

Connecticut's 21st Century Community Learning Centers 2017-18 Evaluation Report

**Report Prepared for the State of Connecticut
Department of Education**

Morica Hutchison and Beth S. Russell

**Center for Applied Research in Human Development
University of Connecticut**

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Overview of Site Characteristics

This report presents findings on Connecticut 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) for the 2017-2018 academic year. The 21st CCLC program provides funding to school districts and community organizations that serve students attending schools with a high concentration of low-income students (i.e., schools with ≥ 40 percent of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch). 21st CCLC grants are designed to provide these students with opportunities for academic enrichment, activities that complement learning, and to encourage family engagement. During the 2017-18 academic year, the 21st CCLC program funded 34 grantees operating 120 sites across the state. This report focuses on the 114 sites that had outcome data on 80% or more of their after school students. The largest number of sites served elementary school students (49 sites, 43.0%), and a smaller number of sites served students from grades K-8 (29 sites, 25.4%), middle school (22 sites, 19.3%), and high school (14 sites, 12.3%).

Site Availability and Participant Attendance

One hundred and thirteen 21st CCLC sites were open for a minimum of three days per week, and the average site was open for 126 days over the course of the year. On average, sites were open 4 days a week for slightly more than 3 hours per day, and most were open by the month of October. This report examines a number of attendance metrics, and where appropriate, examines federal and state attendance mandates. The federal 21st CCLC guidelines specify that students must attend a minimum of 30 days of after-school programming in order to be considered a regular attendee in the program. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) requires that sites' target number of students have a minimum of 60% average daily attendance at their registered after-school program. This means that the site's target numbers of students are expected to attend at least 60% of program open days. In addition to these federal and state requirements, average daily attendance and average participant attendance rate are two useful metrics for assessing participant attendance.

Average daily attendance compares the number of youth attending a site on a given day with that site's target number of students to be served. Average participant attendance rate evaluates how successful sites were in having their participants attend the program on the days they were expected to attend. Overall, most sites achieved the benchmarks set out by the Federal 21st CCLC and the CSDE guidelines. 62.6% of students attended at least thirty days of programming and the **average proportion of students attending at least 60 percent of their registered days was 77%**. Students had an **average daily attendance of 151%** and an **average school day attendance rate of 94.9%**.

Programming for Youth Participants

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

One hundred and eight (94.7%) sites offered an average of 30 minutes or more of homework help on the days homework help was provided, and 107 sites (93.9%) offered some form of remedial assistance to students who required it. Of note, 21st CCLC requires all sites to offer homework help. Remedial assistance was offered through a number of strategies, the most common being small group tutoring with a certified teacher.

Relationships with Schools

Overall, the majority of programs reported communicating on at least a weekly basis with school day staff, and although the majority of sites (n=63; 55.3%) reported that communication with partner school(s) was a “clear strength” of their program, some sites reported challenges in their relationships with partner schools. The most commonly reported major challenge was lack of consistent behavioral expectations from students across school day and after-school program, and the ability to meet with school day staff, but it is important to keep in mind that only 3.5% of sites reported each of these as a major challenge. The most commonly reported minor challenge was access to data/information from school day staff, reported by 12.3% of sites (n=14).

Staffing and Professional Development

Roughly half of the sites held staff meetings on at least a monthly basis (n=50, 43.9%), and regular supervision meetings for staff (n=56, 49.1%), with the majority of sites reporting they provide professional development (n=86, 75.4%). The professional development and support offerings varied by site, but **55.3% (n=63) of the sites indicated covering 14 professional topics provided on the end of the year survey at least once throughout the school year.**

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

Performance of 21st CCLC Program Participants

Twenty-first CCLC participants attended school at an average rate of 94.6% (range: 76.1 to 97.8%), which is equivalent to missing about 9.7 days in a 180-day school year.

During the 2017-18 school year, 1,394 21st CCLC students (11.5%) had at least one disciplinary infraction. Of the students who had at least one disciplinary infraction, the average number of incidents incurred per student with at least 1 disciplinary infraction was 2.2 incidents.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the results of the 2017-2018 evaluation of Connecticut's 21st CCLCs suggest that programs were operating in a manner that is consistent with both federal and state guidelines. Additionally, the school day attendance rates of 21st CCLC students were high, with students attending an average of 94.6% of their registered school days. These rates are consistent with previous years' findings, though slightly lower than the 95.3% reported from the previous year. Only 11.5% of 21st CCLC participants incurred a disciplinary infraction during the course of the 2017-18 school year, and those who did averaged 2.2 incidents per student. This rate is consistent with the previous year and marks a slight improvement from the 12.6% with disciplinary infractions in 2016-2017. Many sites continued to focus improvements on areas that were discussed in previous end-of-year evaluations.

In 2018 the CREC team expressed interest in exploring what other information could be gathered to strengthen descriptions of 21st CCLC participants' experience and its impacts. In the spirit of brainstorming, the following levels of evaluation expansion are recommended:

Low-effort, small revisions to consider:

Additional details from the state records on the disciplinary action (by number/type) and special ed services/diagnoses (by number and type) would allow for immediate descriptive analyses of comparisons between program participants and state-level data; over time, these same variables could be used for predictive analyses of outcomes of interest (e.g., school day attendance, academic achievement, graduation timing/trajectories). Along this line, and also fairly easy to request is a recommendation to collect the graduation timing of participants (on-time/delayed).

Moderate-effort, new information from new data sources to consider:

Perspectives on 21st CCLC participants' social-emotional characteristics would considerably strengthen opportunities to examine how students benefit from the program as well as whether any social-emotional gains bolster outcomes of interest (e.g., school day attendance, academic achievement, graduation timing/trajectories). Students and program staff are the most convenient and reliable sources of that information, thus we recommend collection a 1-page survey on participants' resilience and social emotional competence that could be completed with each child in 5 minutes at enrollment and at the end of the year. For example, the Child/Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) and Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA-mini) combined should take less than 5 minutes and paint a strengths-based picture of students' socio-emotional wellbeing.

Finally, the most effortful option to consider:

Collecting parents'/family perspectives on the program's impact would be a tremendous asset both to the evaluation of the program's impact on the whole child, but also to 21st CCLC marketing and dissemination efforts. We recommend a 4-item survey family members could complete in less than 2 mins via an email link. Items to consider would assess program impacts on 1) child behavior at home, 2) child behavior at school, 3) helping with the family/work schedule (by providing safe/supervised childcare), and 4) sense of connection to the child's school community.



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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 2017-18 academic year (September 2017 to June 2018). The 21st CCLC program was established by Title IV of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* and in 2001 was expanded through the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The purpose of the 21st CCLC program is to fund centers that provide students with academic enrichment, activities designed to complement learning, and to serve students' families. The specific purposes of 21st CCLCs are to:

- (1) Provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services to help students, particularly students who attend low-performing schools, to meet State and local student academic achievement standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and mathematics;
- (2) Offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, such as youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, art, music, and recreation programs, technology education programs, and character education programs, that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students; and
- (3) Offer families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Part B, Sec 4201

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

To evaluate 21st CCLC programs operating in 2017-18, the CSDE worked with the University of Connecticut's Center for Applied Research in Human Development (CARHD) to describe 21st CCLC services delivered during the school year. Three separate sources of data were utilized to complete this report. The first source of data was collected from an online data management system called AfterSchool21. This system contained information on program-wide and individual participant data. The second source of data was collected from the End of Year Survey (EYS) online survey completed by site coordinators in June 2018. The data from this survey included information on the day-to-day programming at each site. The third source of data was the State Department of Education which provided information on students' school day attendance and school day behavior.

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

Section One:

Overview of Connecticut's 21st Century Community Learning Centers

During the 2017-18 grant period, the Connecticut State Department of Education funded 34 grantees operating 114 compliant sites throughout the state. Table 1 (right) lists the number of grantees and sites funded in each district.¹ Figure 1 (bottom of page) shows grantee locations across the state.

