

Michigan 21st Century Community Learning Centers Evaluation

2005-06 Annual Report

Celeste Sturdevant Reed, PhD
Co-Principal Investigator
Evaluator

Laurie Van Egeren, PhD
Co-Principal Investigator
Director

Laura Bates, MA
Research Associate

MSU Evaluation Team



**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY**



University Outreach
& Engagement
Michigan State University
East Lansing

APRIL 2008

Copies of this report are available from:

University Outreach and Engagement

Michigan State University
Kellogg Center, Garden Level
East Lansing, Michigan 48824

Phone: (517) 353-8977

Fax: (517) 432-9541

E-mail: vanegere@msu.edu

Web: <http://outreach.msu.edu/21cclc>

© 2008 Michigan State University. All rights reserved

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.

Funding

This report was supported by the Michigan Department of Education contract with University Outreach and Engagement.

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

Contents

Highlights and Implications	5
Introduction.....	14
Method	16
The Annual Report Form	16
Sample	16
Management, Operations, and Decision-Making.....	18
Operations	18
Changes That Affect the Program.....	19
Decision-Making Structures	19
Adequacy of Facilities	20
Transportation Availability	20
Staffing.....	21
Success in Meeting Staffing Goals	22
Availability of Qualified Staff	22
Professional Development	23
Volunteer Staff.....	24
Links to the School	26
Relationships with School Districts	27
Relationships with Principals and Teachers.....	28
Links to the School Day.....	28
Links to the Community	29
Relationships with Partners/Vendors	30
Community Links for Sustainability.....	31
Recruitment and Retention	32
Overall Recruitment and Retention.....	33
Low-Achieving Students	35
Other Target Groups	36
Student Opportunities for Governance	41
Formal Governance Structures.....	41
Other Types of Student Involvement.....	42
What Students Said	42
Activities	44
Student Activities.....	45
Academic Activities.....	46
Proposed Changes to Student Activities	48
Adult Activities	49
Recruiting Family Members for Adult-Oriented Activities.....	49
Ways of Involving Family Members	50
Barriers to Parent Involvement	51
Successful Strategies.....	51
Parent Perceptions of Staff and Program	51
Program Quality.....	53
Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)	53
What Students Said.....	54
What Parents Said.....	56
Student Outcomes	57
Michigan’s Outcomes Compared to Federal Targets.....	58

Regular Attendees Compared to Non-Regular Attendees 60
Site-Level Performance 61
Participant Perceptions of Program Impact..... 62
Student Perceptions..... 63
Plans for Future Changes 63

Highlights and Implications

This report presents findings from the Annual Report Form completed January to March 2007 by 37 grantees (32 fiduciaries) receiving 52 grants and serving 193 sites who received of the Michigan 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program. Information in their reports covers their 2005-2006 program year. Each grantee submitted one grantee-level report, typically completed by the overall program administrator, and one site-level report for each site in which programming occurred. Grantees could have up to five sites per grant, with some having multiple grants. The first section of the report describes the data sources and methods. The following sections describe the findings on various aspects of program structure, management and outcomes.

In this summary, we present highlights from and implications of the findings for each section.

Management, Operations, and Decision-Making

Highlights

- **Operations.** Only 28% of sites operated at least 38 weeks; this became mandatory in subsequent rounds of funding. Sites were most likely to operate four days per week.
- **Changes that affect the program.** About half of the grantees reported management changes in the past year. Changes tended to be toward less management at the grantee level and more management at the site level. Several grantees increased youth and community involvement through the establishment of advisory and policy committees. Nearly a third of grantees experienced significant changes in their schools or district that negatively affected program operations, including school closings and turnover in school administrators.
- **Decision-making structures.** Most grantees managed budget at the grantee level but managed day-to-day operations at the site level. Most other decisions, such as hiring, working with vendors or program evaluation, were shared between grantee and sites.
- **Adequacy of facilities.** Most sites reported having adequate facilities and just over half reported improvements in access to facilities for recreational activities and computers since the previous year. However, a significant minority reported declining access to important program facilities. Security was an issue for more than a quarter of program sites.
- **Transportation.** Transportation was viewed as a critical component to providing access to the programs and permitting field trips. School districts and, to a lesser extent, nonprofits were most likely to provide transportation support.

Implications

Programs appeared to be relatively stable and working within the constraints of their sites. Despite school changes and reduced access to facilities at some sites, most programs thought they were able to adapt to changes. Programs made routine adjustments in response to changes in circumstances.

Staffing

Highlights

- **Success in meeting staffing goals.** Getting and training staff were primary goals for many grantees last year; most reported being able to meet their goals. For the next year, programs planned a variety of strategies for improving staffing. These included retaining current staff,

providing more professional development, and finding people with specific skills or characteristics.

- **Availability of qualified staff.** Although the majority of programs indicated success in meeting staffing goals, a number noted barriers to filling staff needs. The most common barriers were lack of money or availability of qualified people. While grantees reported more problems finding staff for non-academic activities, they also noted difficulty related to academic activities in finding qualified people, presumably teachers, who wanted to work extra hours.
- **Cultural competence of staff.** Most grantees had staff who shared language and ethnicity with the participants; however, only half of grantees offered cultural sensitivity training.
- **Professional development.** Most grantees provided their staff with a pre-service orientation, which usually covered administrative issues and how to work with youth. The majority of grantees offered professional development opportunities during the year, which most frequently took the form of MDE-sponsored training. One-half to two-thirds of grantees offered staff regular opportunities to meet and plan with other program staff during a program cycle.
- **Volunteer staff.** Most sites used volunteers in one capacity or another. Sites viewed some types of volunteers as more successful with certain activities:
 - **Parents** for chaperoning field trips
 - **High school students** for tutoring and mentoring
 - **College students** for tutoring
 - **Teachers** (but not retired teachers) for academic enrichment
 - **People with specific skills** for sports and arts activities

Overall, sites had good experiences with volunteers and wanted more.

Implications

Overall, programs reported that they had relatively few barriers to attracting and retaining staff. However, a number reported having trouble satisfying staffing needs because of inability to pay them, difficulty finding enough qualified staff, or finding people who wanted to work additional hours.

- **Programs should look at additional strategies to attract and retain qualified staff.** More careful budgeting to increase wages or benefits or increased professional development opportunities could be used to make working in the program more attractive to potential staff. Engaging less qualified/skilled people in professional development might address additional challenges. However, it may be impossible to change the school district's policies regarding wages and benefits, and in some cases, programs are constrained by limited choices for professional development opportunities in their area; programs may want to investigate online options or partnering with other programs to share resources to access training. Many programs were already instituting some of these recommendations.
- **Programs could benefit from having a comprehensive staffing plan that includes professional development.** Although all respondents mentioned one or more of staffing-related solutions, very few appeared to have a comprehensive plan to attract, train, and retain staff with the necessary skills. A framework should be given and opportunities should be provided for grantees to share their experiences enacting staffing strategies within a comprehensive framework.
- **Programs would benefit from sharing strategies for using volunteers.** Some grantees/site coordinators were very successful attracting volunteers. To the extent that their experiences were not unique (e.g., having a college nearby whose students are required to do pre-service volunteer

work), they should be a good source of information about techniques for getting and using volunteers.

Links to School

Highlights

- **Relationships were generally positive.** Overall, programs reported having positive, supportive relationships with school administrators, principals and teachers. About a third of the grantees saw changes in their districts that had a positive impact on the program. Examples are a greater awareness of the program, greater willingness to share resources, and community programs wanting to get involved in the program.
- **Relationships with school districts.** Most grantees said the school districts they served had a positive view of the program. However, few districts provided resources beyond facilities for the program activities. Several grantees reported that their districts provided other resources that supported the program infrastructure such as transportation, security/custodial services, or computers.
- **Relationships with principals and teachers.** Although sites said both principals and teachers viewed the program positively, on the whole, principals were reported to be somewhat more supportive than teachers. Programs that had good relations with principals and teachers were more likely to have adequate facilities. Some programs planned to sustain existing good relations with schools. Others planned to improve relations by communicating more with school board and school personnel or working with schools on program sustainability.
- **Site links to the school day.** Most sites said they linked their programs to the school day by basing activities on what was taught during the school day. However, only two-thirds said they had regular contact with teachers about student homework and academic needs. Staff met regularly with principals but were more likely to meet teachers on an “as needed” basis.

