21st CCLC site coordinators about various aspects of their site's communication with the partner school.

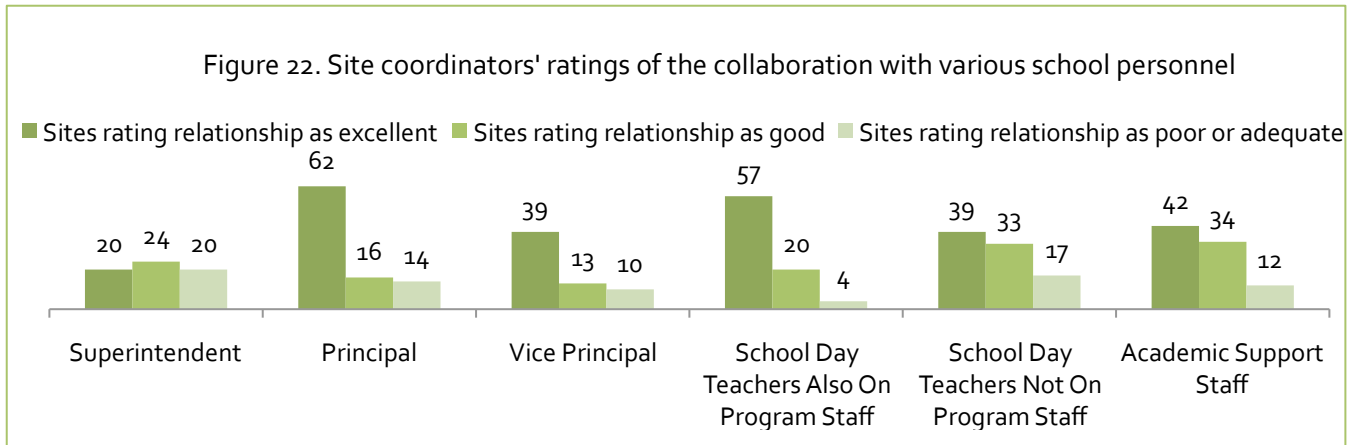
Relationships with School Personnel

This year's EYR included questions about how often someone at the site communicated with specific personnel in the partner school(s). Site coordinators were also asked to rate the quality of the relationship between the site and each school staff member. Figure 21 below summarizes responses regarding the frequency of communication with specific people from the partner school.



Communication with school principals was very common. All sites had at least yearly contact with principals. Over 80% of sites (N=74) reported at least weekly communication with their building principals. It was more common for sites to report regular contact with a principal than with a vice principal. **Fewer sites communicated with the district superintendent;** a little over half (N=51, 56%) communicated with the superintendent at least once during the year. **Broadly speaking, a large percentage of sites reported regular contact with school day teachers and academic support staff (e.g., guidance counselors).** Over 80% of sites reported that they had at least monthly contact with school day teachers (whether on the program staff or not) and with academic support staff. Sites were most likely to report weekly contact with teachers.

In addition to reporting the frequency of contact between their site and various school personnel, site coordinators also rated the quality of the site's relationship with each school contact. Figure 22 below summarizes site coordinators' ratings of the relationship quality for different school personnel.



Site coordinators were especially likely to rate as excellent their program’s relationships with principals and school day teachers who were also on the program staff. Over 85% of programs rated relationships with these school personnel as either excellent or good. By comparison, it appears that site coordinators perceived relationships with teachers differently depending on whether they were also part of the after school staff.

Liaison to the School

Seventy-eight site coordinators (85%) reported that, during the 2009 – 2010 school year, the site had a designated person who was in charge of communication with the partner school. At 66 sites (72%), the site coordinator, lead teacher, or building director was responsible for these duties. Other responses included site, program, or center assistant, grant manager or administrator, parent liaison, and data administrator. Common duties of the liaison included communicating with school staff via email or phone and attending various school meetings, such as school staff meetings or Individual Education Plan meetings.

Inclusion in the Partner School’s School Improvement Plan

Fifty site coordinators (54%) reported that their site was formally included in the partner school’s school improvement plan. Table 12 (right) shows the ways that site coordinators described being included. The most commonly reported way in which the site was included was as a “Tier 2 Indicator” (mentioned by 12 sites), meaning that the after school program was “designed to provide additional prescriptive instruction support systems to address the needs of students identified as below proficiency by working to improve literacy and numeracy of students.”

Table 12. Ways that sites were included in the “School Improvement Plan”

	No. of Sites
Included as a “Tier 2 Indicator”	12
Collaborated in writing school improvement plan	9
Included as a strategy to increase parent and family involvement	8
General academic enrichment and support opportunities	7
Included in the District Improvement Plan	5
Recommended strategy for students to improve performance	5
Strategy to improve school climate and student engagement	4
Part of the school’s Positive Behavior Intervention System	3
The program is listed as a partner	2
Strategy for Increased oral language opportunities	1

Challenges to Maintaining Positive Relationships with the School

This year’s EYR asked site coordinators to describe challenges that the site faced in maintaining a positive relationship with the partner school(s). Overall, 36 sites provided a response to this question. Table 13 (right) summarizes the types of challenges reported by these 36 sites and the number of site coordinators who mentioned them.

Table 13. Categories of challenges described by coordinators

	No. of Sites
Maintaining communication with school day staff	13
Conflicting schedules/ Getting appropriate space	13
Lack of support from school day staff	5
Teacher concerns regarding use of classrooms	4
Off-site program	6
Staffing transitions	2

Maintaining communication with school day staff

“Many teachers seemed overwhelmed with other responsibilities and often were either late in getting student assignments, surveys, etc., to us or did not get them to us unless we constantly reminded them.”

“The school restructured their dismissal policies without informing after school staff.”

At 13 sites, communicating with school day staff posed a challenge. In some cases, pertinent information was not shared with site staff. Other site coordinators mentioned the busy schedules of school day staff (e.g., principals, teachers) as an obstacle to maintaining contact. Finally, some site coordinators reported that the actual communication mechanisms were causing difficulties in communication

Conflicting space schedules/getting appropriate space

Thirteen site coordinators reported that space and scheduling issues were obstacles to maintaining a positive relationship with the school. Many schools have limited space for activities, and these already limited spaces need to be used for several different types of afterschool groups. For example, one coordinator wrote: **“We were often bumped out by outside groups. We did not feel that we had priority in scheduling of space.”** Other site coordinators, such as the one quoted on the right, reported that limited storage space kept the staff members from feeling like they were really a part of the partner school.

“We do not feel connected at the school because we do not have a space to store relevant materials. We either carry things with us in our cars to and from the school or we just don't have anything people are looking for. It is frustrating for the staff, as we are trying to do a service for the school and the students, but we are faced with these road blocks that prevent us from fully operating the program to its fullest potential.”

