

21st CCLC Michigan

Finding the Link between 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Regular Classrooms Technical Supplement

Tara Donahue, Ph.D.
Learning Points Associates

Laurie A. Van Egeren
Director

Laura Bates
Editor

Community Evaluation and Research Center
University Outreach & Engagement
Michigan State University



**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY**



University Outreach
& Engagement
Michigan State University
East Lansing

December 2007

Copies of this report are available online from:

University Outreach & Engagement

Michigan State University

Kellogg Center, Garden Level

East Lansing, Michigan 48824

Phone: (517) 353-8977

Fax: (517) 432-9541

E-mail: outreach@msu.edu

Web: <http://outreach.msu.edu/cerc/21stcclc.asp>

© 2007 Michigan State University. All rights reserved

Series: 21st CCLC Michigan Evaluation Briefs

The views expressed are solely those of the authors.

For more information about this report, contact Laurie

Van Egeren at the above address or phone number, or

email: vanegere@msu.edu.

Graphic Design

Communication and Information Technologies,

University Outreach and Engagement

Funding

This report was supported in part by a contract with the Michigan Department of Education and University Outreach & Engagement, Michigan State University.

Michigan State University is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer.

Contents

Introduction	4
Method	5
Interview protocols	5
participants	5
Program Sites.....	5
Interview Participants	6
Data Analysis.....	6
References	6
Appendix A.....	7
Program Director Interview Protocol	7
Appendix B.....	10
Site Coordinator Interview Protocol	10
Appendix C.....	13
Classroom Teacher Interview Protocol.....	13

Introduction

The state evaluation of 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program (21st CCLC) is designed to assess the success of Michigan grantees in improving student academic and youth development outcomes, as well as to identify program characteristics that are associated with successful programs. The state evaluation is intended to answer the following evaluation questions:

- Is Michigan meeting federal performance targets for student outcomes?
- How does the Michigan 21st CCLC compare with national performance?
- Is the program more successful with some groups of students than with others?
- What are the characteristics of more successful programs that might contribute to their success?
- What would make the programs even better?

This technical supplement provides information about the sample and procedures used for the research brief *Finding the Link between 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Regular Classrooms: Communication with School Day Staff*. Data for this brief were part of a larger study whose purpose was to understand how the 21st CCLC after-school programs aligned their academic programs with what students were learning during the regular school day and how the programs complement or supplement activities of the school-day curriculum.

Questions about this report or the methods used can be directed to Laurie A. Van Egeren, Principal Investigator, vanegere@msu.edu.

Method

This qualitative study examined the ways in which after-school program staff and school-day teachers communicated so that the program could better meet the needs of individual students and align curricular content of the after-school program with the school day. Three groups were interviewed: after-school program directors, after-school program site coordinators, and school-day teachers working in the schools whose students attended the after-school program. Program directors were the overall managers of 21st CCLC grants, which could serve up to five sites. Site coordinators oversaw program activities at individual program locations. Generally, one site served a specific school.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Interviews were conducted using three open-ended, standardized interview protocols tailored for program directors, site coordinators, and teachers from the host schools. Some questions were standard across all three groups to allow comparison of perceptions among the three groups.

The interviews covered three areas:

Demographics of participant: current position, educational background and experience, interest in after-school programs (program staff only)

Context of the after-school program (program staff only): program mission/vision and goals, after-school learning environment, attendance policies

Links to the school day: relationship between school-day teachers and program staff, communication structures, curriculum links, communication about individual students, and understanding of program goals (school-day teachers only)

Copies of the complete interview protocols can be found in the Appendices. Appendix A is the Program Director Interview, Appendix B is the Site Coordinator Interview, and Appendix C is the Teacher Interview.

PARTICIPANTS

The data for this brief come from qualitative interviews with after-school staff and school-day teachers at schools served by the 21st CCLC programs. The interviews were conducted from the Fall of 2005 through Spring of 2006.

Program Sites

Interviews were conducted at six Michigan 21st CCLC programs serving students at 10 sites. Those sites chosen were identified by the MSU state evaluation as successful according to the following criteria: (a) stable leadership over time; (b) access to the host school; and (c) the perception on the part of the program director(s) that the site had been accountable to meeting program goals. The cases represented different geographic regions (two rural and four urban) and served both elementary ($n = 4$) and middle schools ($n = 6$). Of the 10 sites, eight were administered by public schools and two were administered by community-based

organizations. According to the grant requirements, all schools were in need of improvement. All but one qualified for Title I services, and all had a large proportion of students not meeting state proficiency standards in reading and math (between 40% and 93%).