Of the 114 sites funded for the 2017-18 school year, (96.5%) were located at a school. Forty-nine sites (43.0%) reported serving elementary school students, 29 sites (25.4%) reported serving K-8 students, 22 sites (19.3%) reported serving middle school students, and 14 sites (12.3%) reported serving high school students. (Site coordinators were allowed to choose all categories that applied, so percentages can sum to more than 100).

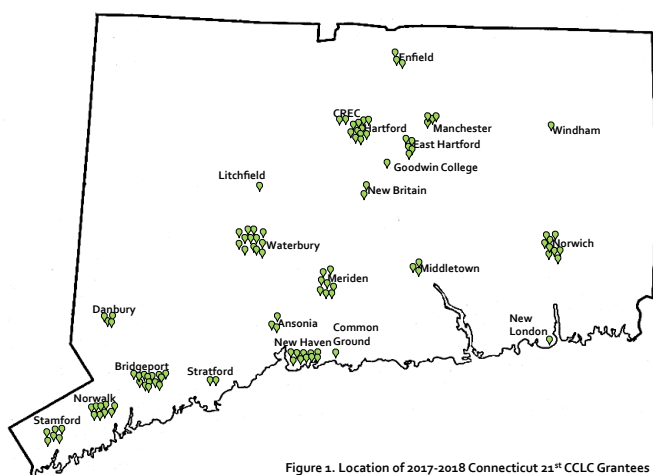


Figure 1. Location of 2017-2018 Connecticut 21st CCLC Grantees

Table 1. 2017-18 grantees and sites by district

District	Grantees	Sites
Ansonia	1	3
Bridgeport	2	16
Common Ground	1	1
CREC	1	3
Danbury	1	4
East Hartford	1	6
Enfield	1	3
Goodwin College	1	1
Hartford	9	12
Litchfield	1	1
Manchester	1	4
Meriden	2	8
Middletown	1	3
New Britain	1	2
New Haven	1	11
New London	1	1
Norwalk	1	10
Norwich	1	9
Stamford	3	6
Stratford	1	2
Waterbury	1	13
Windham	1	1
TOTAL	34	120

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

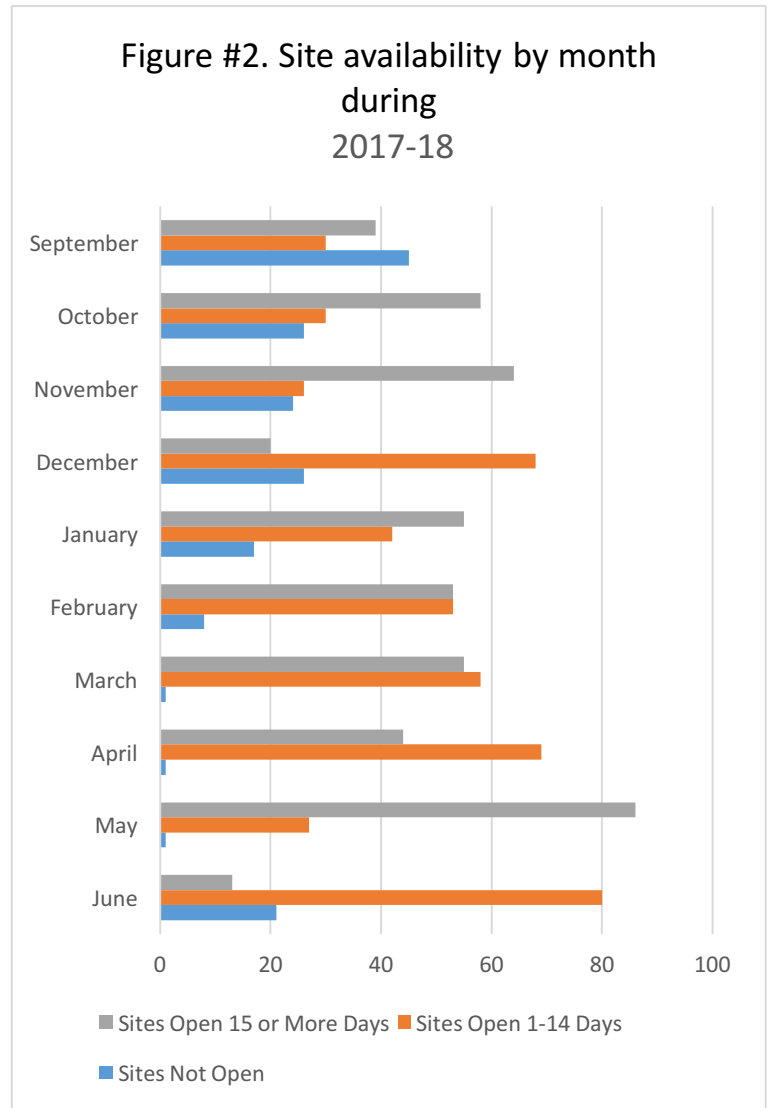
Site Availability during the Academic Year

All programs but one (n=113) reported being open at least three days a week during the 2017-18 school year, with the majority of sites open four (n=32, 28.1%) or five days a week (n=61, 53.5%). The average site was open 125.9 days (range 16 to 185 days), and for slightly more than 3 hours per day (range: 2 to 8 hours). 92 sites (81.4%) were open after school only, 12 sites (10.6%) were open before and after school, and 8 sites (7.2%) were open for a combination of after school, and during the weekends and vacation.

Figure 2 (right) shows the availability of Connecticut 21st CCLC sites over the course of the school year. More than half of the sites (n=69, 60.5%) were open in September, and most (n=88, 77.2%) were open by October. May was the month most programs achieved full availability, with at least 75 percent of programs (80 sites) open 15 days or more during this month. These start times reflect that newly funded sites opened in January 2018.

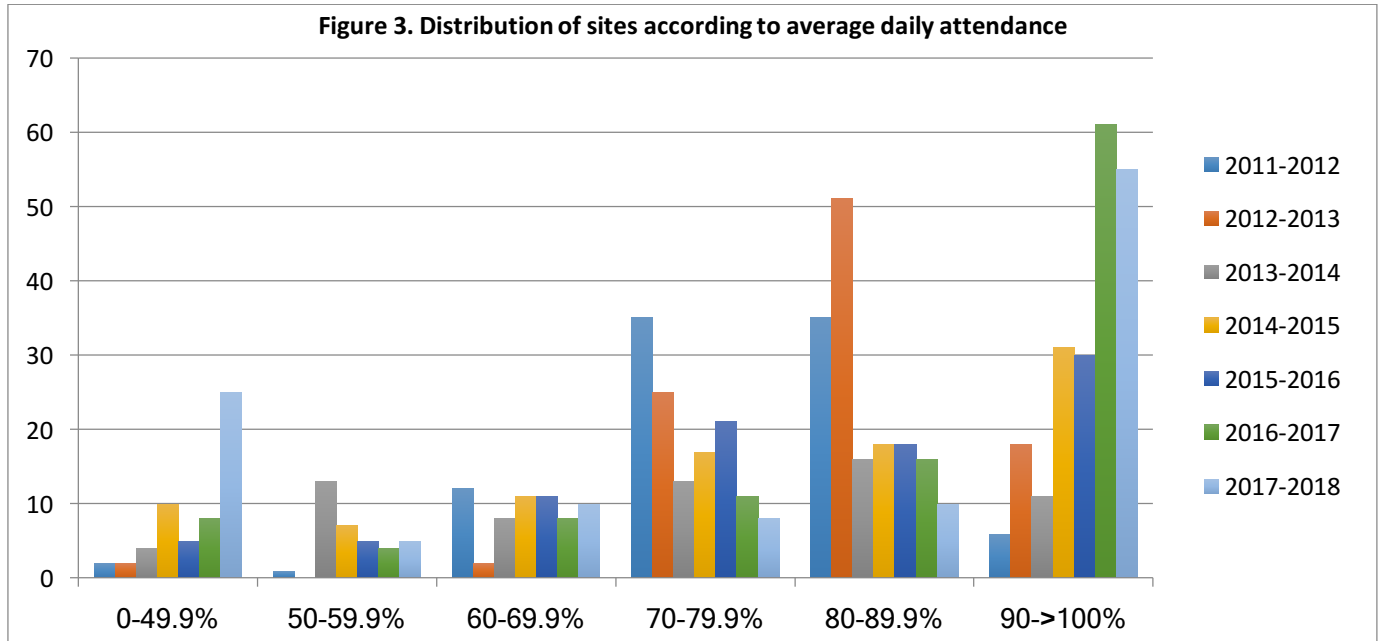
Participant Attendance Patterns Across Sites