Lack of support from school day staff

At 5 sites, coordinators reported a lack of support for the program from school day staff. For example, one site coordinator stated, **“Support with school day staff was a challenge. [The program] was being used as a disciplinary measure by school day teachers without communication made to Site Coordinator or Principal.”**

Teacher concerns regarding use of classrooms

Four site coordinators reported that teachers' concerns about use of their classrooms were a challenge in maintaining positive relationships. One site coordinator, quoted at right, described this challenge and also the procedures the site had developed to address teachers' concerns.

"Teachers were often concerned about the way their classrooms were left. We created a new system to ensure that their classrooms remained clean. Each teacher had to use a daily checklist to make sure rooms were left in order. Teachers were also concerned that students would use the classroom materials, therefore we placed containers in each classroom to make sure that students were using only after school materials."

Off-site programs

"We have students from 3 middle schools so it's difficult to maintain a close collaborative relationship with 3 individual schools and being in a different location from each. We also have a difficult time tracking daily attendance of students. We do not know on a daily basis if our students are out sick or absent from our program for another reason."

Six site coordinators specifically mentioned being an "off-site" program as a challenge to maintaining relationships with the partner school (and, in some cases, multiple schools). Four were not specific in describing why this was a challenge for them, but two were. One is quoted at the left, and the other wrote: **"No transportation is a challenge to ensuring that students arrive to the center. Being allowed to go home prior to the start of the program allows the students the opportunity to change their mind about attending."**

Staffing transitions

At two sites (from the same grant), site coordinators mentioned the difficulties related to changes in school personnel, specifically the district superintendent.

Despite the challenges noted above, the majority of sites reported having relatively frequent contact with school personnel and rated the quality of these collaborations as either excellent or good. The challenges reported by some sites may provide a starting point for supporting all programs in achieving even stronger collaborations with their partner schools.

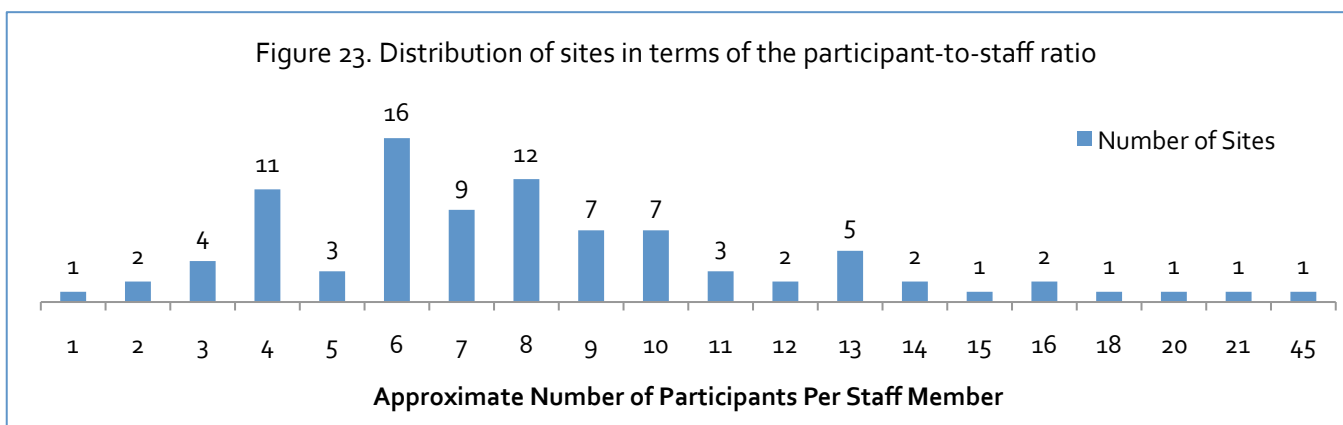
Section Five: Staffing & Professional Development

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 after school programs benefit young people (e.g., Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Huang *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, after school programs' budgets reflect the importance of staffing: personnel costs are very often the primary cost driver of after school programs and the greater allocation of resources for staffing has been associated with higher quality after school programs (Grossman, Lind, Hayes, McMaken, & Gersick, 2009). Various aspects of staffing—such as the overall size of a program's staff, its staff members' qualifications, and professional development opportunities provided to staff—are important in after school program staffing. CT 21st CCLC sites were asked to describe a number of aspects of their staffing and professional development practices during 2009-2010.

General Staffing Characteristics

- The average site had **19 total staff members** (range: 4 to 69).
- The average site had **11 staff members present on a typical day** (range: 2 to 30). This includes administrators, direct service staff, and volunteers or interns.
- At a typical site, **49 percent** of staff were **paid employees who were not certified teachers**.
- On average, **29 percent** of staff members were **certified teachers who were also school day staff**.
- At an average site, approximately **6 percent** of the program's staff consisted of **certified teachers who were not on staff at the school**.

Another important consideration with regard to quality programming is the ratio of staff to students. To examine this factor, each site's response to the question about the number of staff members present on a typical day was compared with the site's target number of youth to be served, yielding an approximate ratio of participants-to-staff. The average site had a ratio of just over 8: 1 (youth to be served versus staff present), but this ratio varied widely across sites. Figure 23 below shows the distribution of sites in terms of this approximated ratio.



As Figure 23 indicates, the most common ratio was 6 participants for each staff member. Although these ratios provide a sense of how programs differ in this regard, the information reported in Figure 23 should be interpreted cautiously. These ratios were calculated using sites' self-reported number of total staff present on a given day; some site coordinators may have over or underestimated this number, resulting in particularly small or large ratios. Furthermore, the student portion of the ratio was based upon the site's proposed target number of youth to be served rather than the actual number of students served.

Staffing Stability

A portion of the staffing questions on the EYR inquired about how long staff members had worked at the site and how much turnover there was in the staff during the 2009-2010 year.

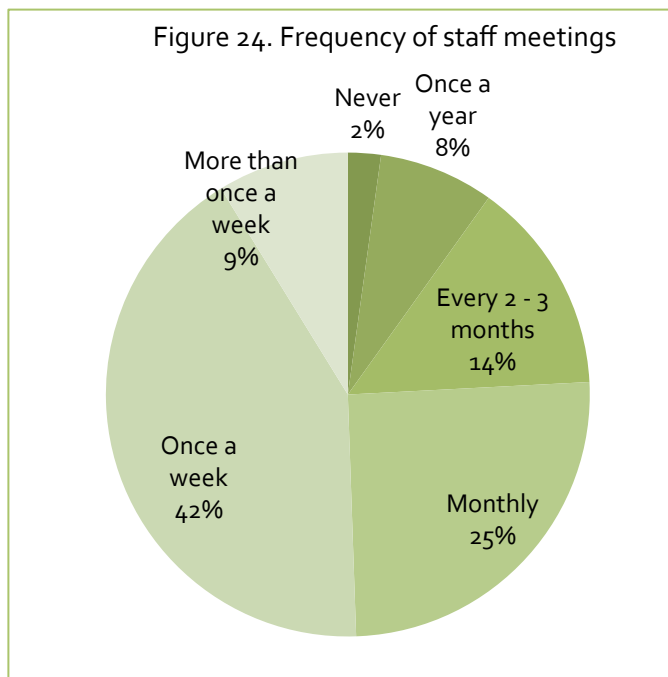
A substantial number of sites (38 sites, 42%) indicated that at least half of their staff had worked at the site for over two years. A majority of sites (76 sites, 84%) indicated that less than a quarter of their staff was comprised of people who had worked there fewer than 6 months.