Interview Participants

Interview participants represented three different groups: 21st CCLC program directors ($n = 6$), program site coordinators ($n = 10$), and teachers from the host schools ($n = 17$).

DATA ANALYSIS

Interview transcripts and field notes were coded by the author using pattern coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A specific code emerged for communication, while other codes, such as relationship to school-day staff and links to the school day included the concepts of coherence, collaboration, and consistency (Noam, et al, 2004).

REFERENCES

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Noam, G. G., with Barry, S., Moellman, L. W., van Dyken, L., Palinski, C., Fiore, N., & McCouch, R. (2004, Fall/Winter). *The Four Cs of afterschool programming: A new case method for a new field*. Afterschool Matters, Occasional Paper Series. Robert Bowne Foundation. Retrieved February 4, 2006, from http://www.robertbownefoundation.org/pdf_files/occasional_paper_03.pdf.

Appendix A

PROGRAM DIRECTOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Demographic Information

First, I'd like to ask you a little about yourself and your history in education.

1. How long have you had your current position as the 21st CCLC director?
2. What is your educational background (i.e., what is the highest degree attained)?
3. Do you have any teaching or other educational experience? If so, please tell me about it.
4. Please tell me how you became interested in after-school programs and what made you want to work here.

Context of the After-school Program

Now, I'd like to talk about your 21st CCLC program in general.

1. Please explain what you see as the primary goal of a 21st CCLC program?
 - Probe: How are your goals focused around academics? How are your goals focused on other activities, such as recreational activities?
2. How does your 21st CCLC achieve those goals?
3. Does your 21st CCLC program have a specific mission or vision?
 - If yes, please describe it for me.
 - If not, why doesn't your program have a specific mission or vision?
4. How does the learning environment provided in your after-school program make good programming compared to learning during the school day?
5. What are your attendance policies for students participating in the after-school program?

Links to the School Day

This next set of questions asks about how the after-school program connects to the regular school.

1. How would you describe the link between school-day academics and the 21st CCLC academic program?
2. How would you describe your site coordinators' relationships with the regular classroom teachers and school staff?
 - Probe: Do you have a formal communication structure between program staff and school staff? Does your program staff attend school functions? Does the school staff attend 21st CCLC events? Do the after-school staff and school day staff attend the same professional development offerings?
3. How do your site coordinators connect with the regular classroom teacher?

- Probe: Does this happen through formal contacts about individual students, informal contacts, logs, other means?
- 4. What information about curriculum is shared between you, your staff and the regular classroom teacher?
 - Probe: Do both curricula align to the state standards? To the Michigan Out-of-School Time Standards?
- 5. What information about individual students is shared between you, your staff, and the regular classroom teacher?
 - Probe: How does your staff learn about individual student learning styles? How are the academic learning needs of the students assessed by the after-school staff?
- 6. How important do you believe the link is between the regular school day and the after-school program?
- 7. How does that link benefit or not benefit students?
- 8. What actions has the program taken to strengthen the relationship between the program and the regular school day?
- 9. What are the strengths of that relationship?
- 10. How would you like to see that relationship improved?

Management of the Program

I'd like to briefly talk about the management of your program.

1. Are your site coordinators full time or part time?
2. What did you use as hiring requirements for site coordinators?
3. What were your hiring requirements for other instructional staff?
4. What is the decision-making process for your 21st CCLC staff in terms of deciding instructional strategies and curriculum used?
 - Probe: Do site coordinators make or contribute to the decisions? What role does your advisory committee play?
5. In what types of training and staff development does your staff participate?
6. How is staff instructed to assess students and the progress they are making?
7. How is program assessment and evaluation conducted?

Student Participants and General Academic Supports

The next few questions focus on your target student population and the academic supports used in the program.

1. How would you describe your student population in terms of demographics and academic achievement?
2. What types of academic supports do you use within the program?
 - Probe: Would you define them as homework help, tutoring, additional instructional time?
3. How are the academic learning needs of students defined?