Federal 21st CCLC guidelines have established that individuals who attend 30 days or more of after school programming during a school year are considered participants. During 2017-18, 7,238 students met this requirement. Of the 3,118 students who did not attend at least 30 days of after school programming, roughly half attended between 15 and 29 days, and less than 15 days. The data presented in this and subsequent sections are based on the group of students who attended 30 days or more of after school programming during a school year and who had outcome data. In order to assess attendance patterns, three metrics were used: average daily attendance, average individual student attendance rates at each site, and percent of participants attending at least 60 percent of the site’s available days. All of these metrics reflect site-level attendance patterns. Individual student attendance patterns are discussed in Section Two of this report.



Average Daily Attendance

Average daily attendance (ADA) compares the number of youth attending a site on a given day with that site’s target number of students to be served². **The overall average ADA across all sites was 151 percent.** Compared to last year’s overall average ADA across sites of 102 percent, sites in 2017-18 had a higher ADA, marking a second year of increases in ADA.



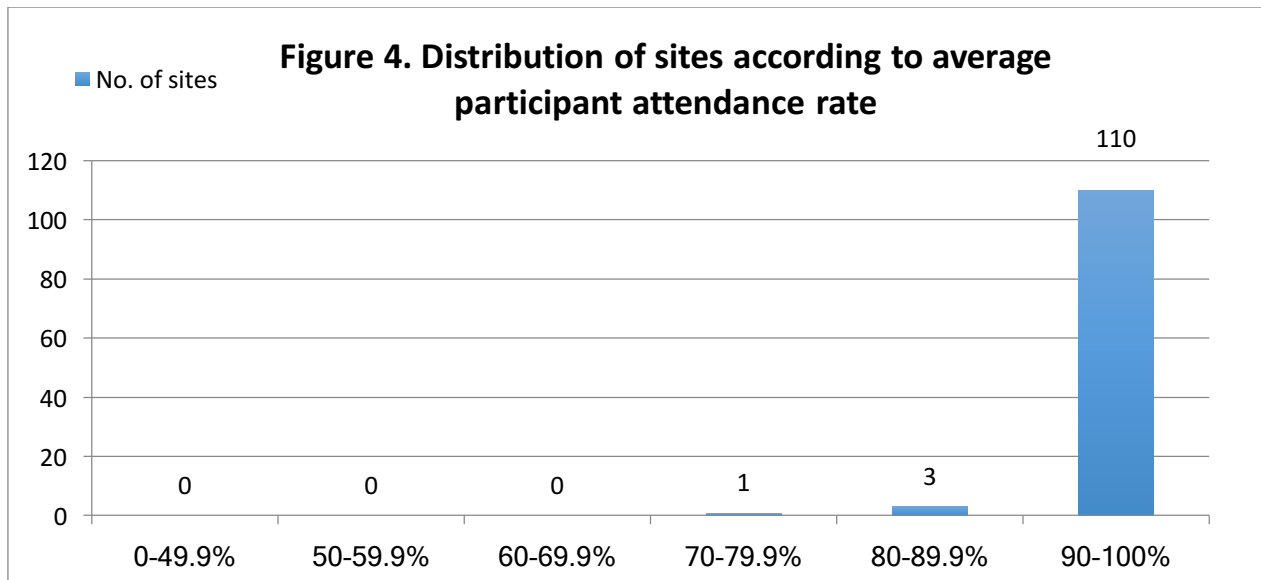
According to CSDE guidelines, 21st CCLC sites are expected to maintain a minimum of 60 percent ADA. In other words, each site is expected to have at least 60 percent of their targeted number of students in attendance on any given day. The 151% percent ADA average across all sites indicates that, overall, **sites exceeded the 60 percent target. Sites had a range of ADA from 5 to 604 percent (Figure 3, above), indicating that there were a number of programs that served a greater number of students than they originally targeted to serve, but that there was also a great deal of variability in attendance patterns across sites. Forty-four sites (38.9%) reported serving a greater number of students than they originally targeted.**

21st CCLC Success Story: Site Perspectives

“A success we had in our program has been restorative circles, these involve the head teacher and a member from administration. We do these almost daily and have been a huge success with the students. The students have told us that we have created a safe space for them to discuss things that they wouldn't always feel comfortable talking to adults with. Students are happy and excited to have a time where they can express themselves with out feeling pressure or judgement.”

Average Participant Attendance Rate

ADA is useful in helping us examine how successful sites are at serving their targeted number of participants on a daily basis, but sites differ in the number of days they are open. Therefore, it is important to examine how often participants attended relative to the number of days for which they were registered. In other words, it is important to assess **sites' average rates of participant attendance**.



Average participant attendance rate was calculated for each participant by dividing the number of days he or she attended the program by the total number of days he or she was registered to attend during the 2017-18 school year. To obtain a site-level metric of average participant attendance rate, these individual percentages were averaged across all participants at each site. **At the site level, the average participant attendance rate was 94.6 percent, and it ranged from 76.1 percent to 97.6 percent.** Figure 4 shows the distribution of sites in terms of their average participant attendance rate.

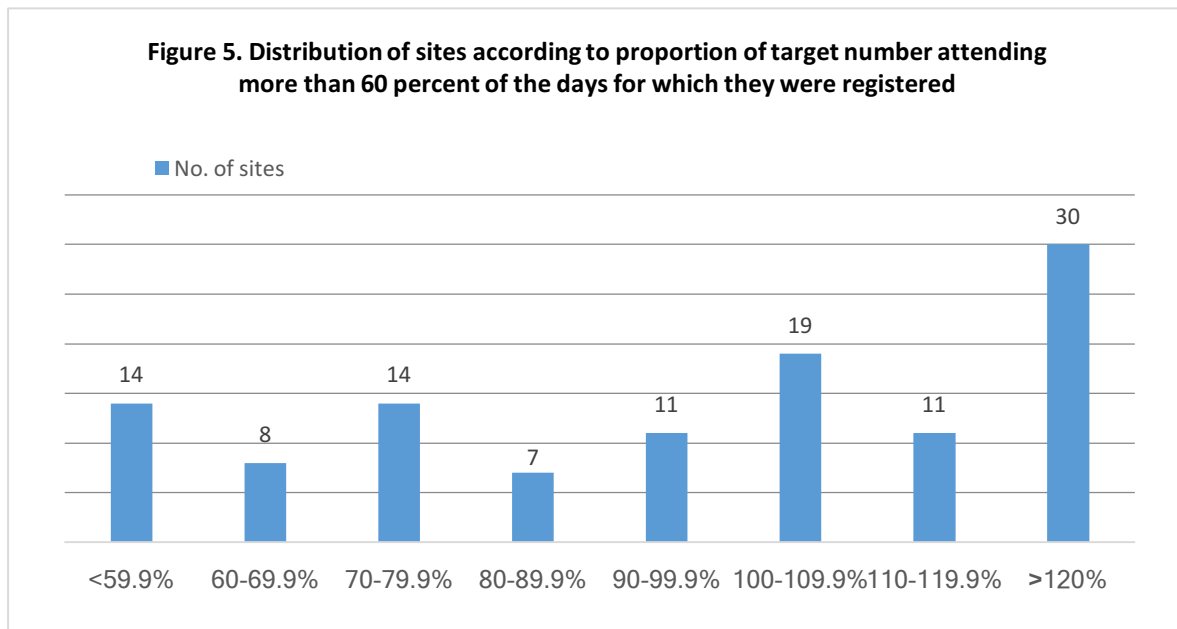
The CSDE has also set out guidelines for average daily attendance rate. Specifically, CSDE requires that sites maintain a minimum ADA of 60 percent in order to remain in compliance. Therefore, sites should strive to an average daily attendance rate of at least 60 percent. **Sites did an exceptional job of this for the current year, with all 114 compliant sites averaging daily attendance rates between 70 and 100 percent.** This review of sites' ADAs suggests that all currently compliant sites are succeeding in maintaining an ADA of 60% or above.