Based on the EYR responses, it appears that most Connecticut 21st CCLC had very little staff turnover. Of the 91 sites surveyed, **70% (62 sites) indicated that less than 10% of their staff turned over during the course of the year.** A substantial majority (78 sites, 86%) had less than 20% of the staff turn over. Just 15 sites (16%) indicated that more than 20% of their staff turned over during the course of the year.

Staff Meetings

Site coordinators were asked a variety of questions about occasions when staff members came together for meetings, trainings, and professional development events. **A majority of sites reported that regular staff meetings were a part of their program operations. Nearly 70 sites (77%) said that they met at least monthly.** Figure 24 summarizes how frequently staff meetings were held during 2009-2010.

The 2009-2010 EYR also included a series of questions about what occurred at staff meetings. **The average site held staff meetings that lasted for 48 minutes.** A few sites reported that they never met, and a few sites indicated that they dedicated 2 or more hours to staff meetings. Nearly half of sites (N=41, 45%) indicated that their staff meetings lasted for an hour or more. In terms of the content addressed in meetings, a majority of sites (over 85%) indicated that their staff meetings consistently (often or at almost every meeting) addressed general programming considerations and the planning for specific program activities. **Over two thirds of sites (N=62, 68%) consistently used staff meetings to discuss the needs of individual students.** Fewer sites consistently incorporated training or professional development into their staff meetings, but most sites (N=51, 56%) said that the staff meetings sometimes included such training. When interpreting this information about the length and content of staff meetings, it should be kept in mind that sites meeting more frequently probably conducted staff meetings differently from sites meeting less often.



Staff Training and Professional Development

Site coordinators were asked a series of questions about their site’s training and professional development (PD) activities. During the 2009-2010 year, **the average site had 60% of its training and PD activities take place onsite (remaining 40% was offsite)**. Nineteen programs (21%) indicated that *all* of their training and PD events took place onsite. Nine programs (10%) said that *all* of their training and PD took place offsite.

Site coordinators were also asked about the content addressed in their site’s training and professional development activities. In Table 14 below, column 2 summarizes sites’ responses regarding the topics covered when training new staff members. The results indicate that many topics were consistently included in new staff training across 21st CCLC programs. However, there were also a number of important topics, such as maintaining safety or working with participants from varied cultural backgrounds, that were not included in the new staff training for a substantial portion of programs.

In addition to this information about new staff training, site coordinators also provided information about the topics covered in their **ongoing trainings and PD activities for existing staff**. Site coordinators were asked how many times each of thirteen topics were addressed during training and PD events that took place during 2009-2010. Table 14 below (columns 3 and 4) summarizes sites’ responses regarding whether the topic was covered and, if so, about how it was addressed over the course of the year. All 13 topics were covered by a large percentage of the programs (over 80%). At sites that did address a particular topic, on average, all topics were covered more than twice over the course of the year.

Table 14. Frequency of addressing particular professional development topics

Training and Professional Development Topics	#Sites Covering in NEW STAFF Trainings	# Sites Covering in Ongoing ALL STAFF Trainings	Average Number of Times Covered in 'All Staff' Trainings During Year
1. Program goals	79	90	3.0
2. Program policies and procedures	78	88	3.0
3. Creating structure/rules and behavioral management	77	88	2.9
4. Staff-student interactions	73	87	2.7
5. Involving parents and families	72	87	2.9
6. Working with participants with a variety of academic needs	67	86	2.8
7. Academic instruction strategies	66	86	2.8
8. Maintaining physical and psychological safety at the site	65	83	2.9
9. Youth development (e.g., conflict resolution, community service)	58	82	2.5
10. How to deliver social development activities	44	79	2.3
11. How to deliver recreational/health activities	56	77	2.6
12. Working with participants from a variety of cultural backgrounds	51	73	2.5
13. Data management	42	72	2.3

Section Six:

Program Improvement and Evaluation Activities

Applicants for Connecticut 21st CCLCs are required to develop a data-driven evaluation plan as part of their grant proposal. A strong evaluation plan includes identifying the program's specific goals and developing a data management process that enables assessment of progress toward those goals. In the EYR for 2009-2010, site coordinators were asked a variety of questions about their site's program improvement and evaluation activities, including what sources of information the site used to assess its performance, how the site handled its data management, and what aspects of programming the site planned to target in its program improvement efforts.

Sources of Information Used for Program Improvement

In this year's EYR, site coordinators were provided with a list of 8 sources of information that could be used for planning, designing, and evaluating their programming. Respondents ranked the 8 data sources in terms of how often their site used each source of information. A ranking of 1 represents "used the most," and 8 represents "used the least." Table 15 below shows the average ranking across all programs for each of the 8 sources listed.

Table 15. Ranking of sources of feedback for program improvement

Ranking of Source of Information About Program Performance	Average Rank 1-Most Used 8-Least Used
Formal Feedback from Participants	3.7
Individual Data	3.7
School Principals	3.9
School Day Teachers NOT on Staff	4.3
Teacher Feedback	4.4
Parents	4.5
Results of Program Evaluations	5.7
Quality Advising	5.8

As shown in Table 15, **feedback from participants and individual data were the most highly ranked** (meaning that the largest number of sites rated them as the form of feedback they relied on most). In contrast, results of program evaluations and of the quality advising process had the lowest average rankings (meaning that most sites ranked them among the sources of information they used the least.) Although a large number of sites reported that they used feedback from the quality advising and program