Implications

Programs should work toward more planning with school districts to share resources as part of sustainability planning. As programs move to build support for sustaining programs beyond the grant period, school districts are an obvious partner.

Programs should move toward regular, structured interaction with teachers around student needs and links to the school day curriculum. To be effective in meeting the learning needs of students, program staff should have regular communication with teachers about both individual student needs and curriculum content.

Links to Community

Highlights

- **Cost-effectiveness of partnerships.** Only one-third of grantees thought their partnerships were cost-effective. They were trying to improve their cost-effectiveness by achieving greater clarity in contracts as to expectations, discontinuing contracts with ineffective partners, and shifting more programming to their own staff.
- **Challenges and successes of partnerships.** Grantees mentioned three main challenges to successful partnerships: reliability, cost of programming, and training or skill levels of partners' staff. Nevertheless, they believed partnerships brought benefits by allowing a greater variety of

activity types and by expanding the skill pool of activity staff. Some grantees said partnerships also helped build positive relationships with the community.

- **Community links for sustainability.** The majority of grantees focused their sustainability efforts on obtaining in-kind resources from the schools and increasing the use of volunteers. They also sought grants to sustain programs. Fewer programs attempted to share resources: half had co-funded activities, a third had staff partially funded by schools, and even fewer had support from local governments or parent/student fees.

Implications

Monitor partnerships for effectiveness. Many grantees found their community partnerships were not cost-effective and sometimes were unreliable. Program managers can use attendance data from EZreports to check on the numbers of sessions held and average daily attendance for activities conducted by partners. By identifying problems early, managers can work with partners to improve performance or eliminate activities that are not well attended. One grantee was developing a tool to evaluate partnerships.

Conduct joint training to enhance the skills of partner agency staff. One of the challenges noted in working with partnerships was skill deficits among partner staff. As most programs have professional development for their own staff, they can easily include staff of partner agencies. This can also be an opportunity to be sure that partners are focused on the 21st CCLC program's goals. Partner agencies may also consider opportunities to participate in professional development to be a benefit of working with the 21st CCLC program. One grantee made training mandatory for partner agencies.

Focus more effort on building local community support for long-term sustainability. Programs tend to focus sustainability efforts on obtaining additional support from schools or obtaining additional grants. However, the best way to achieve long-term sustainability is to develop support at the local level and obtain at least some funding from local sources such as government and business. Few programs had initiated fees for student attendance, nor had they explored parent willingness to contribute something to support the program.

Recruitment and Retention

Highlights

- **Overall recruitment and retention.** In 2006, 25,642 students were enrolled. Most (71%) attended only during the school year and less than half attended regularly (30 days or more). Most grantees and half of sites said their recruitment was successful.
- **Recruitment and retention challenges.** Challenges were similar for elementary and middle schools. Competing activities and lack of transportation impeded both recruitment and retention. In addition, staffing problems and school changes interfered with recruitment and student mobility was a barrier to retention.
- **Recruitment and retention strategies.** Common strategies to improve recruitment focused on connecting with school personnel and parents to obtain student referrals. Some grantees also tried to involve parents, students, and the community more in decision-making for the program or provided transportation. Retention strategies focused on improving activities and providing incentives for attendance; some instituted stricter attendance policies.
- **Attendance policies.** Most grantees either allowed students to leave at any time or only required attendance for part of the day. The seven who changed policies this year moved toward more structure.
- **Low-achieving students and other special populations.** Most grantees were very successful in recruiting low-achieving students. In 2005-06, 77% of the students recruited were low-achieving,

and about 45% of them attended regularly. Most attributed their success to good relations with teachers, principals, and parents, as well as good programming. Barriers to attendance were similar to those for all students, with the additional challenges of family problems/low parental involvement and student dislike of school. Some programs tried to target additional special populations, including special education students, at-risk students, and expelled students. One grantee targeted students with good grades who wanted to maintain them.

- **Different racial/ethnic groups.** African-Americans constituted the largest ethnic group, followed by whites, Hispanics, and Arabic students. Retention was highest among Arabic students. Most programs serving students with diverse populations had no recruitment problems; however a few cited difficulties with language or family issues. Barriers to retention included family transience, lack of transportation, and students not seeing students “like them.”
- **Different grade levels.** Most programs served elementary or middle school students, with elementary students attending more over a longer period of time. Programs attributed their success with middle school students to offering interesting, challenging activities led by supportive staff, and giving students opportunities for choice.
- **Gender.** Programs served boys and girls about equally and few programs adapted recruitment or retention strategies specifically by gender. A few programs developed gender-specific activities or mentioned considering gender in staff recruitment (e.g., having a mix of male and female staff).

Implications

Good connections with schools, students, parents, and community are an essential part of a successful recruitment strategy. Most programs viewed recruiting through the schools, either directly through referrals or indirectly as a means to contact students and parents, as one of the most successful recruitment strategies. This was particularly true for low-achieving students. Giving parents, students and even community members a voice in the program made it more attractive to parents and students. It might also overcome perceptions of the program among some student groups that it is not “cool” to go to the program.

Attendance policies must balance encouraging regular participation with student choice. Most programs have attendance policies that maximize the student choice in order to make the program more attractive. However, a certain amount of structure is needed for efficient management of program resources and to ensure that students attend enough to benefit.

Student Governance

Highlights

- **Student involvement through formal governance structures.** Only one-third of grantees had formal governance structures that included students, while others got student input through other means. All programs saw benefits to student involvement; however, programs with formal structures also said their involvement led to gains in student leadership, reduced behavior problems in the program, and better recruitment of new students.
- **Other types of student involvement.** At the site level, students often had opportunities to participate in decisions about programming and day-to-day operations, such as choosing activities, or meals. Some sites allowed students to help set rules or lead activities. Student involvement in these activities was thought to lead to higher satisfaction and improved student behavior in the program.

- **Student views of opportunities for decision-making.** Students were less positive about the opportunities for governance and decision-making than were program administrators.

Implications

More programs should move toward involving students through formal governance structures.

Although most programs did involve students in decisions about activity design and day-to-day program operations, these types of activities do not provide the same opportunities to develop leadership skills. Sites who did involve students more formally reported that they had better recruitment and fewer behavior problems.

Programs should seek regular input from students about their opportunities for involvement in decision-making. In general program, administrators perceived that student had more opportunities for decision-making than students did. Regular student surveys would help administrator better assess whether students experience the program the way it was intended to be delivered.

Activities

Highlights

- **Changes in student activities.** In general, grantees reported that they worked to improve activities either by getting more input from parents and students, offering more student choice, or changing providers or activities. Activity changes included increasing the number/variety, and tailoring them to certain student populations or specific skills (e.g., technology).
- **Patterns of attendance.** Although academic activities were a required component, 13% of participants did not take part in any academic activities according to the attendance tracking database. After academics, recreation was the most frequently attended activity, followed by arts and youth development. Programs reported that their attendance figures were what they expected, but not all were satisfied with their attendance.
- **Academic activities.** Tutoring was the most frequently attended academic support activity (72%). A majority of sites did not describe specific ways that they designed activities to meet academic goals, nor did they mention any ways that they embedded academics in non-academic activities.
- **Student perceptions of academic support.** Most students thought the program helped them stay caught up with homework and a majority had positive views about the program helping them learn. Eight percent said they did not do school work in the program, but this may have been a result of the way the questions were worded, resulting in an emphasis on homework help and tutoring, but not academic enrichment.
- **Plans for improving activities.** Planned changes for academic and non-academic activities were similar to those changes made in the last year. For academic activities, sites planned to use additional strategies of improving relations with schools and building staff capacities through better meetings and more professional development.

Implications

Programs appear to have been proactive in implementing strategies to improve activities. Sites mentioned using a variety of strategies to improve activities, such as getting more input from parents and students, offering students more choice, and increasing the variety and quality of activities offered.

Some programs are not operating at their desired capacity. Although few programs were surprised by their attendance figures, some hoped to increase attendance in the future. Presentation by some of the programs that are more successful at recruiting in specific activity areas might be very helpful to others.

Grantees might benefit from training/technical assistance on embedding academics in non-academic activities. When asked about their strategies for embedding academics in other activities, few grantees gave responses that were actually relevant to the question. This implies that there is some confusion about what embedding academics means.