21st CCLC Success Story: Site Perspectives

"The most amazing experience and proud moments that we have had in our program is simply with our students academic and behavior progress. Every single month, from program start to finish we have, at the least, 4 or more students from 2 or more grades that receive student of the month. Many of them have struggled with poor behavior as well academically but to see the turn around and our encouragement, mentorship and positive impact as staff and peer leaders, we believe that our curriculum and day to day action plans are making a difference in the lives of our students and a huge resource to the school."

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

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



This metric was calculated using a two-step process. First, the total number of students whose individual rate of attendance was over 60 percent was computed for each site, and then, this number was divided by the site's target number. As can be seen in Figure 5 (above), 100 sites (87.7%) had their target number of students attend at least 60 percent of their registered days, and 14 sites (12.3%) did not meet this requirement. Additionally, 55 sites (48.2%) had percentages above 100. This indicates that the site had more students than their target number of students attend at least 60 percent of their registered days.

21st CCLC Success Story: Site Perspectives

"Every year our program organizes cultural activities to celebrate students and staff cultures. This year we organized a hispanic heritage celebration where about 50% of the parents had the chance to participate. We also organized a black history celebration where about the same percentage of parents participated.

Both celebrations were successful because of the enthusiasm and passion demonstrated by the students on the stage and by the parents' attendance and positive remarks about the events."

Section Two:

Description of Participants and Individual Attendance Rates

In order to be considered a 21st CCLC participant, students had to attend at least 30 days of after school programming in 2017-18. This section pertains to these students who had data on the following variables.

Demographic Information about Participants

Gender

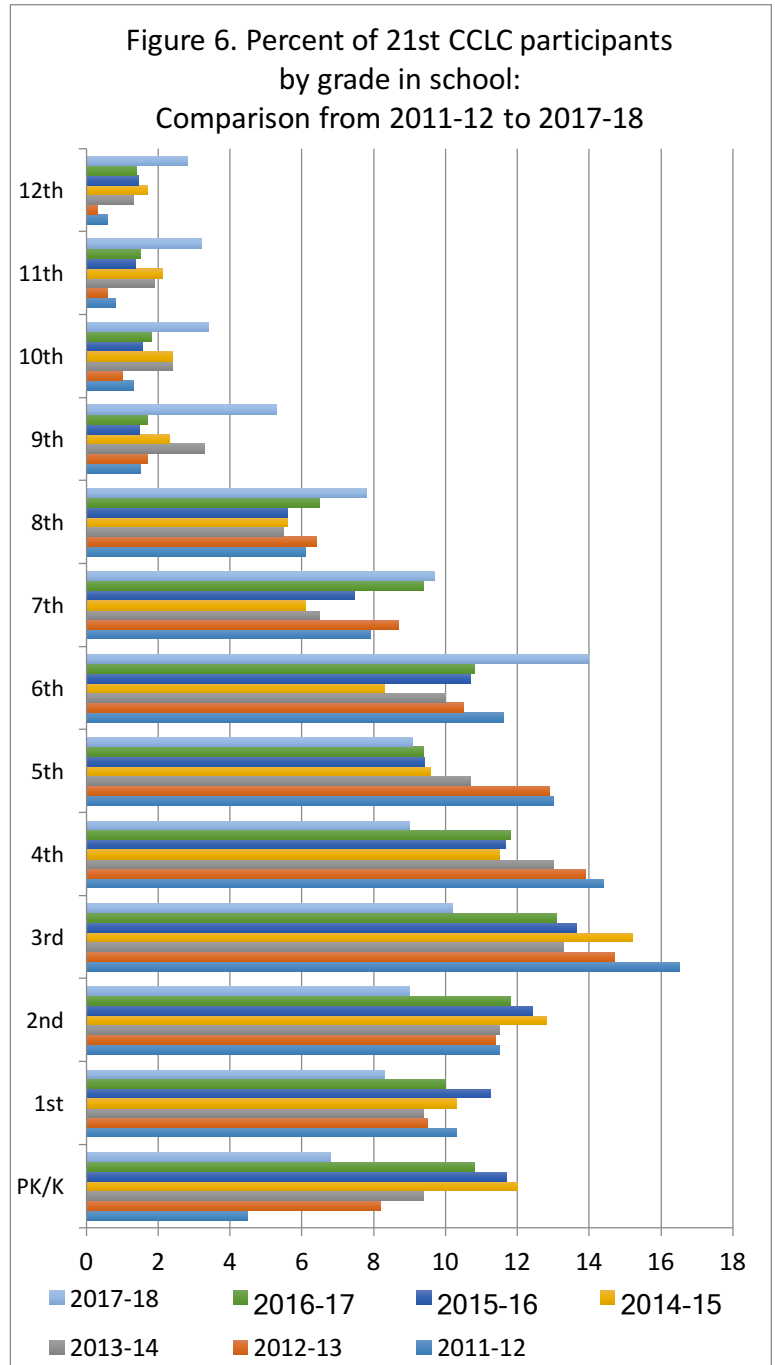
During the 2017-18 school year, 49.9% of 21st CCLC participants were female, which is comparable to the percentage of female students who participated in 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17 (50.2%, 50.5%, 49.6%, 50.4%, 50.2%, and 50.9% respectively).

Grade Level

Twenty-first CCLC programs served students from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade, and information about grade level was available for 12,124 participants (99.9%). Figure 6 (right) shows the distribution of participants by grade. As the figure indicates, the highest numbers of participants were in grades 3, 6 and 7.

Free/Reduced Lunch Status

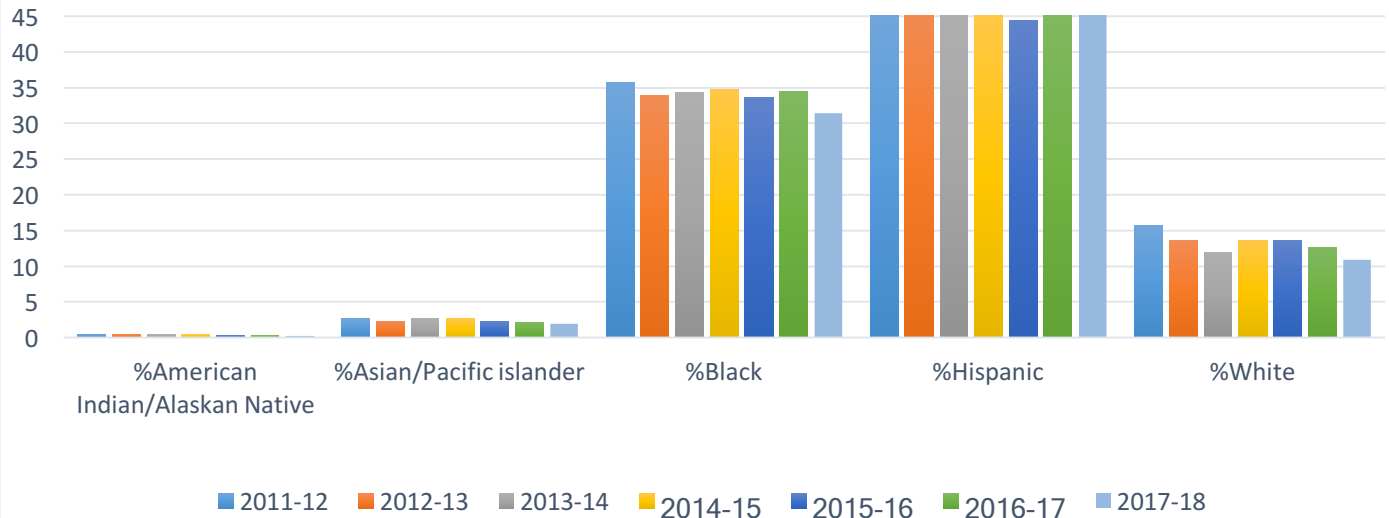
Information about students' eligibility for free/reduced lunch was available for 10,829 of the 12,139 participants (89.2%). The percentage of 21st CCLC participants who were eligible for free/reduced lunch was 84.2 percent. This is comparable to the percentage of students who were eligible in 2016-17 (89.8%), 2015-16 (80.3%), 2014-15 (81.2%), 2013-14 (88.2%), 2012-13 (88.0%), and 2011-12 (88.3%).