4. What instructional models are used to address the needs of the students (i.e., remediation, enrichment, alternative learning styles, problem-based learning, or self-directed learning)? Please describe.
5. What would you describe as the strengths of after-school programs serving as academic support systems?
6. What would you describe as the weaknesses of after-school programs serving as academic support systems?
7. Do you see cognitive improvements in the 21st CCLC participants?
8. How do you assess the cognitive improvements?
9. Do you see behavioral improvements in your students?
10. How do you assess the behavioral improvements?

Literacy Curriculum

Although we could talk about many different specific areas of your program, I would like to focus on literacy as a specific academic subject that is also taught during the school day.

1. How is literacy taught in the after-school program?
2. Can you describe the after-school literacy curriculum?
 - Probe: What does a successful lesson plan include? What does a typical day or week look like in literacy instruction in the after-school program?
3. Why was this curriculum chosen?
 - Probe: Does it connect to classroom work? District initiatives? Aligns with benchmarks and standards?
4. Who decided what literacy curriculum to use?
5. How does the teaching of literacy in the after-school program relate to the literacy the students are learning during the school day?
 - Probe: Is it the same material? Are similar instructional strategies used? Is the after-school program used to support what the student is learning during the school day or extend upon what is being taught during the school day?
6. Who did you recruit to teach your literacy curriculum?
 - Probe: Did you choose a certified teacher, college student, volunteer? Why?
7. What type of pedagogy is used to teach the curriculum?
8. How many kids are in each academic literacy session?

Conclusion

1. Any other thoughts or comments you would like to share?

Appendix B

SITE COORDINATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Demographics

First, I'd like to ask you a little about yourself and your history in education.

1. How long have you had your current position at the 21st CCLC site?
2. What is your educational background (i.e., what is your highest degree attained?)
3. Do you have any teaching or other educational experience? If so, please tell me about it.
4. Please tell me how you became interested in after-school programs and what made you want to work here.

Context of the After-school Program

Now I'd like to talk about your 21st CCLC program in general.

1. Please explain what you see as the primary goal of a 21st CCLC program?
 - Probe: How are your goals focused around academics? How do your goals focus on other activities, such as recreational activities?
2. How does your 21st CCLC program achieve those goals?
3. Does your 21st CCLC program have a specific mission or vision?
 - If yes, please describe it for me.
 - If not, why doesn't your program have a mission or vision statement?
4. How does the learning environment provided in your after-school program make good programming compared to learning during the school day?
5. What are your attendance policies for students participating in the after-school program?

Links to School Day

1. How would you describe the link between school day academics and the 21st CCLC academic program?
2. How would you describe your relationship with regular classroom teachers and school staff?
 - Probe: Do you have a formal communication structure between program staff and school staff? Does your program staff attend school functions? Does the school day staff attend 21st CCLC events? Do the after-school staff and school day staff attend the same professional development offerings?
3. How do you and your staff connect with the regular classroom teacher?
 - Probe: Do you have formal communication about individual students, informal contacts, logs, other means?

4. What information about curriculum is shared between you, your staff and the regular classroom teacher?
 - Probe: Do both curricula align to the state standards? To the Michigan Out-of-School time standards?
5. What information about individual students is shared between you, your staff, and the regular classroom teacher?
 - Probe: How does your staff learn about individual student learning styles? How are the academic learning needs of the students assessed by the after-school staff?
6. How important do you believe the link is between the regular school day and the after-school program?
7. How does that link benefit or not benefit students?
8. What actions has the program taken to strengthen the relationship between the program and the regular school day?
9. What are the strengths of that relationship?
10. How would you like to see that relationship improved?

Management of the Program

I'd like to talk briefly about the management of your program.

1. Is your position full time or part time?
2. Who hired your instructional staff? What were the hiring requirements?
3. How are decisions made regarding curriculum and instruction? What role do you play?
4. In what types of training and staff development does your staff participate?
5. How is staff instructed to assess students and the progress they are making?
6. How is program assessment and evaluation conducted?

Student Participants and General Academic Support

The next few questions are in relation to your target student population and the academic components of your program.

1. How would you describe your student population in terms of demographics and academic achievement?
2. What types of academic supports do you use within the program?
 - Probe: Would you define them as homework help, tutoring, additional instructional time?
3. What instructional models are used to address the needs of students (i.e., remediation, enrichment, alternative learning styles, problem-based learning, or self-directed learning)? Please describe.
4. What would you describe as the strengths of after-school programs serving as academic support systems?
5. What would you describe as the weaknesses of after-school programs serving as academic support systems?
6. Do you see cognitive improvements in the 21st CCLC participants?