Adult Activities

Highlights

- **Recruitment for adult-oriented activities.** Sites mentioned similar strategies for involving parents in adult-oriented activities and special events; however, recruitment for adult activities was not successful for the most part. Most sites did not offer adult-oriented activities (vs family involvement activities).
- **Strategies for involving family members.** The most successful strategies mentioned for increasing parent involvement were holding family activities, inviting parents to see their children perform, and having open communication between staff and parents.
- **Barriers to parent involvement.** The two main barriers to parent involvement were work schedules (mentioned by 97%) and lack of transportation (88%). One third or less mentioned lack of parental concern for education, past negative experiences with schools, and language or cultural barriers.
- **Successful strategies for engaging parents.** Most grantees mentioned successful strategies that focused on making parents feel welcome and communicating with them regularly. Most intended to continue their current strategies in the coming year.
- **Parent perceptions of program and staff.** Most parents gave the program a grade of A (58%) or B (35%). Over 90% agreed or strongly agreed with statements indicating the program was respectful and welcoming to them and knew how to help their child.

Implications

Parents were generally satisfied with the programs their children attend. Programs have done a good job of making parents feel that they were welcome and respected and that the staff were meeting their children's needs.

Programs could benefit from technical assistance in strategies to engage more parents in adult-oriented activities. In spite of the fact that adult-oriented activities are a component of 21st CCLC programs, few grantees have established these activities. Recruitment has been largely unsuccessful for adult activities, yet most programs intend to continue using the same recruitment strategies.

Program Quality

Highlights

- **Staff assessment of program quality.** Using the Youth Program Quality Assessment, staff generally rated their programs as high in providing a safe and supportive environment for youth. Ratings were somewhat lower for the dimensions of interaction and engagement, which involve more opportunities for student choice and decision-making.
- **Student perceptions of program and staff.** Overall, students were very positive about the program environment and their interest in being there. Students in grades 4-12, when asked about program staff, gave positive opinions about their attitudes, behaviors and skills. However, about one third reported staff behaviors that create a negative program environment at least "sometimes."

- **Parent perceptions of program activities.** Parents were overwhelmingly positive about program activities and the balance between recreation and academics. Ninety-seven percent said the program had “many interesting activities.”

Implications

Programs were doing a good job of creating a supportive environment but would benefit from training about creating opportunities for higher-level skill building. Self-assessments conducted by program administrators and staff indicate that program environments are generally positive and were confirmed by positive parent and student ratings. However, results also indicate that staff have less competence in building high-quality interaction and student engagement.

Staff may benefit from training in positive behavior management skills. Although most students were very positive about staff attitudes and interactions, a significant minority had negative perceptions of staff interactions. This finding may indicate that some staff need to develop additional skills; alternatively, it may mean that some students are chafing against the program structure and rules. In either case, staff could benefit from professional development in how to manage student behavior in positive ways.

Outcomes

Highlights

- **Michigan’s outcomes compared to federal targets.** Among all regular participants, Michigan had not met the federal targets for reading and math but came close to meeting the federal targets for classroom performance. Among students who have room for improvement, Michigan met the targets for improvement in reading and math.
- **Regular attendees compared to non-regular attendees.** Students who attended regularly were more likely to remain stable or improve their performance in reading and math grades compared to student who did not attend regularly. This may be a result of the program, or it may be because students who attended more regularly also attended the school-day program more regularly and benefited from consistent instruction.
- **Site-level performance.** Most sites did not meet the federal target of having 45% of participants improve in reading and math grades. When only students with room for improvement were considered, the percent meeting the target for reading rose from 23% to 47%, and for math it rose from 18% to 54%. Program administrators gave several explanations for differences in performance across sites: different grade levels of participants (elementary vs. middle school), the presence of more low-performing students in some sites, and curriculum used at different sites. The three most common explanations for changes over time provided by administrators were that from year to year, different students had attended, programs had emphasized different activities or issues, and students had attended at different levels.
- **Parent perceptions of program impact.** The vast majority of parents responding to the program improvement survey (over 90%) agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped their child learn new things, develop new skills, do better in school, and improve their social adjustment.
- **Student perceptions.** Students reported a variety of program impacts, including help with academic performance, staying away from risky behaviors, social and leadership skill development, and opportunity for exercise and healthy eating.
- **Plans for future changes.** Programs were asked about their plans to improve achievement among program participants. Programs with lower teacher ratings and those with consistent ratings by teachers, parents, and students planned to improve communication with teachers. Those with consistent ratings mentioned other strategies such as building relationships with students and

parents, improving curricula, and improving staff quality by using certified teachers or implementing professional development based on program quality assessments.

Implications

Although Michigan programs received high ratings from students, parents, and to a certain extent, teachers, they were not able to reach federal performance targets for academic improvement and lagged behind the rest of the country on these measures. Programs have shown more improvement among students who had more room for improvement (i.e., had a GPA of less than 3.0 in the first marking period). Based on comments made by the program administrators about reasons for their performance, several strategies for improving performance seem likely to bring better results:

- **Focus on attracting and retaining lower-performing students.** Those with more room for improvement did appear to benefit more from participation, and those who participated more regularly tend to show more improvement. Most programs do not retain students from year to year, but having the same student enroll multiple years would probably provide a better opportunity to affect their overall performance.
- **Focus on improving activities and using curricula that are linked to the school day and intended to produce the changes you seek.** Several program administrators cited factors such as improved activities and focusing on grade-level curricula as factors in improved performance. Communication with school-day teachers was seen as important. Interesting activities also encourage students to participate.
- **High-quality staff are essential to reaching program goals.** Programs cited improvements in staff qualifications (e.g., using more certified teachers), better professional development, and selecting staff who can maintain a positive atmosphere and reducing staff turnover as important strategies for improving performance.

Introduction

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program funds schools and community organizations to offer out-of-school-time (OST) activities for K-12 students in high-poverty areas. The main focus of the program is expanding enrichment opportunities, particularly academic enrichment, for students attending low-performing schools. Key goals of the program are:

- Improving students' academic performance
- Offering enrichment and youth development activities in a safe environment outside of the regular school day

Michigan 21st CCLC programs offer homework help, tutoring, and academic enrichment activities to help students meet state academic standards in subjects such as reading and math. They also provide other enrichment activities focused on youth development, drug and violence prevention, technology, art, music, recreation, and character education to enhance the academic component of the program¹.

2005-2006, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) funded 52 **grants** to 32 different grantees; in this report the number of grantees are shown as 37 because Detroit and Grand Rapids had multiple contractors providing their 21st CCLC Programs. The 52 grants operating during this year were funded in three separate cohorts: 13 A's, 25 B's, and 14 C's. The 32 **grantees** included 18 school districts, 6 public school academies, 7 community-based organizations and 1 university. 21st CCLC **sites** served students in the following grades: 77 elementary school; 68 middle school; 6 high school; 27 elementary-middle school combined; 7 middle-high school combined; and 6 elementary-middle-high school grades combined. This total – 193 sites – is different from the 187 sites reported on in the Annual Report Forms because of school closings and mergers during the 2005-2006 academic year; sites that operated only in summer were not asked to report.

The state evaluation of 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program (21st CCLC) is designed to assess the success of Michigan in meeting program goals. The state evaluation is intended to answer the following evaluation questions:

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

The annual report (ARF) serves two primary purposes:

- Grantees examine the processes and outcomes of their program; identify areas of strength and ways to improve their programs, leading to better returns on community investment and greater sustainability.
- The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) learns more about the individual programs, identifies strategies for success, and targets areas for technical assistance.

This report provides program information about Michigan 21st CCLC on critical issues in quality after-school programming that have been identified by researchers, practitioners, and MDE.

¹ Michigan Department of Education Website, http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_35090-127653--00.html

This report offers information about the program from two levels of program management:

- **Grantee** – the grant recipient/administrator, which has primary responsibility for management of the program as a whole
- **Site** – each individual programming location.

Program administrators, site coordinators, and, in some cases, local evaluators and other program staff participated in answering questions about various aspects of their programs.