Racial/Ethnic Background

Information concerning the racial/ethnic background of the students was available for 12,139 participants (100%). Figure 7 (below) shows the racial/ethnic background of 21st CCLC participants. The majority of students were Hispanic/Latino (45.9%), followed by Black (31.4%) and White (10.9%). Finally, 2.2 percent were American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, or Pacific Islander. These percentages were relatively constant over a seven-year period.

Figure 7. Racial/ethnic background of 21st CCLC participants:
Comparison of 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18



Individual Rates of Attendance

The rate of attendance was computed for each participant by dividing the number of days he or she attended the site by the total number of days for which he or she was registered and was compared across different demographic characteristics. **The average participant attended 94.6 percent (range: 3 to 100%) of the total number of days for which he or she was registered. Males had a slightly higher attendance rate (94.6%) compared to females (94.5%),** but this difference was not statistically significant³. Whether or not students received free/reduced lunch was not significantly⁴ related to individual rates of attendance. Students who did not receive free or reduced lunch had the same mean rate of attendance (94.4%) as students who received free or reduced lunch (94.4%). Individual attendance rates significantly differed based on participants' racial/ethnic background⁵. Hispanic students attended at a statistically significant higher rate (94.6%) than Black students (94.1%), and a significantly lower rate than Asian (96.1%) or White (95.9%) students. This result translates to a difference in program attendance of approximately three days the highest and lowest group attendances.

Section Three:

Description of Programming for Student Participants

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

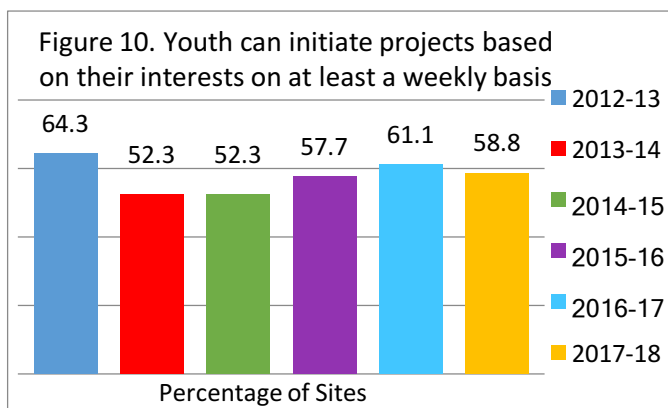
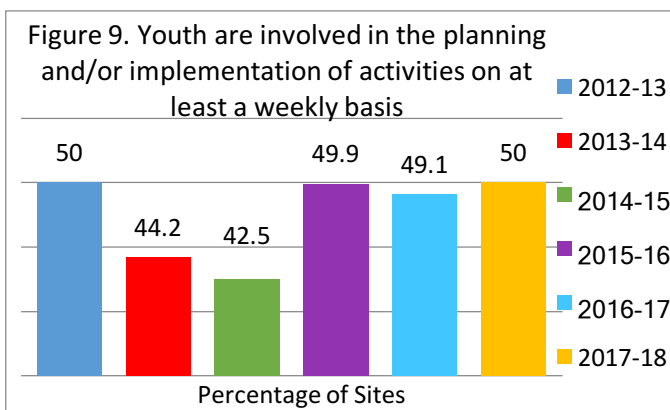
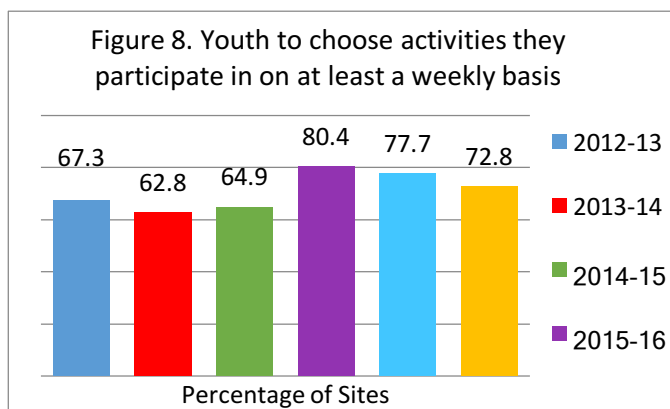
Involving Youth in Program Planning and Implementation

The EYS focused on strategies sites utilized to involve youth in program planning and implementation as a way to evaluate youth's opportunities to engage in the program. Figures 8 through 10 (right) compare site coordinators' responses to some of these questions across the last seven school years. Nearly all sites (n=108, 94.7%) surveyed students about programming at least a few times a year. Over half of the participating

sites allowed students to choose activities they participate in (n=83, 72.8%), spend additional time on activities of interest (n=85, 74.6%), initiate projects based on their interest (n=67, 58.8%), and assume specific responsibilities for running the program (n=78, 68.4%) at least once a week.

Academic Programming

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



Homework Help

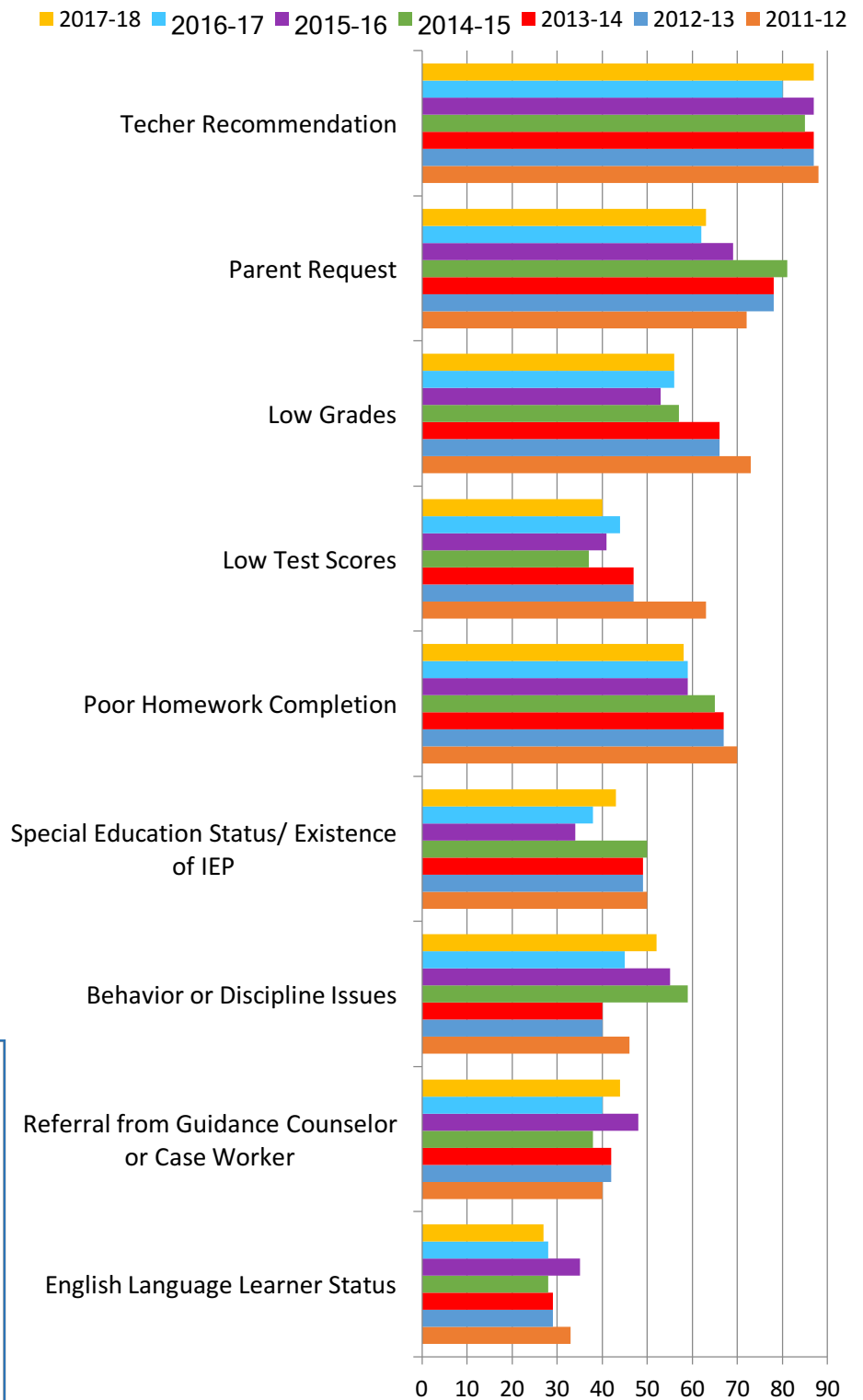
Research has demonstrated that students' homework completion plays a critical role in their academic success (Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006).