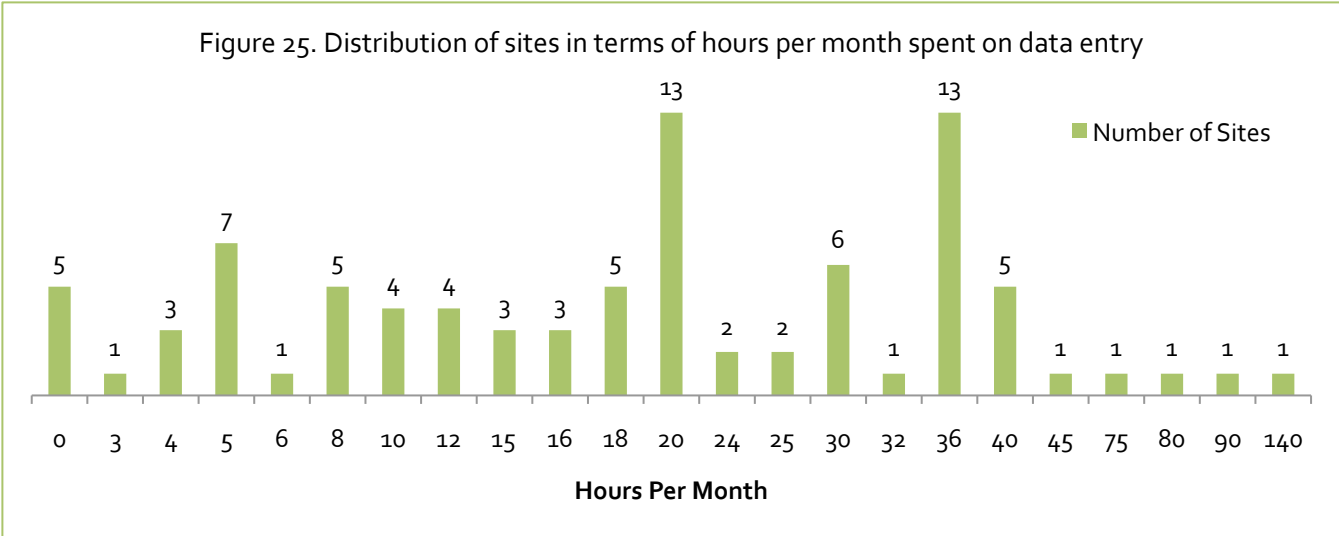
evaluation processes least often, this does not mean that they did not use these sources of information at all; it simply means that they used these sources less often than they used other sources of data.

Data Management

The number of individuals trained in data entry ranged from none (12 sites) to 5 (1 site). **Most sites had either one (27 sites; 30%) or two (35; 38%) individuals trained in data entry;** a smaller number of sites (13; 14%) had three individuals trained, and no sites had four staff trained in data entry. **Seventy-six sites (83%) had a "dedicated data entry person," or someone who was specifically responsible for data entry and management.**

A majority of site coordinators (N=60, 65%) reported that data entry went "very well" or "well." Twenty-four coordinators (26%) said that it went "fairly well," whereas a small number reported that data entry went "poorly" (3) or "very poorly" (1).

Site coordinators also reported the number of hours that data entry required each month. Responses regarding the number of hours spent on data entry each month ranged widely from 0 hours to 140 hours, **with the average being approximately 23 hours per month.** Figure 25 below shows the distribution of site coordinators' responses to this question.



About one third of sites (30) said that they used software tools other than the CAYEN system (4 sites did not provide answers to this question). Microsoft Excel was the most commonly reported tool, used by 14 sites. Other tools included Efforts to Outcomes, SchoolNet, iWork Numbers, Microsoft Access, Star Student, Tetradata, Tenex, RecTrac, and Keyware.

Reporting Requirement for Other Stakeholders

Fifty-one site coordinators (56%) reported that their site submitted reports to other entities besides the CSDE. Table 16 (right) shows the most commonly reported stakeholders who required some form of progress report from 21st CCLCs.

Table 16. Reports required by additional stakeholders

Reports Submitted to Entities Other than CSDE	No. of Sites
Principal	18
Other School Staff (e.g., Director of Curriculum)	11
Board of Education	7
Funding or Supervising Organization	7
Superintendent	6
Grant Coordinators	3
Grant Writers	3
Data specialist	1
Outside Evaluator	1

Specific Areas Targeted for Program Improvement

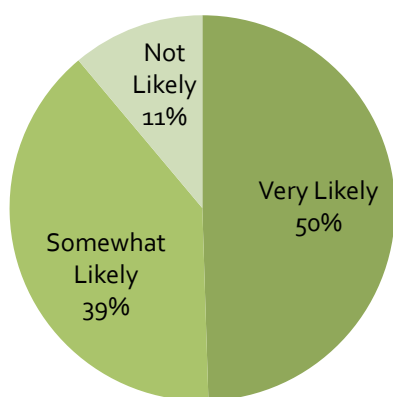
In this year's EYR, site coordinators also reported on the likelihood that their site would focus on seven domains of programming: parent engagement, academics, behavior management and staff/participant interactions, social development, data management, professional development, and recreational/wellness programming. For each of the areas they marked as "very likely" to be targeted, site coordinators were asked to describe the site's strategies for improvement in that area.

Parent and Family Engagement and Programming

Parent and family engagement and programming was the most common area identified as being in need of improvement, with the vast majority of programs indicating that they were either very likely or somewhat likely to focus on this aspect of their program. Most coordinators described multiple strategies that they planned to use to address the issue.

By far, the most commonly reported strategy was to increase the frequency and/or type of parent and family programming offered (69 sites, 76%). Twenty-three coordinators mentioned increasing family-child programming, such as family dinners, open houses, or field trips.

Figure 26. Intention to focus on parent engagement



Sixteen coordinators planned to change parent-only offerings, such as by providing parent workshops on financial or computer literacy.

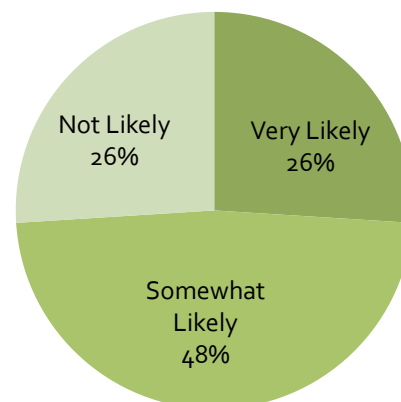
The second most common strategy, identified by 17 coordinators, was to solicit additional parent feedback, primarily through surveys. Sixteen coordinators described plans to increase opportunities for parents to volunteer, and the same number explained that they wanted to increase opportunities for parents to be involved in the planning of activities, including the creation of a parent advisory council of some type. Sixteen coordinators reported that they wanted to increase the frequency of communication with parents, whereas 15 others described planned changes in types of parent communication, such as creating a website and sending out information via e-mail. Other less commonly mentioned strategies included reducing barriers

to parent participation (11 sites) by providing transportation, food, or child care, or changing the times and locations of events; collaborations with the partner school's Parent Teacher Organization/Association or community organizations (9 sites); changes to personnel (6 sites), such as hiring a parent and family coordinator; and implementing parent contracts that specified an expectation for parent involvement (2 sites).

Academic Programming

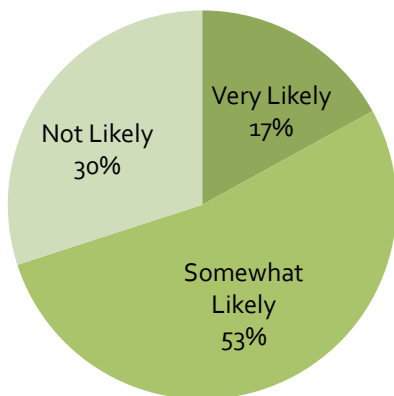
Twenty-three coordinators indicated that their sites were "very likely" to focus on academic programming. Of these, 19 described the specific strategies they were planning to use. These included purchasing or using a specific curriculum (5 sites); offering additional or different types of activities in certain academic areas (5 sites); improving or increasing sources of data about students (4 sites); changing the goals and structure of the program, such as more alignment with the regular curriculum (4 sites); creating or expanding programs for students needing additional assistance (3 sites), increasing collaboration with parents and teachers (1 site); and providing professional development on new strategies to help students (1 site).