Method

Data presented in this report came primarily from data submitted via the 2005-2006 Annual Report Form (ARF), a Web-based reporting form developed by the state evaluation team as a mechanism for grantees to report to the Michigan Department of Education on their annual progress. In the Student Outcomes section, multi-year comparison data were drawn from earlier annual reports, student outcomes provided by the grantees, EZreports data and parent and student surveys. A unique feature of the ARF is that the state evaluation team provides individual grantees with grantee-level and site-level data summarized from standard data coordinated by the state about implementation, participant characteristics and outcomes (e.g., EZreports attendance tracking data; youth, parent, and teacher survey data, Youth Program Quality Assessment [YPQA]² data; and school outcomes data). These data are provided help them assess their program's progress, accomplishments, and areas in need of improvement. A description of the methods used to collect the data used to populate the ARF is available in *21st CCLC Michigan: Overview of the Program and State Evaluation Technical Supplement*³ (Wu, Van Egeren, & Bates, 2007).

The Annual Report Form

The ARF has two parts: (a) a grantee-level report, completed by the program director, and (b) site-level reports for each location where programming occurs, completed by site coordinators or other administrators working with the site coordinators.

- The **grantee-level report** covers factors that are likely to be common across sites within a grantee, such as overall program objectives, management structures, student governance policies, staff development and training, recruitment and attendance policies, partnerships, and links to school and community.
- The **site-level report** covers factors likely to vary from site to site including facilities, staffing, activities, service utilization, relationships with the school and community, service partnerships and student outcomes. In each program area, sites are provided with descriptive tables and figures that summarize information from program data, surveys, and school records to assist them in assessing their progress. Administrators are asked to comment on and interpret the data presented in the report and to provide additional information about their program management.

The ARF was opened on January 22, 2007 and was due on March 1, 2007. Information addressed the 2005-06 program year, which included summer 2005 and the 2005-06 school year. Data was analyzed both quantitatively using descriptive statistics and qualitatively based on content analyses of the answers.

Sample

Grantee-level information was provided by 37 ARF reports from the 32 organizations. Although most grantee-level information covered all sites overseen by the grantee organization regardless of the number of grants received, the two largest grantees (Detroit Public Schools and Grand Rapids Public Schools) used a model in which the fiduciary grantee contracted with three to four community-based organizations ("sub-grantees"), each of which was responsible for operating a number of sites. In these cases, each of the sub-grantee organizations completed a grantee ARF. Most (35) grantee reports were completed by the Program Director (also called project director, director, or program coordinator). One was completed by the federal program specialist and the other by the supervisor of the elementary school sites. The largest

² High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. For more information, see <http://etools.highscope.org/pdf/YouthPQA.pdf>

³ http://outreach.msu.edu/cerc/documents/21CCLC_Overview_tech_report.pdf

number of reports (15) had a single author; 10 were authored by two people. The agency executive director was a member of the writing team for three of the six community-based organizations. The local evaluator contributed to reporting on six (16%) of the grantee-level reports.

Among the 187 site reports, two-person teams represented the largest group ($n = 58$, 31%); reports authored by a single person were second most prevalent ($n = 46$, 25%) with three-person teams ($n = 41$, 22%) a close third. The project director was a member of the team 61% of the time (115/187) and the site coordinator 70% of the time (130/187). The site coordinator was most often the single author (35/46 or 76%). Twenty-three teams had teachers and/or principals as members and 13 teams included the local evaluator; this latter figure is approximately the same percent as for the grantee teams (6% site vs. 5% grantee).

Management, Operations, and Decision-Making

Grantees were asked to provide information about changes in their management since last year, the structure of decision-making in their program, and transportation needs. Sites answered questions about the adequacy of facilities and transportation. Thirty-five of 37 grantees and 182 of 187 sites submitted information about program management. Reasons for missing data are not known.

Highlights

- **Operations.** Only 28% of sites operated at least 38 weeks; this became mandatory in subsequent rounds of funding. Sites were most likely to operate four days per week.
- **Changes that affect the program.** About half of the grantees reported management changes in the past year. Changes tended to be toward less management at the grantee level and more management at the site level. Several grantees increased youth and community involvement through the establishment of advisory and policy committees. Nearly a third of grantees experienced significant changes in their schools or district that negatively affected program operations, including school closings and turnover in school administrators.
- **Decision-making structures.** Most grantees managed budget at the grantee level but managed day-to-day operations at the site level. Most other decisions, such as hiring, working with vendors or program evaluation, were shared between grantee and sites.
- **Adequacy of facilities.** Most sites reported having adequate facilities and just over half reported improvements in access to facilities for recreational activities and computers since the previous year. However, a significant minority reported declining access to important program facilities. Security was an issue for more than a quarter of program sites.
- **Transportation.** Transportation was viewed as a critical component to providing access to the programs and permitting field trips. School districts and, to a lesser extent, nonprofits were most likely to provide transportation support.

Implications

Programs appear to be relatively stable and working within the constraints of their sites. Despite school changes and reduced access to facilities at some sites, most programs think they have been able to adapt to changes. Programs have made routine adjustments in response to changes in circumstances.

Operations

Weeks of Operation

In 2005-06, out of 167 sites with operations data (data was unavailable for 20 sites from one organization), sites operated between 16 and 49 weeks (some programs in Cohort C, the newest cohort, took several months to implement). Only 28% of sites operated for at least 38 weeks, the required number of weeks identified in subsequent requests for proposals released by MDE.

During the school year, sites operated between 16 and 45 weeks, with the majority (62%) running for between 29 and 35 weeks. During summer, 129 (77%) sites operated, with periods ranging from 3 to 10 weeks; most sites (66%) ran for 5 or 6 weeks.

Days Per Week of Operation

During the school year, sites were most likely to operate for four days per week (71%) or three days per week (24%). Two sites ran for two days per week and five sites (4%) ran for five days per week.

During the summer, sites were most likely to operate for four days per week (51%), three days per week (24%), or five days per week (19%). Six sites (5%) ran two days per week and one operated one day per week.

Changes That Affect the Program

Management Changes

About half (51%) of the grantees reported one or more changes in the past year and 43% reported no changes. Seven of the 37 grantees (19%) reported that project directors had changed; at 54 sites (29%), the site coordinators changed. Many of the changes were reported to be normal management adjustments in response to changing conditions, such as:

- Six grantees moved management tasks from grantee to site level
 - Three increased site coordinator responsibilities for programming
 - Three shifted responsibility for data collection and data entry
 - One transferred management of sustainability activities
 - One shifted some program planning to a youth advisory committee
- Several grantees implemented new policy or advisory committees
 - Two initiated policy committees
 - Five established advisory committees

School Changes

- Nine grantees reported school-related changes that had a negative impact on the program, including:
 - School closings; 12 of 182 sites changed location from the prior year (5 responses were missing).
 - Turnover among school administrators
 - School construction
 - School contract issues (e.g., the number of days that teachers could work)
 - Loss of students

Decision-Making Structures

Grantees discussed how they made decisions about a wide range of topics, such as budget, staffing, programming issues, parent/community involvement, student recruitment, and evaluation/program improvement. These comments are based on open-ended responses and only represent those grantees who mentioned that topic.

- Most grantees who mentioned budgeting (18/27 or 67%) kept budget decisions at the grantee level
 - A few grantees (4/27 or 15%) shared this responsibility with their sites
 - A few (15%) gave sites responsibility for their own sub-budgets
- Day-to-day operations were exclusively a site responsibility (100% of 30)
- Most grantees shared other decision-making with sites, with two exceptions:
 - One grantee, a school district with 4 sites, centralized most decision-making within the grantee
 - One grantee, serving several school districts, decentralized most decision-making

Adequacy of Facilities

Sites were asked to compare the facilities available to the program during 2005-06 with those they had during 2004-05. They reported on space/facilities available for academic, youth development, recreational, and computer activities. They also reported on the adequacy of janitorial and security services.

- Materials and janitorial services were not a problem for most sites
- However, over a third of sites (67/187 or 36%) contended with some lack of access to adequate facilities for activities:
 - Nine sites reported a decrease in the availability of facilities for at least three types of activities, while only two had substantial improvements in three areas
 - For all 17 sites that had changes in facilities for academic activities, the availability of space had declined from satisfactory to inadequate.
 - 55% (29/53) of sites reported improved space for recreation since the previous year, but 18 (34%) said their access had declined
 - 43 sites reported changes in their computer access. Of these, approximately half (49%) had improved access to computers, but 16 (37%) sites lost some access.
- 28% of sites expressed some concern about the availability of security

Transportation Availability

Grantees and sites reported on their needs for transportation and how they addressed these needs.