Further the CSDE requires that all sites provide homework help. One hundred and thirteen sites (99.1%) reported that they offered homework help to their participants and 107 (93.9%) sites offered 30 minutes or more of homework help on the days homework help was provided. The sites offered an average of 50 minutes (range 20 to 120 minutes) of homework help on the days that homework help was provided. 112 sites (98.2%) had at least one staff member to assist students with homework, and 98 sites (86.0%) had at least one certified teacher available to help with homework. Under half of sites (43%) reported that there was at least one staff member directly involved with homework help for every ten students.

21st CCLC Success Story: Site Perspectives

"This year we had many students enrolled that were bilingual and/or came from Puerto Rico after the hurricane. It has been reported that our program really helped the families that took in children of relatives. It has also been reported that the bilingual children speak & understand much more of the English language because of the immersion into our program."

Figure 11. Percentage of sites using strategies to identify students in need of remedial assistance:
Comparison from 2011-12 to 2017-18



Remedial Assistance

One hundred and seven sites (93.9%) indicated that they offered remedial assistance. Site coordinators were asked how they identified students in need of remedial assistance at their site. Figure 11 (right) shows the percentage of sites using each strategy from 2011-12 to 2017-18 school years. Site coordinators were also asked to report the primary strategy used to address participants' needs for remedial assistance. Table 2 (below) shows the number and percentage of sites that identified each strategy as their primary strategy used.

Strategy	# of sites (% of total)
Small group tutoring with a certified teacher	46 (40.4%)
Small group tutoring with other paid staff/volunteers	28 (24.6%)
One-on-one tutoring with a certified teacher	19 (16.7%)
One-on-one tutoring with other paid staff/volunteers	8 (7.0%)
Other	8 (7.0%)

21st CCLC Success Story: Site Perspectives

"We had a student who in the fall was disengaged in school. This was evident in his grades and in his chronic absences. He was recommended to the 21st Century Learners in Action Program by our guidance department. Initially, he was somewhat shut down and resistant to the program. However, in the second week of his participation he connected with one of our parent volunteers facilitating Junior Achievement workshops focusing on College and Career planning. This student and parent volunteer engaged in conversations and activities around his hopes and dreams for his future and the obstacles to achieving his goals. He began to see a path to success and viewed his academics as a way to achieve them. During our career showcase, this student spoke with several presenters and connected to a member of the military. With the help of the after school teacher during academic time, the student created a dream board of his future and the steps it would take academically and socially and emotionally to achieve his vision. This served as a motivator for this student for the remainder of the year. He ended his year on the honor roll, with school connections and friendships, and with significantly reduced absences."

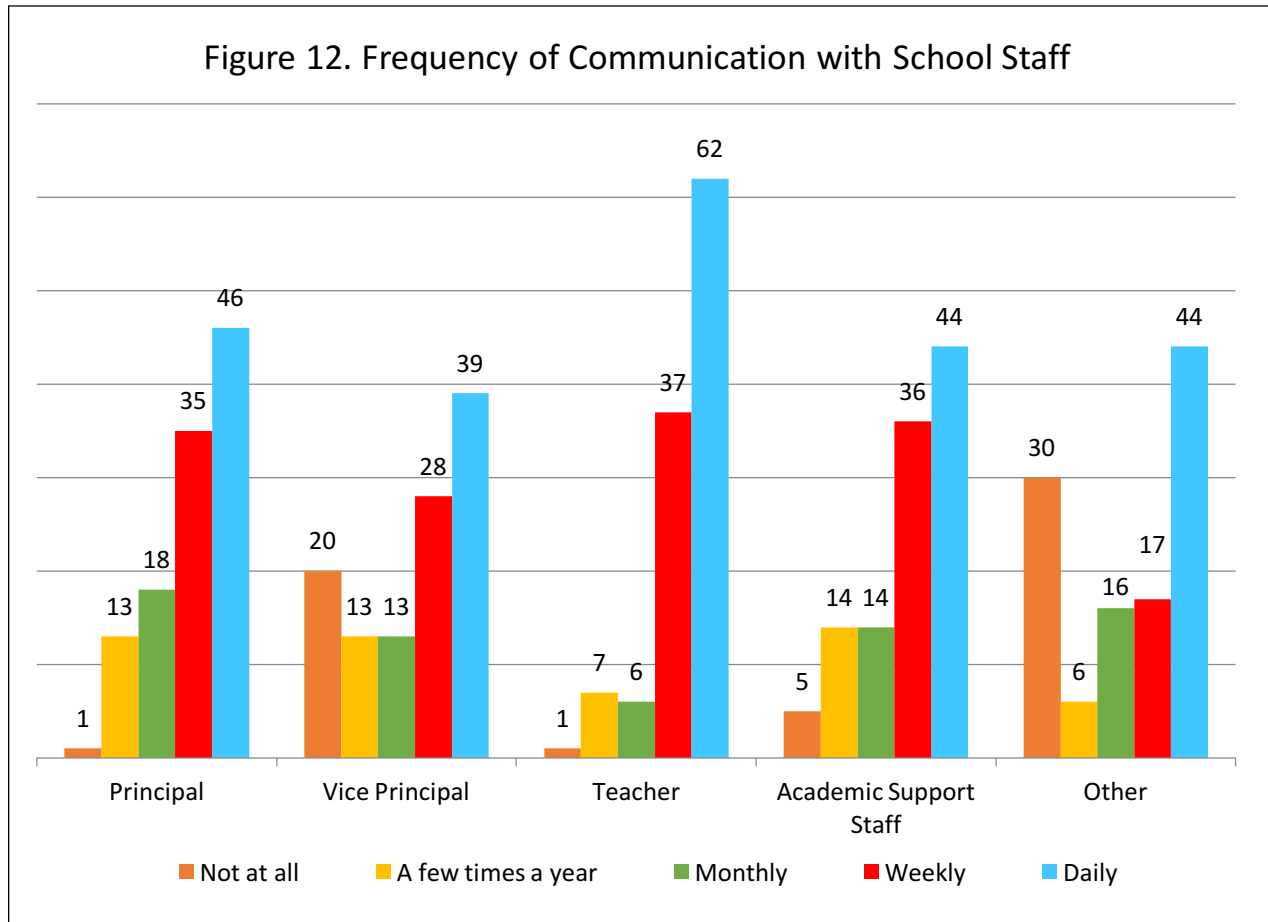
Section Four:

Relationships with Partner Schools

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

Communication with School Day Staff

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



Collaboration with the Partner School

Challenges to Maintaining Positive Relationships with the School

Overall, sites did not report many major or minor challenges in maintaining positive relationships with partner schools. Table 3 (right) shows the percentage of sites reporting each area as a major or minor challenge. Less than 5 percent of sites reported any area as being a major challenge, and less than 15 percent of sites reported any area as a minor challenge.