Figure 27. Intention to focus on academics



Behavior Management and Staff-Participant Interactions

Figure 28. Intention to focus on behavior management and staff-participant interactions

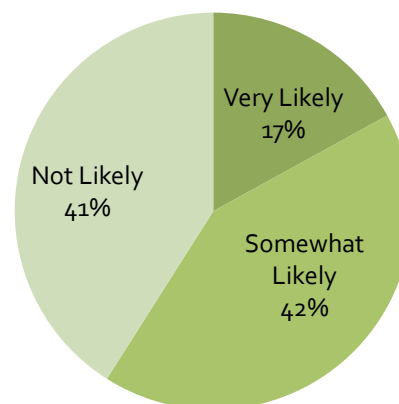


Although 15 coordinators indicated that their site was very likely to focus on the area of behavior management and staff-participant interactions, only 5 described the strategies that they would use to address this area. Overall, the 5 responses center on implementing proactive approaches to shaping students' behavior. These strategies included restructuring activities and discipline systems, implementing a system of incentives for good behavior, providing more professional development for staff and implementing behavior contracts.

Data Management

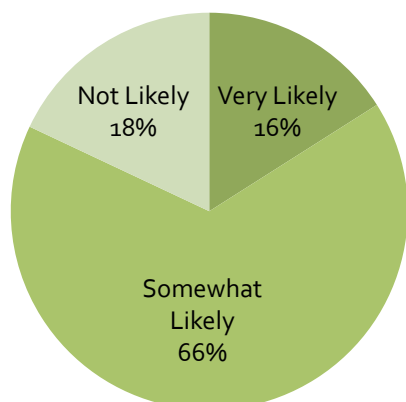
Fifteen site coordinators (17%) reported that they were very likely to focus improvement efforts on data management; 10 described the strategies they planned to use. Broadly, data management improvement strategies were (a) to hire someone (3 sites); (b) to collect and use more data, such as test scores and student portfolios (2 sites); and (c) to increase monitoring of the data collection process, such as designating one person responsible for data administration, creating additional deadlines, sending more staff for training in data entry, and checking accuracy of entered data more frequently (5 sites).

Figure 29. Intention to focus on data management



Social Development Programming

Figure 30. Intention to focus on social development

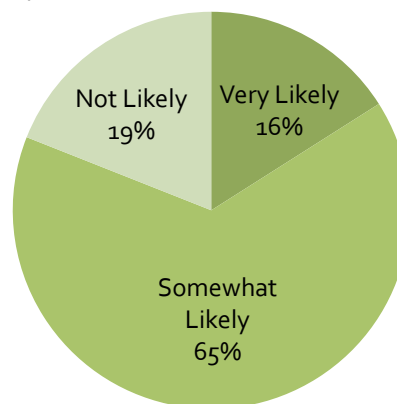


Fourteen site coordinators (16%) chose social development as an area very likely to be targeted for improvements; 8 coordinators described the strategies they planned to use. Strategies in this area included (a) creating activities focusing on team building, leadership, and social skills (3 sites); (b) targeting self-esteem (2 sites); (c) implementing staff and student reflection time using journals (1 site); (d) creating more varied programming around monthly themes (1 site); and (e) implementing community service projects (1 site). One coordinator reported that his or her site would be implementing a social development program for the first time in the upcoming school year.

Professional Development

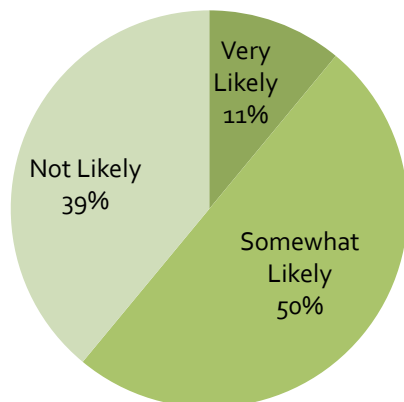
Fourteen site coordinators (16%) indicated that the professional development at their sites needed improvement; all provided strategies for addressing this need. Strategies included (a) focusing professional development programming on student behavior and staff-participant interactions (8 sites); (b) starting professional development earlier in the year, in some cases prior to the start of school (3 sites); and (c) surveying staff to determine their perspective on their professional development needs (2 sites).

Figure 31. Intention to focus on professional development



Recreation and Wellness Programming

Figure 32. Intention to focus on recreation and wellness programming



Ten site coordinators chose recreation and wellness programming as an area they would target for improvement; 9 described specific strategies. The most common strategies were to broaden the activity offerings in this area (6 sites), by hiring a recreation assistant and having recreation and wellness activities available for families as well. One coordinator mentioned including a healthy eating component for participants and their families, another reported that the site planned to use a specific curriculum, and one described wanting to incorporate an academic component into recreational activities.

Across the seven domains of programming reviewed above, Connecticut 21st CCLCs appear to be acknowledging the importance of program improvement. Only 2 sites indicated that they were not likely to work on improving in any of the seven programming areas. The remaining 89 programs each identified at least two aspects of their programs on which they were likely to focus their program improvement efforts.

In terms of how they are approaching program improvement, Connecticut 21st CCLCs' program evaluation activities appear to center around participant-driven sources of data (including feedback from youth participants and data on the performance of individual students). Programs varied widely in the amount of time spent on data management, but generally indicated that their data management practices were going smoothly. In terms of program improvement initiatives, parent/family involvement and academic programming emerged as priorities for many sites. These priorities for improvement may provide a starting point for the quality advising support offered by CSDE.



Section Seven: Discussion and Recommendations

The results of the 2009-2010 evaluation of Connecticut 21st CCLCs suggest that, collectively, the network of programs is operating in a manner that is consistent with both federal and state guidelines for 21st CCLCs. A majority of Connecticut sites indicated that they are offering a combination of academic programming, enrichment activities, and recreation and wellness programming. Over 90% of programs provided daily homework help for all students and had services in place for students demonstrating the need for remedial assistance. Literacy, math, and science programming were available in at least 75% of sites. Most sites indicated that they were very focused on engaging parents and families in their programs. Parent and family involvement was also consistently identified as a place where programs wanted to improve.

The results of the 2009-2010 evaluation are relevant to several themes that emerged during the previous year's evaluation, including: the basic availability and attendance patterns of 21st CCLC programs, parent engagement, and program-school partnerships. The 2009-2010 evaluation results also generate several new discussions, including: how to achieve balance between offering structured programs and also promoting youth involvement in program design, cultural competency initiatives in 21st CCLCs, and possible programming domains that might benefit from increased focus, such as behavior management and career readiness programming. Finally, the 2009-2010 evaluation results provide insight into ways to strengthen future evaluations of the Connecticut 21st CCLC programs.