- Only 14% of the grantees said they did **not** need transportation; a similar proportion (16%) of sites said it was needed but not available.
- This is explained by examining grantees' reports of the sources they used for transportation:
 - 76% of grantees partnered with schools
 - 36% of grantees worked with nonprofits or other organizations
- The benefits that sites reported of having transportation included attracting more students, taking more field trips, and transporting students home after the program.

Staffing

Staffing is central to quality programming and is a continuing challenge for programs. In these reports, programs discussed their goals and accomplishments this year around staffing, the challenges they encountered, and how they are working to improve their staffing. They reported on the planning and professional development opportunities they offered to staff and their use of volunteers.

Highlights

- **Success in meeting staffing goals.** Getting and training staff were primary goals for many grantees last year; most reported being able to meet their goals. For the next year, programs planned a variety of strategies for improving staffing. These included retaining current staff, providing more professional development, and finding people with specific skills or characteristics.
- **Availability of qualified staff.** Although the majority of programs indicated success in meeting staffing goals, a number noted barriers to filling staff needs. The most common barriers were lack of money or availability of qualified people. While grantees reported more problems finding staff for non-academic activities, they also noted difficulty related to academic activities in finding qualified people, presumably teachers, who wanted to work extra hours.
- **Cultural competence of staff.** Most grantees had staff who shared language and ethnicity with the participants; however, only half of grantees offered cultural sensitivity training.
- **Professional development.** Most grantees provided their staff with a pre-service orientation, which usually covered administrative issues and how to work with youth. The majority of grantees offered professional development opportunities during the year, which most frequently took the form of MDE-sponsored training. One-half to two-thirds of grantees offered staff regular opportunities to meet and plan with other program staff during a program cycle.
- **Volunteer staff.** Most sites used volunteers in one capacity or another. Sites viewed some types of volunteers as more successful with certain activities:
 - **Parents** for chaperoning field trips
 - **High school students** for tutoring and mentoring
 - **College students** for tutoring
 - **Teachers** (but not retired teachers) for academic enrichment
 - **People with specific skills** for sports and arts activitiesOverall, sites had good experiences with volunteers and wanted more.

Implications

Overall, programs reported that they had relatively few barriers to attracting and retaining staff. However, a number reported having trouble satisfying staffing needs because of inability to pay them, difficulty finding enough qualified staff, or finding people who wanted to work additional hours.

- **Programs should look at additional strategies to attract and retain qualified staff.** More careful budgeting to increase wages or benefits or increased professional development opportunities could be used to make working in the program more attractive to potential staff. Engaging less qualified/skilled people in professional development might address additional challenges. However, it may be impossible to change the school district's policies regarding

wages and benefits, and in some cases, programs are constrained by limited choices for professional development opportunities in their area; programs may want to investigate online options or partnering with other programs to share resources to access training. Many programs were already instituting some of these recommendations.

- **Programs could benefit from having a comprehensive staffing plan that includes professional development.** Although all respondents mentioned one or more of staffing-related solutions, very few appeared to have a comprehensive plan to attract, train, and retain staff with the necessary skills. A framework should be given and opportunities should be provided for grantees to share their experiences enacting staffing strategies within a comprehensive framework.
- **Programs would benefit from sharing strategies for using volunteers.** Some grantees/site coordinators have been very successful attracting volunteers. To the extent that their experiences are not unique (e.g., having a college nearby whose students are required to do pre-service volunteer work), they should be a good source of information about techniques for getting and using volunteers.

Success in Meeting Staffing Goals

Grantees reported on the extent to which they achieved their staffing goals from the previous year. Of the 37 who had goals from last year, 33 (89%) said they accomplished their goals this year. The other four gave responses of one of three types: (a) gave a response that was not an answer, (b) reported “no change,” or (c) reported “not applicable.” Goals for these 33 grantees included:

- Obtaining more staff (30%). Strategies included hiring more teachers or other staff from the school, developing more community partnerships, and obtaining more college students and other volunteers
- Increasing staff development and training (27%)
- Retaining staff (15%)
- Implementing better hiring practices (12%)

Staffing goals identified for the upcoming year were similar, but placed a greater emphasis on developing volunteers and student internships.

Availability of Qualified Staff

Barriers to Getting Staff

As Table 1 shows, money and availability of qualified people were the major barriers to obtaining the staff program administrators wanted.

- Grantees reported more problems finding staff for non-academic than for academic activities, and were particularly limited by the choices available in the geographic area for non-academic staffing
- In seeking staff for academic activities, grantees were more likely to be limited in being able to find enough qualified staff and staff who want to work additional hours—most likely, school-day teachers

Table 1
Barriers to Achieving Desired Staffing Patterns

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Barriers for academic activities</i>	<i>Barriers for non-academic activities</i>
Ability to pay for the staff we need	46%	44%
We are able to get the quality but not the number of staff we need	40%	32%
Hard to find people who want to work additional hours	35%	28%
Limited choices in our area	18%	27%
School district's policies about who can be hired	17%	19%
People do not have skills to work with our children	16%	22%
Nothing	67%	57%

Cultural Competence of Staff

Program administrators were asked about the extent to which the ethnic and cultural characteristics of staff matched those of the student population. Overall, grantees indicated that staff ethnic and cultural characteristics closely matched those of the students.

- Over 95% of the sites said their staff shared language and ethnicity with the students
- 89% said activities were tailored to the culture of the students
- Slightly more than half of sites (59%) provided cultural sensitivity training to staff

Goals to Improve Staffing Over Next Year

Grantees planned to try a variety of ways to improve staffing, including:

- Retain current staff
- Provide more professional development
- Find new staff – for example, people with different ideas and skills or with specific skills or characteristics
- Learn from past experience or the experience of others

Professional Development

Administrators were asked about the opportunities that program staff have to participate in pre-service orientation and ongoing professional development. They also reported on the (paid) time available to staff for planning and coordination.

Pre-Service Training

Most grantees (92%) provided pre-service professional development to staff. Pre-service training tended to cover administrative topics and general youth development. Out of all grantees:

- 91% covered administrative topics
- 86% covered how to work with youth or positive youth development
- 66% presented on how to use their curriculum

- 56% taught staff how to use the Youth Program Quality Assessment (a self-assessment of program quality)

Ongoing Professional Development

Most grantees (91%) offered opportunities for professional development activities during the program year.

- Three grantees offered no professional development within the organization, and two offered none outside of the organization.
- 78% of those offering professional development allowed staff to attend two or more events advertised by the Michigan Department of Education
- 64% offering professional development did so within the organization

Compared to the previous year, in 2005-06 many programs provided more staff training, with topics based on feedback from staff, from the YPQA self-assessment, and from MDE. According to administrators, results of the training included:

- Better prepared, more confident staff
- Improved staff-student relationships
- Better coordination among staff

Co-Planning with Peers

Encouraging co-workers to plan activities together can provide additional professional development opportunities, as peers learn from one another and are able to reflect upon alternative ways to develop activities. Grantees reported the following:

- One half to two thirds of staff had opportunities to plan and meet with other staff.
- 65% of programs paid staff for planning time
- 66% paid staff in the same activity to meet for planning at the start of a session
- 49% said staff from different activities meet regularly during a program cycle

Volunteer Staff

Based on the type of volunteer sought, most program sites (between 82% and 98%) used various types of volunteers to supplement activities staff during the program year. However, as shown in Table 2, sites looked for different types of volunteers for different types of activities. In particular:

- Parents were viewed as most successful chaperoning field trips
- High school and college students were viewed as most successful in tutoring
- High school students were viewed as most successful as mentors
- Teachers (but not retired teachers) were viewed as most successful in academic enrichment
- People with specific skills were viewed as most successful in arts and recreation

Table 2
Types of Volunteers Used for Different Activity Types

<i>Type of volunteer</i>	<i>Tutoring</i>	<i>Act as mentor (positive role model)</i>	<i>Academic enrichment</i>	<i>Sports, arts, tech, etc. activities</i>	<i>Chaperone field trips, patrol playgrounds, etc.</i>
Parents of enrolled students	40%	64%	33%	52%	83%
High school students (doing community service)	55%	60%	40%	47%	30%
College students	57%	61%	48%	55%	46%
Business people	40%	52%	32%	35%	28%
Retired teachers	60%	60%	60%	53%	43%
People with specific skills (coaches, art instructors, nutritionists, etc.)	45%	64%	53%	72%	39%

In open-ended questions, sites indicated that overall they had good experiences with volunteers and wanted more, with a few exceptions:

- Business people were rarely used; one site that did use business volunteers had a bad experience
- Nine sites reported parents were less successful in tutoring roles; they gave reasons such as “our parents don’t have the academic skills” and “aren’t confident.”
- High school or college students didn’t work out in a few cases

Links to the School

At the grantee level, programs were asked to describe their relationship with the school administration and the types of contributions that the district made to program support. They also described changes in the district that had an impact on the OST program and what goals they had identified for building their relationship with the school. At the site level, programs reported on their relationship with the school principal and teachers, as well as the ways in which they tried to connect with the school-day content.