Table 3. Sites' report of the major and minor challenges of maintaining positive relationships with partner school(s)		
	Major Challenge # of sites (% of total)	Minor Challenge # of sites (% of total)
Commitment/support from school day staff	3 (2.6%)	8 (7.0%)
Communication with school day staff	-- (--)	5 (4.4%)
Ability to meet with school day staff	4 (3.5%)	11 (9.6%)
Consistency of student expectations	4 (3.5%)	10 (8.8%)
Access to data/information from school day staff	-- (--)	14 (12.3%)
Participant recruitment from schools	2 (1.8%)	9 (7.9%)
Access to space at after school site	3 (2.6%)	12 (10.5%)
Staffing changes at partner site(s)	1 (0.9%)	10 (8.8%)

21st CCLC Success Story: Site Perspectives

“One student enrolled in our program has struggled with behavior issues consistently in the early part of the school year. He often got into verbal altercations with his peers which made it difficult for him to develop new friendships. Now, with the support and communication with his school day teachers, we have structured his daily routine after school to enhance consistency mirrored in his school day. He rates himself on a scale of 1 to 3 on how well he did during each activity block and discusses the results with his team leader. In addition, as suggested by his parents, if the student gets a certain score by the end of the week the parents give him a reward at home. This information is also shared weekly with his teacher. With this new behavior management plan, he has become a friend that his peers look to play with regularly. By adding structure and consistent behavior strategies, he has grown significantly this school year.”



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 the primary mechanism through which young people benefit from afterschool programs (e.g., Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Huang et al., 2008). Therefore, the services provided by 21st CCLC programs are driven by having well-trained, stable, and supported staff.

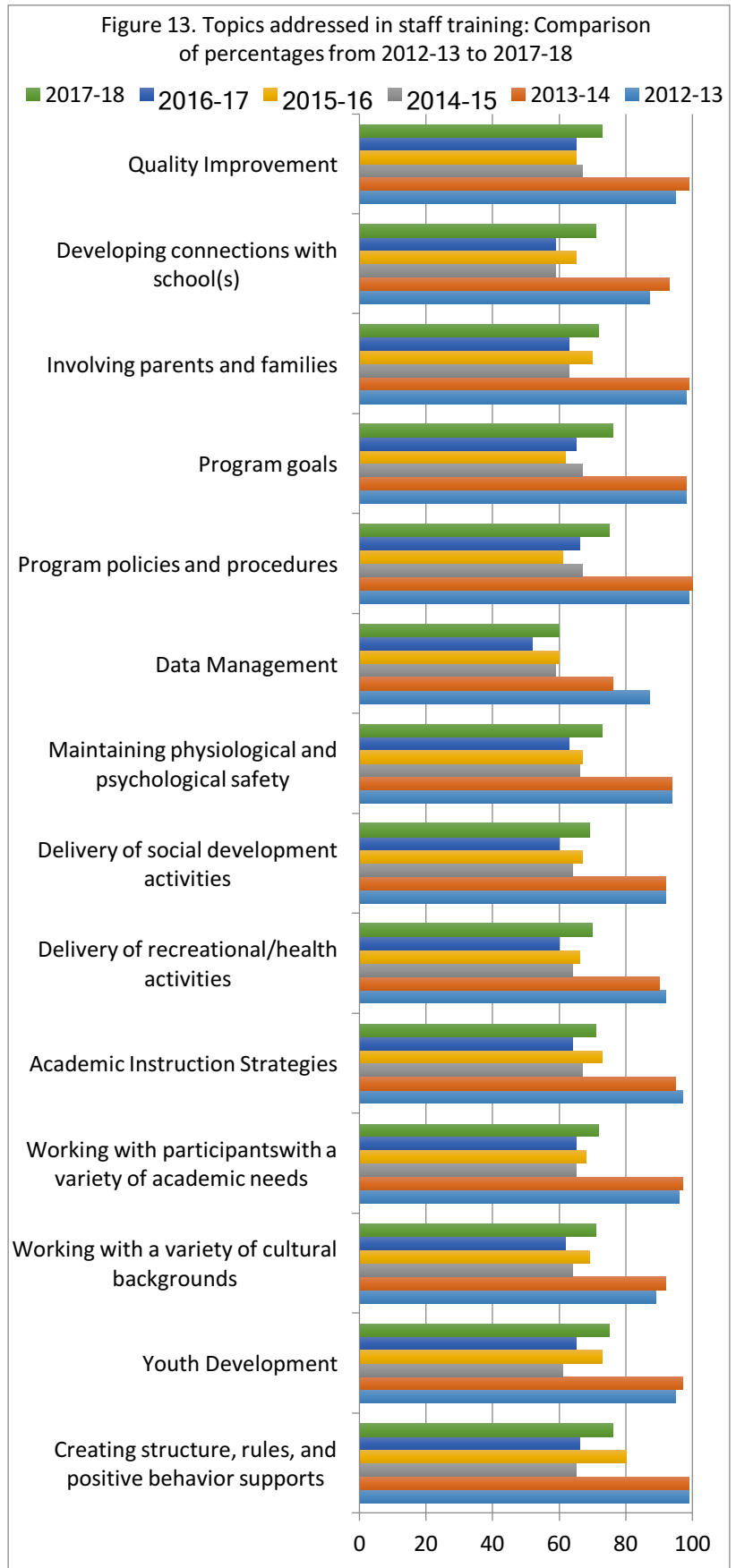
Staff Meetings, Support, and Professional Development

Staff Meetings

A productive and successful way to improve the quality of staff members and program implementation is to hold regular staff meetings, trainings, and professional development events. **More than half of sites held regular staff meetings at least once a month (n=77 sites, 67.5%).** Of those sites, 25 (21.9%) reported holding weekly staff meetings. 22 (19.3%) reported holding staff meetings once every 2-3 months, 8 sites (7%) reported holding 1 staff meeting per year.

Staff Training and Professional Development

Site coordinators were asked to select how often they covered a variety of topics in staff training or professional development events. Figure 13 summarizes the topics covered in each of the past six years. 47.4% percent of sites reported covering all 15 topics during this past school year.



Staff Support

Site coordinators were asked to select all types of support offered to their staff in order to improve after school programming delivery. Overall, the majority of sites offered some form of additional support to their staff, and only five sites (4.4%) reported providing no additional support to their staff. Table 4 (below) provides the number and percentage of sites that offered each type of support to staff members during the 2017-18 school year.