Program Availability and Attendance Trends

One issue that received particular attention in last year's evaluation report was the degree to which CT 21st CCLCs met their targets for the days open and the number of participants to be served. In 2008-2009, CT 21st CCLC sites varied widely in the total number of days that they reported being open and also in terms of whether they met their target numbers of youth to be served. One challenge encountered during the 2008-2009 evaluation was that it was not clear whether sites were missing their targets due to inconsistent data entry or because they were actually not delivering services as planned. The results of this year's evaluation suggest that there was less missing data and also that programs had more success in being open and meeting their participant targets.

Across the core months of the 2009-2010 school year, a substantial number of programs had an average daily attendance that was at least 60% of their established target number of youth to be served. Reasons for this improvement may include efforts to more accurately estimate appropriate target numbers and more consistent data entry, as well as actual increases in the number of youth being served.

One issue worth noting is there is evidence that many 21st CCLC programs started the year slowly and wound down early. In the months of September, October, and June there were a number of programs (more than 33%) that were not open at all, even though school was in session during these months (see Figure 2, page 11). This trend was similar to the trend observed in the previous year (2008-2009), when a number of programs were not open during the beginning and ending months of the school year. During 2009-2010, the middle months of the year (November to May) generally showed the most programs being available. Compared with the previous year, the months of November to May in 2009-2010 had slightly fewer programs that were not open at all during the month, suggesting a modest improvement in basic program availability during the middle of the year.

In addition to these monthly trends, it also is noteworthy that there was a high degree of variability in the total days that programs were open. Some programs were open as few as 52 days, whereas others operated over 200 days. Programs that had difficulty simply being open may benefit from targeted quality advising.

Trends in program availability, particularly at the beginning of the year, warrant closer attention because they may have important implications for whether 21st CCLC programs are meeting participants' (and their families') needs from the start of the school year. Additionally, the availability of programs at the start of the year may affect programs' ability to recruit participants and operate at capacity.

Program availability (whether a program is open) and participant attendance (whether an individual goes to the program) are essential conditions for connecting youth with 21st CCLC programming. Participants can only access services to the extent that programs are available, and participants may only benefit from 21st CCLC services to the extent that they are attending programs and accessing these services. Research on the potential benefits of out-of-school-time activities indicates that both the quantity and quality of after school participation matters (Simpkins, Little, & Weiss, 2004). This research indicates that participants who attend after school activities more often (for example, more days per week or more weeks per year) tend to show more benefits across a range of academic, behavioral, social, and health outcomes, compared with those who still participate but who do so less often (Simpkins *et al.*). Additionally, the duration of a participant's involvement (whether they have been coming to the program for a few months, a year, or several years) also matters: a longer history in the activity is associated with greater benefits. Finally, the breadth of participation matters: participants who are involved in a range of after school activities show greater benefits than those who participate in just one activity. This research points to the importance of 21st CCLCs' being available often and consistently and encouraging participants to attend consistently.

Parent Engagement as a Focus for Program Improvement

In the 2008-2009 evaluation and again this year, CT 21st CCLCs expressed a strong interest in parent engagement as a potential area for improvement. In this year's EYR responses, 50% of programs indicated that they were 'very likely' to work on improving parent involvement. An additional 39% said that they were 'somewhat likely' to focus on improving parent engagement. As reflected in their 2009-2010 EYR responses, many sites are developing strategies for improving parent engagement, including increasing the number of events that include both parents and children together, as well as offering more programming for parents only. Many sites also indicated that they planned to collect more feedback from parents about the programs. Although it appears that some programs are already in the process of planning changes to their parent and family services, the ongoing interest in improving this aspect of programming suggests that parent involvement may be a worthwhile focus for future professional development events and for quality advising offered to CT 21st CCLCs. One topic that may be especially relevant is the collection and use of parent feedback to inform program design. Although many sites indicated that they were likely to work on improving parent involvement in the future, 2009-2010 EYR responses also indicated that programs are less likely to rely on parents as a source of information about how the program is doing and more likely to use individual data about participants instead. This suggests that CT 21st CCLC may benefit from technical assistance (i.e., professional development and quality advising) specifically focused on making the most of parent feedback.

Partnerships Between 21st CCLC Programs and Schools

Among the issues addressed in the 2008-2009 evaluation report was the recommendation to collect more detailed information about after school-school partnerships. Based on this recommendation, the 2009-2010 EYR included more specific questions about the connections between 21st CCLCs and their partner schools.

The 2009-2010 evaluation results suggest that, collectively, CT 21st CCLCs are well connected to their partner schools. Over 80% of sites reported at least weekly contact with school principals and at least monthly contact with teachers. Communication with principals and teachers (especially teachers who were on that program's staff) was common. Sites also generally rated the quality of these relationships as either 'excellent' or 'good.' Eight-five percent of sites had a designated staff person who was responsible for communicating with the school. Compared with the number of sites reporting regular communication with school personnel, there were fewer

sites that were linked with the school in terms of being written into the school's school improvement plan. Just over half of sites (N=50) reported that they were formally included in their partner school's improvement plan. Although the evaluation results generally suggest that programs had a good connection with their partner schools, a little over a third of sites (N=36) reported facing some sort of challenge in their partnership with the school. The most common challenge reported was communicating with school day staff. Moving forward, program-school communication strategies and inclusion in school improvement plans may be areas on which to focus quality advising and program improvement efforts. Additionally, it may prove useful in future evaluations to collect more information about the alignment between 21st CCLC curricula and the school day curriculum.

Balancing Structure and Youth Involvement in After School Programming

At the federal level, the design of the 21st CCLC program situates community learning centers at the intersection between activities explicitly focused on academics and activities that are entirely *extracurricular*. Twenty-first CCLCs are charged with providing enrichment opportunities that are intentionally aligned with school-day learning objectives but that also offer something different from the school day. Balancing these complementary (and potentially competing) goals appears to be an important, perennial challenge facing 21st CCLCs. The 2009-2010 evaluation results provide some relevant information about CT 21st CCLCs' efforts to navigate these two goals.

Site coordinators' program descriptions indicated a general emphasis on ensuring structure, for example, by frequently using specified lesson plans to run activities or by maintaining consistent schedules and activities from one day to the next. This emphasis on structure may be viewed as a good sign that programming is being implemented intentionally. For example, the emphasis on structure may reflect the fact that programs are following an evidence-based curriculum or are focused on aligning the after school curriculum with school day curricula. On the other hand, CT 21st CCLCs also appeared to be less likely to emphasize youth involvement opportunities, for example, by offering self-directed activities or involving youth in activity design. Generally speaking, the most commonly reported forms of youth involvement at CT 21st CCLCs still appeared to be more adult-directed than youth-directed. Sites indicated that youth were provided with choices but were not generally offered responsibility for planning and carrying out program initiatives. In the after school literature, there is evidence to support a link between young peoples' level of involvement in their organizations and their positive outcomes. These outcomes include leadership skills, teamwork skills, communication skills, strategic thinking, self-confidence, personal wellness, enhanced sociopolitical awareness, social capital, social responsibility, and hopefulness (Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005). For 21st CCLCs, it may be worthwhile to devote attention, in terms of both evaluation and technical assistance, to the balance between programs' being well designed and aligned with academic objectives while also promoting a high level of youth involvement.