Highlights

- **Relationships were generally positive.** Overall, programs reported having positive, supportive relationships with school administrators, principals and teachers. About a third of the grantees saw changes in their districts that had a positive impact on the program. Examples are a greater awareness of the program, greater willingness to share resources, and community programs wanting to get involved in the program.
- **Relationships with school districts.** Most grantees said the school districts they served had a positive view of the program. However, few districts provided resources beyond facilities for the program activities. Several grantees reported that their districts provided other resources that supported the program infrastructure such as transportation, security/custodial services, or computers.
- **Relationships with principals and teachers.** Although sites said both principals and teachers viewed the program positively, on the whole, principals were reported to be somewhat more supportive than teachers. Programs that had good relations with principals and teachers were more likely to have adequate facilities. Some programs planned to sustain existing good relations with schools. Others planned to improve relations by communicating more with school board and school personnel or working with schools on program sustainability.
- **Site links to the school day.** Most sites said they linked their programs to the school day by basing activities on what was taught during the school day. However, only two-thirds said they have regular contact with teachers about student homework and academic needs. Staff met regularly with principals but were more likely to meet teachers on an “as needed” basis.

Implications

Programs should work toward more planning with school districts to share resources as part of sustainability planning. As programs move to build support for sustaining programs beyond the grant period, school districts are an obvious partner.

Programs should move toward regular, structured interaction with teachers around student needs and links to the school day curriculum. To be effective in meeting the learning needs of students, program staff should have regular communication with teachers about both individual student needs and curriculum content.

Relationships with School Districts

District Administrators' Perceptions of Program

Most grantees (89%) reported that district administrators viewed the program positively and saw advantages for the host school.

District Contributions

Only five grantees (14%) received no resources from their school districts. The most commonly received resources were in-kind use of the building and copy machines (19%). A few mentioned that their district provided the following:

- Transportation (16%)
- Computers, cell phones and audio-visual equipment (16%)
- Materials (8%)
- Custodial services (8%)
- Office space (5%)
- Security (5%)

In addition, two districts provided cash (for coordinator salary or academic support) and one district integrated Title I funds to support tutoring.

Changes in Past Year

Although school closings and other district-level changes had a negative effect on program operations (see *Management, Operations, and Decision-Making*), nine grantees also reported changes that had a positive impact, such as:

- Greater awareness of program among principals and faculty
- Greater willingness to share resources
- Office space for the program

In addition, these grantees reported that community programs wanted to get involved with their 21st CCLC program

Goals for Improving Relationships with the District

Grantees identified goals to address in 2006-07 in order to improve relationships with the school district.

- Ten (27%) planned on improving communication with the school board, district administrators, principals and/or teachers.
- Eight (22%) said they already have a good relationship and want to maintain it
- Seven (19%) grantees planned to work with the district to sustain the program
- Other grantees mentioned a variety of goals, including:
 - Better opportunities and/or outcomes for participants (11%)
 - Better programming (8%)

Relationships with Principals and Teachers

Most sites saw the principal as supportive; 89% viewed the principal as warm and welcoming, and 85% said the principal acted as an advocate for the program. In addition, principals supported the program in specific ways:

- Endorsing distribution of 21st CCLC materials, such as flyers, in classrooms
- Allowing distribution of materials at parent nights or other school events
- Encouraging teachers to identify and recruit students for the program

Sites also reported that most teachers were supportive of the program, with 83% reporting that teachers were warm and welcoming, 75% reporting that teachers were invested in the program, and 80% reporting that teachers viewed the program as beneficial.

Notably, relations with the principal and the teachers were not always the same:

- 56% reported having good relations with both principals and teachers
- 27% said they had good-enough relations with principals but poor relations with teachers
- 17% reported poor relations with both principals and teachers

Sites that had good relations with both principals and teachers were more likely to have adequate facilities.

Links to the School Day

Most sites said they linked their activities with the students' school-day learning, and that they did so in a variety of ways:

- 80% of sites said their program activities were based on what was taught in the classrooms
- 68% said they had regular contact with teachers about student homework or academic needs
- Staff reported meeting more regularly with principals than with teachers, but said that they were more likely to meet with teachers on an "as needed" basis

Links to the Community

Grantees reported on the cost effectiveness of the partnerships they developed to provide services and strategies they were employing to increase the cost effectiveness of their partnerships. They also described their activities to promote community investment in program sustainability. Both sites and grantees described their successes and challenges in working with community partners.

Highlights

- **Cost-effectiveness of partnerships.** Only one third of grantees thought their partnerships were cost-effective. They are trying to improve their cost-effectiveness by achieving greater clarity in contracts as to expectations, discontinuing contracts with ineffective partners, and shifting more programming to their own staff.
- **Challenges and successes of partnerships.** Grantees mentioned three main challenges to successful partnerships: reliability of partners, cost of programming, and training or skill levels of partners' staff. Nevertheless, they believed partnerships brought benefits by allowing a greater variety of activity types and by expanding the skill pool of activity staff. Some grantees said partnerships also helped build positive relationships with the community.
- **Community links for sustainability.** The majority of grantees focused their sustainability efforts on obtaining in-kind resources from the schools and increasing the use of volunteers. They also sought grants to sustain programs. Fewer programs attempted to share resources: half had co-funded activities, a third had staff partially funded by schools, and even fewer had support from local governments or parent/student fees.

Implications

Monitor partnerships for effectiveness. Many grantees found their community partnerships were not cost-effective and sometimes were unreliable. Program managers can use attendance data from EZreports to check on the numbers of sessions held and average daily attendance for activities conducted by partners. By identifying problems early, managers can work with partners to improve performance or eliminate activities that are not well attended. One grantee is developing a tool to evaluate partnerships.

Conduct joint training to enhance the skills of partner agency staff. One of the challenges noted in working with partnerships was skill deficits among partner staff. As most programs have professional development for their own staff, they can easily include staff of partner agencies. This can also be an opportunity to be sure that partners are focused on the 21st CCLC program's goals. Partner agencies may also consider opportunities to participate in professional development to be a benefit of working with the 21st CCLC program. One grantee made training mandatory for partner agencies.

Focus more effort on building local community support for long-term sustainability. Programs tend to focus sustainability efforts on obtaining additional support from schools or obtaining additional grants. However, the best way to achieve long-term sustainability is to develop support at the local level and obtain at least some funding from local sources such as government and business. Thus far, few programs have been willing to initiate fees for student attendance, nor have they explored parent willingness to contribute something to support the program.

Relationships with Partners/Vendors

Cost-Effectiveness of Partnerships

About one-third of grantees thought their partnerships were cost-effective; the same number reported no actions taken to increase cost-effectiveness. The remaining grantees used a variety of methods to improve cost effectiveness:

- Developing greater clarity in agreements regarding expectations, policies, and procedures
- Negotiating better deals with service providers
- Discontinuing grants with ineffective providers
- Shifting more programming to their own staff

Challenges in Partnerships

Although grantees and sites were asked slightly different questions about the challenges of working with partners, their answers were quite similar.