Strategy	# of sites (% of total)
Curriculum planning provided by educational coordinator	44 (38.6%)
Coaching of site staff	59 (51.8%)
Co-teaching with site staff	50 (43.9%)
Evaluation of site staff	51 (44.7%)
Student data evaluation shared by education coordinator	23 (20.2%)
Education coordinator leading specific lessons/activities with students	29 (25.4%)
Paid planning time	56 (49.1%)
Professional development	73 (64.0%)
Staff meetings	89 (78.1%)

Specific Areas Targeted for Additional Professional Development and Support

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

Area	Total	First	Second	Third
Parent and family programming	49	26	13	10
Academic programming	43	13	21	9
Variety of activities	38	14	8	16
Recruitment, retention, & attendance	26	10	11	5
Organization/planning, communication/feedback	6	1	1	4
Community partnerships	25	5	11	9
Staffing (e.g., recruitment, retention, development)	23	8	7	8
Behavior management	43	22	11	10
School partnerships	10	1	5	4
Youth involvement, leadership, and engagement	26	3	8	15
Health and wellness	7	2	2	3
Social/youth development	28	5	11	12
Data management	9	2	3	4

**21st CCLC Success Story:
Site Perspectives**

"One great success the program experienced was the formation of a choir. Twenty five students ranging in age from five to twelve took direction from a highly qualified director. It was astonishing to watch the transform of an unruly group of boy and girls into a highly polished force. The children discovered hidden talents and delighted audiences with their performance of challenging music. Every time they performed a request was made for a future performance."

Section Six:

School Performance of 2017-18 21st CCLC Participants

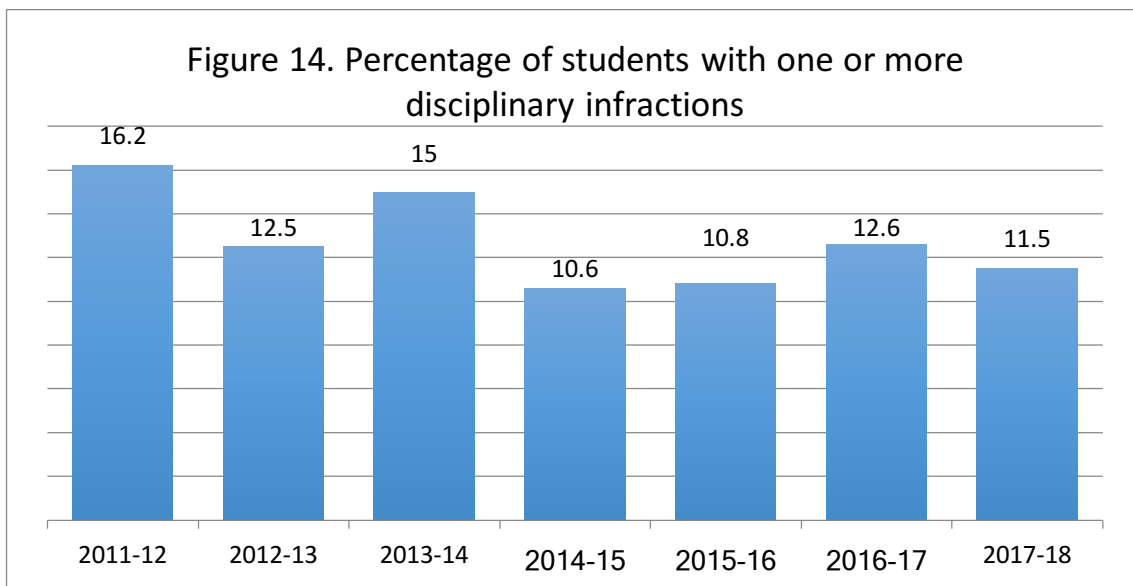
Two measures were chosen as performance indicators for students participating in 21st CCLC programs: school day attendance and school day behavior. Due to the federal guidelines concerning after school participation, in order to be included in the following analyses, students had to have attended the 21st CCLC after school program for at least 30 days. Overall, 7,238 students met the attendance requirement.

Performance Measure 1: School Day Attendance

The first performance measure examined was school day attendance. Attendance rates were calculated using CSDE school day attendance data for individual program participants. This attendance rate reflects the number of days a student was present as a percentage of the total days he or she was enrolled in school. Data on school day attendance were available for 11,090 21st CCLC participants (91.3%). School attendance for individual 21st CCLC participants varied from 3 to 100 percent. The average attendance rate was 94.6 percent, which is equivalent to missing about 9.7 days in a 180-day school year, and represents an increase from the previous year's rate 95.3%.

Performance Measure 2: School Day Behavior (Disciplinary Infractions)

The second performance measure provided information about 21st CCLC participants' in-school behavior, represented as disciplinary infractions. Data on disciplinary infractions was available for 12,139 21st CCLC participants (99.9%). During the 2017-18 school year, 1,394 21st CCLC participants received at least one disciplinary infraction. Therefore, 11.5 percent of 21st CCLC participants had at least one disciplinary infraction during the 2017-18 school year. Of the students with at least one infraction, the number of incidents each student incurred ranged from 1 to 28 with an average of 2.2 incidents per student. Thirty-five 21st CCLC participants received 10 or more disciplinary infractions.





Section Seven:

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the 2017-18 evaluation of Connecticut 21st CCLCs suggest that programs were operating in a manner that is consistent with both federal and state guidelines. Most programs provided homework help every day and had services in place for students who demonstrated need for remedial assistance. The vast majority of sites reached participant attendance targets, a great many exceeded them. However, there was a small proportion of sites that did not meet participant attendance requirements; fourteen sites did not have their target number of students attend at least 60 percent of their registered days.

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

Program Availability

Over the past seven years, 21st CCLC sites have made significant efforts to improve site availability by meeting their target number of days open. The results of this evaluation suggest consistent efforts in this regard with only slight variations from year to year. Over the last seven years, the sites have been open an average of 123, 130, 124, 125, 136, 132, and 126 days respectively. This year's data further indicate that over half of the sites were open in September with the vast majority of sites open by January.

Age-Appropriate Youth Involvement Opportunities

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

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

Partnerships between 21st CCLC Programs and Schools

The results of the 2017-18 evaluation suggest that sites were, overall, well connected with their partner schools. Less than five percent of the sites reported any major challenges with their partner school, but the most commonly reported major or minor challenge was the ability to meet with school day staff. Given the generally high level of collaboration between after school sites and schools, it seems reasonable to expect continued improvements in this area, however, the rate of major challenges remains stable from previous years.

Staff Support Systems

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

Performance of 21st CCLC Program Participants

Overall students in the 21st CCLC programs attended an average of 94.6 percent of their registered school days, which is equivalent to missing about 9.7 days in a 180-day school year. While CT law finds a student truant after missing 10 days in a school year, the finding that CT 21st CCLC participants fall below that level is an encouraging finding since attendance during the school day is a necessary first step for educating children and adolescents. The decrease in ADA rates this year indicates an opportune moment to increase efforts to promote engagement to ensure 21st CCLC sites continue to report average rates below the truant cut-off. A second encouraging finding is that only 11.5 percent of the 21st CCLC participants incurred a disciplinary infraction across the 2017-18 school year.

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

Finally, including other outcome measures to supplement information from the two performance indicators may strengthen future outcome evaluations. Gathering information on students' social and emotional outcomes should be considered for future evaluations, as was proposed in previous years and tentatively approved in April of 2019. We are eager to develop an enhanced evaluation to capture a more nuanced picture of the good work done in CT's 21st CCLCs that might collect these data from program staff, program participants, and perhaps even their families.

21st CCLC Success Story: Site Perspectives

"Jacob* has special needs and struggles during the school day. He often struggles with staying focused and acts out negatively. Since enrolling in our program Jacob has settled in well. When his parents come to pick up he doesn't want to leave, is engaged, and has positive interactions with his peers. We know this is the case during the after school program because he is given choices, engages in project-based learning, and is able to build meaningful relationships with his peers and the adults in the program." *Child's name has been changed to protect privacy



Section Eight:

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

Footnotes

¹ Table includes all 120 sites that were funded in 2017-18, including the six sites that were not included in analyses due to missing data.

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

³ Using an independent samples t-test, there was not a statistically significant difference in rate of program attendance according to gender [$t(11035) = -.259, p = .795$].

⁴ Using an independent samples t-test, there was not a statistically significant difference in the rate of program attendance according to free and reduced lunch status [$t(9613) = -0.68, p = .94$].

⁵ Using a univariate analysis of variance, there were statistically significant differences in the rate of program attendance based on ethnic background [$F(7,11082) = 11.4, p = .000$].