Competency in Serving Diverse Populations

Collectively, CT 21st CCLC sites reported practices that indicate sensitivity to the racial, ethnic, and cultural make up of their participant population. These practices included having program materials available in languages other than English and having interpreters available when necessary. The majority of 21st CCLC sites (N=83, 91%) reported that they offered at least a few activities that focused on ethnic identity development, culture, and/or diversity. Thirty-eight sites (42%) said that at least half of their activities had such a focus. The results from this year's evaluation provide a starting point for asking additional questions about the cultural competency of CT 21st CCLCs. Future evaluation could take this question one step further and look specifically at the populations served by 21st CCLCs, including African American youth and Spanish-speaking youth. Evaluation activities could assess the specific needs of these youth, investigate how sites are responding specifically to them, and provide resources for professional development that could guide sites' improvement in this area.

Behavior Management as a Potential Focus For Professional Development

Many site coordinators indicated that “behavior management” was an area where they wanted to improve. Connecticut 21st CCLC programs might benefit from receiving specific recommendations and references on this topic. The CSDE may wish to draw upon its ‘Positive Behavior Supports’ work to guide professional development and quality advising regarding behavior management.

Programming for Career and College Readiness

Site coordinators were unlikely to rank career/college readiness as a high programming priority. Additionally, few programs offered vocational enrichment opportunities. This lack of emphasis on vocational programming could reflect several factors, including the younger age groups being served by many Connecticut’s 21st CCLCs. However, college and vocational readiness may be an overlooked area in the current focus of 21st CCLCs and, thus, an appropriate target for future professional development and quality advising efforts.

Improvements to the Evaluation Process

This year’s evaluation, in addition to generating the aforementioned recommendations for programming focus, also provided insight into a few potential areas for improvement in future evaluations of the Connecticut 21st CCLCs. These included documenting more of the details regarding 21st CCLCs’ social development programming and their use of evidence-based curricula, as well as increasing the alignment of the evaluation with existing data sources and other reporting requirements.

Documenting Social Development Programming

Although this year’s EYR included a few questions on the topic of social development programming, future 21st CCLC evaluations might benefit from more precise inquiry into the content and implementation of this domain of programming. Research on the effectiveness of social development programming suggests that high quality programs that target social development are likely to produce both academic and behavioral/emotional benefits (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). The mission of the 21st CCLC program acknowledges social development as an important part of 21st CCLC services. However, it appears that CT 21st CCLCs vary substantially in how they approach social development. Empirical literature on program quality and effectiveness could guide this aspect of the evaluation. After school researchers Durlak and Weissberg systematically reviewed studies on the effectiveness of social development programs and found that effective social development programs shared particular characteristics. The effective programs were sequenced, active, focused, and explicit about their goals. In future evaluations of CT 21st CCLCs, it may be useful to more carefully document the presence of these characteristics (e.g., by collecting more information about the sequencing of activities over the whole year) and others features associated with high quality social development programming.

Documenting Use of Evidence-Based Curricula

This year’s EYR included greater attention to 21st CCLCs’ use of structured curricula by including questions about whether literacy, math, science, and social development programming involved the use of an evidence-based curriculum. Although this year’s EYR provided a general sense of whether sites are using structured curricula, there is room for improvement in the specificity of information collected. For example, the CT 21st CCLC request for proposals stipulates that “These [literacy] activities must include small group instruction for low-achieving students using strategies consistent with Connecticut’s Blue Print for Reading, the Connecticut Framework for Language Arts, or another research-based literacy practices.” Future evaluations could specifically ask whether programs are using particular literacy strategies that are outlined in Connecticut’s Blue Print for Reading or the Connecticut Framework for Language Arts. Collecting more information about the use of evidence-based curricula may prove helpful in allowing programs to share information about useful curricula while also ensuring that programs are accountable for using an evidence-based curriculum.

Aligning Data Reporting, Quality Advising, and Evaluations with Programs' Needs

A large number of sites reported that they use feedback from the quality advising and program evaluation processes less often than they use other sources of feedback, such as data on participants' academic achievement or surveys of youth participants. These results do not mean that programs are not using quality advising or program evaluations at all, but rather suggest that these sources of information are used less often than other sources of feedback. Nonetheless, site coordinators' responses regarding the usefulness of quality advising and evaluation suggest that these resources are probably being underutilized. In light of these results, both quality advisors and evaluators may find it beneficial to consult with programs about how to increase the utility of these program improvement resources.

A number of sites indicated that they were required to provide formal reports to entities other than the CSDE. There may be an opportunity to align reporting requirements across stakeholders. Streamlining the reporting process may be one way to make evaluations more useful to programs.

Future evaluations may benefit from greater use of quantitative measures of youth activities and parent/family programming (especially those recorded in the Cayen database). Getting data from Cayen would lessen the amount that sites have to report in the EYR. It would also address a major limitation of this evaluation: that it relies on staff report and recollection rather than on records that are maintained throughout the year, such as the information stored in the Cayen database or information collected during quality advising visits. Closer alignment between data stored in Cayen, the quality advising process, and the evaluation process may help address this limitation in the future.

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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.

Appendix

List of Connecticut 21st CCLC Grantees and Sites by District

	District	Cohort	Grantee Site(s)	Target #	2009 – 2010 Budget	Per Pupil Allocation
1	Ansonia	8	Ansonia Public Schools	80	\$130,000	\$1,625
			Ansonia Middle School	30		
			Mead School	25		
			Prendergast School	25		
2	Bridgeport	6	Central CT Coast YMCA	72	\$142,500	\$1,979
			Harding High School	72		
3	Bridgeport	5	Light House Program	275	\$121,486	\$442
			Bryant School	100		
			Columbus School	75		
			Edison School	100		
4	Bridgeport	6	Light House Program (1)	300	\$190,000	\$633
			Hallen Elementary School	125		
			Madison School	175		
5	Bridgeport	6	Light House Program (2)	275	\$190,000	\$691
			Beardsley Lighthouse	125		
			Park City Magnet School	150		
6	Bridgeport	7	Light House Program	175	\$200,000	\$1,143
			Wilbur L. Cross	75		
			Hall School	100		
7	Bridgeport	8	Light House Program	125	\$200,000	\$1,600
			Cesar A. Batalla School	125		
8	Bridgeport	4	NBFA Bridgeport	150	\$50,000	\$333
			New Beginnings Family Academy	150		
9	Bristol	4	Bristol Public Schools	80	\$140,026	\$1,750
			O'Connell School	80		
10	Danbury	5	Danbury Public Schools	120	\$121,486	\$1,012
			Hayestown Avenue School	60		
			Ellsworth Avenue School	60		
11	East Hartford	7	East Hartford Public Schools	80	\$152,166	\$1,902
			East Hartford Middle School (Cohort 7)	40		
			Sunset Ridge	40		
12	East Hartford	8	East Hartford Public Schools	120	\$179,706	\$1,498
			East Hartford Middle School (Cohort 8)	40		
			Hockanum School	40		
			Silver Lane School	40		
13	Enfield	6	Enfield Public Schools	150	\$190,000	\$1,267
			Alcorn & Enfield Street Learning Center	150		