- Three challenges were cited most frequently (two or more grantees):
 - Reliability among providers (e.g., being there when scheduled)
 - Cost of programming or diminishing resources for partners
 - Sufficient training/skill among partner staff related to working with youth
- In addition, sites named three additional challenges in working with partners:
 - Engaging and retaining student interest in the activity provided by the partner
 - Getting sufficient space for partner activities

To address challenges with partners, sites used strategies that were similar to grantee strategies for increasing cost effectiveness, such as developing clearer agreements and discontinuing relationships with ineffective partners; however, a few were unique:

- Providing mandatory training for partners
- Changing program hours to increase attendance in partners' activities
- Developing a tool to evaluate partnerships

Successes from Partnerships

Grantees reported a number of benefits of working with community partners, including:

- Enhancing program activities to include a greater variety of interesting sessions that attracted more students to participate
- Providing access to opportunities beyond the program site
- Expanding the pool of staff skills (e.g., developing partnerships with organizations that could contribute to grant writing to seek additional funds)
- Providing events to create more opportunities for parents attend with their children
- Building positive relationships with the community

Community Links for Sustainability

The great majority of grantees (all but one) pursued at least one strategy to sustain the program. For example, most programs pursued in-kind contributions and recruiting volunteers to help sustain programs:

- 89% received in-kind resources from the school district
- Three-fourths were soliciting volunteers with specific program support skills
- Two-thirds used college or high school students as volunteers in activities to supplement staffing

In addition, about two-thirds sought federal and/or foundation funding. However, fewer programs pursued shared resources. Of those that did:

- About half (54%) had co-funded opportunities for students, such as a summer program partnership between the 21st CCLC and YouthCorps
- One third (31%) had staff who were partially supported by school funds
- Less than one quarter were receiving any financial support from city or county government
- On an open-ended question, 14% reported using a sliding fee scale for students

Recruitment and Retention

Data for this section come from the ARF and EZreports. Grantees described their attendance policies and any changes in those policies over the past year. They also reported on their strategies for recruiting and retaining students. At the site level, programs reported on their overall success in recruiting and retaining participants; they also discussed strategies they intended to implement to improve recruitment and retention.

The 21st CCLC program has a specific charge to serve students in low-achieving schools; therefore, grantees and individual sites were asked to report on their successes and challenges of attracting and retaining low-achieving students. In addition, sites discussed their progress in attracting students who were similar to the school population in terms of race/ethnicity, grade level, and gender to assess whether recruitment was particularly successful or unsuccessful with certain groups.

Highlights

- **Overall recruitment and retention.** In 2006, 25,642 students were enrolled. Most (71%) attended only during the school year and less than half attended regularly (30 days or more). Most grantees and half of sites said their recruitment was successful.
- **Recruitment and retention challenges.** Challenges were similar for elementary and middle schools. Competing activities and lack of transportation impeded both recruitment and retention. In addition, staffing problems and school changes interfered with recruitment and student mobility was a barrier to retention.
- **Recruitment and retention strategies.** Common strategies to improve recruitment focused on connecting with school personnel and parents to obtain student referrals. Some grantees also tried to involve parents, students, and the community more in decision-making for the program or provided transportation. Retention strategies focused on improving activities and providing incentives for attendance; some instituted stricter attendance policies.
- **Attendance policies.** Most grantees either allowed students to leave at any time or only required attendance for part of the day. The seven who changed policies this year moved toward more structure.
- **Low-achieving students and other special populations.** Most grantees were very successful in recruiting low-achieving students. In 2005-06, 77% of the students recruited were low-achieving, and about 45% of them attended regularly. Most attributed their success to good relations with teachers, principals, and parents, as well as good programming. Barriers to attendance were similar to those for all students, with the additional challenges of family problems/low parental involvement and student dislike of school. Some programs tried to target additional special populations, including special education students, at-risk students, expelled students. One grantee targeted students with good grades who wanted to maintain them.
- **Different racial/ethnic groups.** African-Americans constituted the largest ethnic group, followed by whites, Hispanics, and Arabic students. Retention was highest among Arabic students. Most programs serving students with diverse populations had no recruitment problems; however a few cited difficulties with language or family issues. Barriers to retention included family transience, lack of transportation, and students not seeing students “like them.”
- **Different grade levels.** Most programs serve elementary or middle school students, with elementary students attending more over a longer period of time. Programs attributed their

success with middle school students to offering interesting, challenging activities led by supportive staff, and giving students opportunities for choice.

- **Gender.** Programs served boys and girls about equally and few programs adapted recruitment or retention strategies specifically by gender. A few programs developed gender-specific activities or mentioned considering gender in staff recruitment (e.g., having a mix of male and female staff).

Implications

Good connections with schools, students, parents, and community are an essential part of a successful recruitment strategy. Most programs viewed recruiting through the schools, either directly through referrals or indirectly as a means to contact students and parents, as one of the most successful recruitment strategies. This was particularly true for low-achieving students. Giving parents, students and even community members a voice in the program made it more attractive to parents and students. It might also overcome perceptions of the program among some student groups that it is not “cool” to go to the program.

Attendance policies must balance encouraging regular participation with student choice. Most programs have attendance policies that maximize the student choice in order to make the program more attractive. However, a certain amount of structure is needed for efficient management of program resources and to ensure that students attend enough to benefit.

Overall Recruitment and Retention

Numbers Served

In 2005-06, a total of 25,642 students were recruited into the 21st CCLC program. Most attended only during the school year, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Percent of Students by Period of Attendance

<i>Period</i>	<i>Percent of students</i>
Summer	14%
School year	71%
Both summer and school year	15%

Recruitment Strategies

Five grantees (14%) reported that they had full programs or very high attendance and had no need to improve recruitment. The rest of the grantees felt that recruitment could be improved. The most common recruitment strategies used by several grantees included:

- Working through schools to identify students or to encourage parents to enroll their children
- Involving students, parents and the community as advisory board members
- Information targeted to parents, such as flyers sent home
- Publicity in the local media
- Providing transportation services

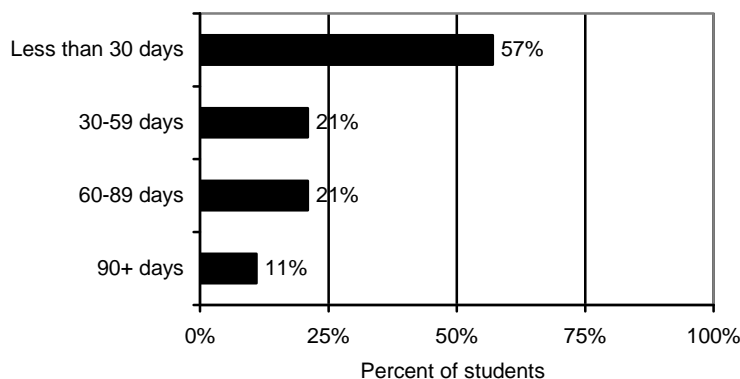
In contrast to grantee-level administrators, over half (58%) of the site administrators reported they were doing well in attracting students; 19% thought they were doing a fair job; and only 6% thought they were not doing well. Of those who did indicate recruitment problems, factors such as the following were mentioned:

- Lack of transportation; students lived outside area due to school choice
- Competing activities
- Staffing problems (illnesses and turnover)
- School changes
- Late start to the program
- Losing students after the end of the sports season (didn't need the tutoring assistance to keep their grades up anymore)
- Teachers didn't support the program

Numbers Retained

As shown in Figure 1, more than half of students who enrolled in 21st CCLC attended less than 30 days, the number of days required to be classified as a “regular” by the federal program. Equal numbers of students were retained for 30-59 days and 60-89 days (21%), and 11% of students attended for 90 days or more.

Figure 1
Percent of Students by Length of Attendance (N = 25,642)



Retention Strategies

At the site level, half of the sites agreed that they need to better retain students. Reasons included:

- Competing activities
- Lack of transportation
- Student mobility (e.g., transferred out of school)

Elementary and middle schools used similar strategies to improve retention. The most common approaches to improving retention included:

- Incentives for students, such as field trips or coupons for school supplies
- Improving activities; making activities match student interests

- Enforcing attendance policies and encouraging parents to comply

Grantee and site administrators also suggested:

- Focusing on staff retention
- Family incentives
- Student incentives
- Providing transportation home
- Emphasizing tutoring and homework help
- Coordinating with the school by for example, working with truant officers, requiring attendance in order to participate in sports
- Increasing or maintaining a student voice in the program
- Increasing parent involvement
- Improving staff quality
- Following up with students who did not attend.