7. How do you assess the cognitive improvements?
8. Do you see behavioral improvements in your students?
9. How do you assess behavioral improvements?

Literacy Curriculum

1. Although we could talk about many different areas of your program, I would like to focus on literacy as a specific academic subject that is also taught during the school day.
2. How is literacy taught in the after-school program?
3. Can you describe the after-school literacy curriculum?
4. Why was this curriculum chosen?
 - Probe: Does it connect to classroom work? District initiatives? Aligns with benchmarks and standards?
5. Who decided what literacy curriculum to use?
6. How does the teaching of literacy in the after-school program relate to the literacy the students are learning during the school day?
 - Probe: Is it the same material? Are similar instructional strategies used? Is the after-school program used to support what the student is learning during the school day or extend upon what is being taught during the school day?
7. Who did you recruit to teach your literacy curriculum?
 - Probe: Did you choose a certified teacher, college student, volunteer? Why?
8. What type of pedagogy is used to teach the curriculum?
9. How many kids are in each academic literacy session?

Conclusion

1. Any other thoughts or comments you would like to share?

Appendix C

CLASSROOM TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Demographics

First, I'd like to ask you a little about yourself and your history in education.

1. How long have you been a teacher at this school?
2. How long have you been a teacher?
3. Have you ever worked at an after-school program? If so, please tell me about your experience.

Links to After-school Program

My next set of questions is about the relationship between your school and the after-school program that serves students from this school.

1. In general, what do you know about the 21st CCLC program?
 - Probe: What is its purpose?
2. How would you describe the 21st CCLC program in your school?
 - Probe: What are the goals? Do you see those goals being achieved?
3. How does the learning environment provided in the after-school program differ from that provided during the day?
4. How would you describe your relationship with the site coordinators and staff of the 21st CCLC programs?
 - Probe: Do you have a formal communication structure between school staff and after-school staff? Does your staff attend after-school functions? Does the program staff attend school day functions? Do you and the after-school staff attend the same professional development offerings?
5. How do you connect with the 21st CCLC staff?
 - Probe: Does this happen through formal contacts about individual students, informal contacts, logs, other means?
6. What information about curriculum is shared between you and the 21st CCLC staff?
 - Probe: Do both curricula align to the state standards? To the Michigan Out-of-School Time standards?
7. How would you describe the student population of those being recruited in 21st CCLC programs in terms of demographics and academic achievement?
8. What information about individual students is shared between you and the 21st CCLC staff?

- Probe: How does the after-school staff learn about individual student learning styles? How are the academic needs of the students assessed by the after-school staff?
9. Do you see cognitive improvements in 21st CCLC participants?
 10. How do you assess cognitive improvements?
 11. Do you see behavioral improvements in 21st CCLC participants?
 12. How do you assess behavioral improvements?
 13. How important do you believe the link is between the regular school day and the after-school program?
 14. How does that link benefit or not benefit students?
 15. What would you describe as the strengths of the after-school programs serving as academic support systems?
 16. What would you describe as the weaknesses of after-school programs serving as academic support systems?
 17. What actions has the program taken to strengthen the relationship between the program and the regular school day?
 18. What do you see as the strengths of that relationship?
 19. How would you like to see that relationship improved?

General Academic Support

My next two questions are about your teaching strategies in general.

1. How do you define the academic learning needs of your students?
 - Probe: How do you gauge individual student needs? What special support is given to student with needs?
2. What instructional models do you use in your classroom (i.e., remediation, enrichment, alternative learning styles, problem-based learning, or self-directed learning)? Please describe.

Literacy Curriculum

My next few questions are about the literacy curriculum used in your classroom.

1. What literacy curriculum do you use in your classroom?
2. Can you describe your literacy curriculum?
 - Probe: What does a successful lesson plan include? What does a typical day or week look like in literacy instruction in your classroom?
3. Who decided what literacy curriculum to use?
 - Probe: District, school, principal?
4. Why was this curriculum chosen?
 - Probe: Does the curriculum align with the *Michigan Curriculum Framework* benchmarks and standards? How do you know?
5. What type of instructional strategies do you use to teach this specific curriculum?
6. How many students are in your class?

7. How would you describe the students in your school in terms of demographics and academic achievement?

Conclusion

1. Any other comments or thoughts you would like to share?