	District	Cohort	Grantee Site(s)	Target #	2009 – 2010 Budget	Per Pupil Allocation
14	Hartford	6	Compass Youth Collaborative	100	\$100,000	\$1,000
			Belizzi Middle School	100		
15	Hartford	7	Compass Youth Collaborative	100	\$125,000	\$1,250
			Burns Academy of Latino Studies	100		
16	Hartford	8	Compass Youth Collaborative	100	\$125,000	\$1,250
			Dr. James H. Naylor School	100		
17	Hartford	4	Hands on Hartford	80	\$91,991	\$1,150
			Betances School (Hands on Hartford)	80		
18	Hartford	6	Leadership Greater Hartford	95	\$190,000	\$2,000
			Hartford Public High School	95		
19	Hartford	7	OPMAD	100	\$200,000	\$2,000
			Batchelder School	100		
20	Hartford	5	The Village for Families and Children	121	\$121,486	\$1,004
			Martin Luther King Elementary School	121		
21	Hartford	7	The Village for Families and Children	80	\$93,839	\$1,173
			A. E. Burr School	80		
22	Hartford	7	University of Hartford	175	\$200,000	\$1,143
			Global Communications Academy	175		
23	Manchester	4	Manchester Public Schools	180	\$115,749	\$643
			Washington Media Arts Magnet School	180		
24	Meriden	8	Meriden Boys and Girls Club	65	\$96,160	\$1,479
			John Barry Elementary School	65		
25	Meriden	6	Meriden Public Schools	150	\$190,000	\$1,267
			Lincoln Middle School	75		
			Washington Middle School	75		
26	Meriden	8	Meriden Public Schools	50	\$65,000	\$1,300
			Hanover Elementary School	50		
27	Middletown	7	Middletown Public Schools	100	\$171,030	\$1,710
			Wilson Middle School	100		
28	Middletown	8	Middletown Public Schools	60	\$137,836	\$2,297
			Keigwin Middle School	60		
29	New Britain	8	Consolidated School District of New Britain	35	\$52,500	\$1,500
			New Britain High School	35		
30	New Britain	5	Parks and Recreation	120	\$121,486	\$1,012
			Gaffney Elementary School	60		
			Lincoln Elementary School	60		
31	New Britain	7	Parks and Recreation	150	\$200,000	\$1,333
			DiLoreto Magnet School	75		
			Smalley Academy	75		

	District	Cohort	Grantee Site(s)	Target #	2009 – 2010 Budget	Per Pupil Allocation
32	New Britain	8	YMCA of New Britain	133	\$200,000	\$1,504
			Chamberlain Primary School	83		
			Northend Elementary School	50		
33	New Haven	6	Common Ground	150	\$112,100	\$747
			Common Ground High School	150		
34	New Haven	5	New Haven Public Schools	82	\$121,486	\$1,482
			Ross/Woodward Classical Magnet School	41		
			Mauro-Sheridan Inter-district Magnet School	41		
35	New Haven	6	New Haven Public Schools	150	\$190,000	\$1,267
			John C. Daniels	50		
			Truman	50		
			Dwight/Troup	50		
36	New Haven	7	New Haven Public Schools	134	\$200,000	\$1,493
			John S. Martinez School	67		
			Clinton Avenue School	67		
37	New Haven	8	New Haven Public Schools (1)	134	\$200,000	\$1,493
			Fair Haven School	67		
			Celentano Museum Academy	67		
38	New Haven	8	New Haven Public Schools (2)	134	\$200,000	\$1,493
			Lincoln-Basset Middle	67		
			Columbus Family Academy	67		
39	New Haven	8	New Haven Public Schools (3)	134	\$200,000	\$1,493
			Barnard Environmental Studies Magnet	67		
			Conte/West Hills Magnet Middle School	67		
40	New London	7	New London Public Schools	100	\$200,000	\$2,000
			Jennings	60		
			Nathan Hale Elementary School	40		
41	Norwalk	6	Norwalk Public Schools	70	\$125,400	\$1,791
			Briggs High School	70		
42	Norwich	7	Norwich Public Schools (ASPIRE)	170	\$190,000	\$1,118
			Kelly Middle School	100		
			Teachers Middle School	70		
43	Norwich	6	Norwich Public Schools (BRIDGES)	120	\$198,248	\$1,652
			Moriarty Elementary School	70		
			Uncas	50		
44	Norwich	8	Norwich Public Schools	75	\$113,497	\$1,513
			Greeneville	75		
45	Stamford	8	CTE, Inc.	67	\$100,000	\$1,493
			Springdale	67		

	District	Cohort	Grantee Site(s)	Target #	2009 – 2010 Budget	Per Pupil Allocation
46	Stamford	8	ROSCCO	150	\$200,000	\$1,333
			Hart Magnet School	150		
47	Stamford	7	Stamford Public Schools	200	\$200,000	\$1,000
			Rippowam Middle School	200		
48	Stamford	8	Stamford Public Schools	135	\$200,000	\$1,481
			Dolan Middle School	135		
49	Waterbury	5	Waterbury Public Schools	130	\$121,486	\$935
			Wallace	80		
			North End Recreation Center	25		
			WOW/NRZ Community Learning Center	25		
50	Waterbury	7	Waterbury Public Schools (1)	150	\$200,000	\$1,333
			Woodrow Wilson Elementary School	60		
			Washington School	90		
51	Waterbury	7	Waterbury Public Schools (2) (After School Adventures)	150	\$197,724	\$1,318
			Waterbury Parks and Recreation (Sprague School)	60		
			Chase Park House	90		
52	Waterbury	8	Waterbury Public Schools (1) (Dare to Dream)	90	\$200,000	\$2,222
			Mattatuck Museum/ Downtown Academy	90		
53	Waterbury	8	Waterbury Public Schools (2) (Downtown Academy)	100	\$193,503	\$1,935
			YMCA/Downtown Academy	25		
			Mattatuck Museum	25		
			Connecticut Junior Republic	25		
			Waterbury Youth Services	25		
54	Waterbury	8	Waterbury Public Schools (3) (After School Adventures)	160	\$199,982	\$1,249
			Walsh Elementary School	80		
			Carrington School	80		
55	Windham	6	Windham Public Schools	190	\$190,000	\$1,000
			Natchaug Elementary School	55		
			North Windham Elementary School	55		
			Sweeney Elementary School	45		
56	Windham	8	Windham Public Schools	100	\$200,000	\$2,000
			Windham Middle School	100		