Attendance Policies

Thirty of 37 grantees (81%) answered questions about program attendance policies (e.g., whether enrolled students were required to attend, whether students could attend for part of the day). Although it might be expected that attendance policies would vary depending on the age of the students, they were in fact similar for programs serving elementary and secondary school students. Most programs allowed students to leave at any time or only required attendance for part of the program day.

- Thirteen (43%) allowed students to leave at any time
- Twelve (40%) required students to attend part of the day
- One required students to attend the entire program day
- Four (13%) had no attendance policy

Seven grantees (23%) changed attendance policies from the previous year, and all moved toward instituting more structure by doing such things as:

- Requiring attendance three or more times a week to be eligible for transportation
- Requiring students to sign up for clubs and attend on the days their club met
- Instituting a full-time attendance policy and educating parents about the importance of regular attendance

Low-Achieving Students

Over three years, the 21st CCLC grantees were consistent in recruiting and retaining low-achieving students. Here, low-achieving students are those who meet one or more of the following criteria: Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) reading or math scores that did not meet state standards or fall semester grades of 2.0 or lower on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 representing the best performance. In general, grantees felt they were successful in recruiting and retaining low-achieving students. That should not be especially surprising since the emphasis was on low-performing schools.

Recruitment

Over a three-year period, grantees successfully recruited students at risk of low academic achievement. In 2005-06, 77% of students recruited were classified as low academic achievers; this was higher than 2004-05 (70%) and comparable to 2003-04 (79%).

Retention

Just less than half of the low-achieving students recruited into the program were retained for a significant period of time. Each year, about 45% (44%, 43%, and 46% in 2005-06, 2004-05, and 2003-04, respectively) of the low-achieving students recruited into the program were retained for at least 30 days.

Successes and Barriers

Successes

About half (57%) of the programs said there were no barriers to attracting low-achieving students. Grantees attributed their success to good contacts and good programs, including:

- Referrals from teachers principals and special education ($n = 8$)
- Contact with parents ($n = 8$)
- Creating programs students want to attend ($n = 8$)
- Consistent, positive relations with staff ($n = 5$)

Single grantees cited:

- A school policy requiring a 2.0 grade point for sports participation
- Incentives for attendance
- Having a safe place for students

Barriers

Barriers to attendance included:

- Competing activities ($n = 4$)
- Student frustration with or dislike of school ($n = 3$)
- Transportation ($n = 2$)
- Low parental involvement ($n = 2$)
- Family obligations or circumstances ($n = 2$)
- Perceptions of the program (it is only for low-achieving kids or only for “smart” kids) ($n = 1$)
- Lack of community awareness of program ($n = 1$)
- Barriers in program administration ($n = 1$)

Other Target Groups

Notably, most programs did not target exclusively low-performing students; some explicitly tried to attract a mix of students. For example, when asked who they targeted, sites said:

- At-risk students ($n = 17$)
- Special education students ($n = 9$)

- Other ethnic groups (Asian, Bosnian, bilingual/non-Arabic ($n = 3$))
- Students who were already making good grades and wanted to maintain them ($n = 2$)
- Expelled and long-term suspended students ($n = 1$)
- Home-schooled students ($n = 1$)

In the words of one grantee administrator:

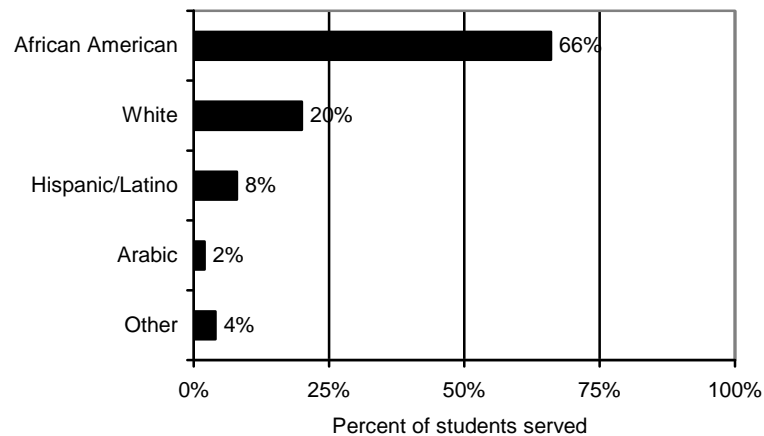
“Unfortunately, I feel we will always have a higher number of students who do not “need” the program as much as others. We have a better “reputation” than in the past—students seem to enjoy coming even if they have to come for certain reasons. They don’t feel uncomfortable telling their friends they have to go; they recruit them to come too.”

Racial and Ethnic Groups

Recruitment

As shown in Figure 2, across Michigan, African American students constituted the racial/ethnic group most served by 21st CCLC programs, followed by white students. Programs enrolled a sizable number of Hispanic/Latino students as well, and some sites served predominantly Arabic students.

Figure 2
Recruitment by Racial/Ethnic Group (N = 24,312)



Retention

Retention rates (percent of students who participated at least 30 days) were highest for Arabic students (68%) and lowest for African American and white students (around 42%). About 50% of Hispanic/Latino students remained in the program for at least 30 days.

Successes and Barriers

Many grantees and sites said they had no problem recruiting and retaining diverse students (60%); others said there was no ethnic diversity in their school (24%). The lack of diversity was especially true for all-African-American or all-white schools.

Barriers to *recruiting* a diverse group included:

- Language problems, bilingualism

- Family values and responsibilities

Barriers to *retaining* a diverse group included:

- Youth not seeing other students “like them”
- Family problems, such as transience or children in foster care
- Child behavior problems
- Transportation
- Student suspensions

Grade Level

Recruitment

21st CCLC sites could serve elementary, middle, or high schools or some combination of the three. Table 4 indicates the number and percent of sites by grade levels they served.

Table 4
Number of Sites Serving Students of Different Grade Levels

<i>Group served</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Elementary school	79	43%
Middle school	73	39%
High school	6	3%
Combined elementary/middle	23	12%
Combined middle/high	1	1%
All three combined	4	2%

Note: *N* = 188 sites.

As shown in Table 5, Michigan students who enrolled in 21st CCLC were generally evenly divided between elementary and middle school students. Only 5% of students attended high school. Compared to 21st CCLC programs across the country, Michigan enrolls a much greater percentage of middle school students (46% in Michigan compared to 26% federally), reflecting the priority that Michigan places on serving middle school students.

Table 5
Percent of Students by Grade Level

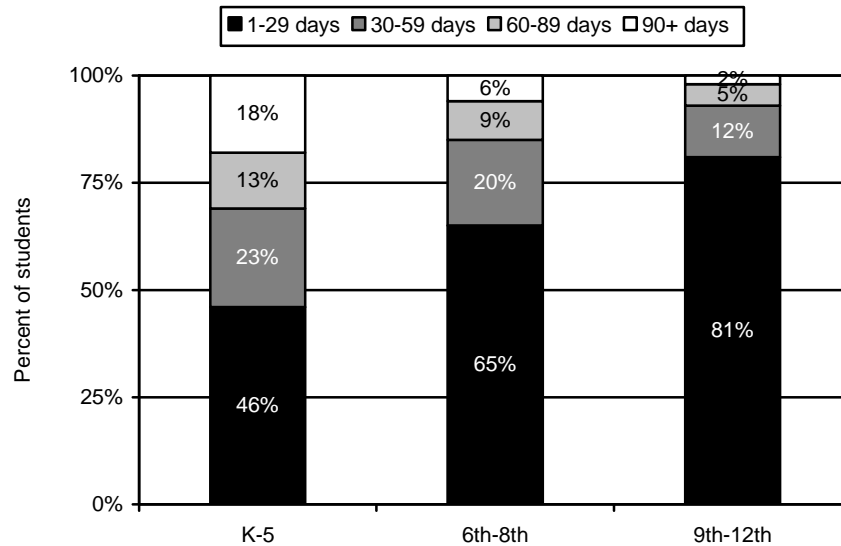
<i>Period</i>	<i>Percent of students</i>
Pre-K to 5 th grade	48%
6 th to 8 th grade	46%
9 th to 12 th grade	5%

Note: *N* = 25,642 students.

Retention

As shown in Figure 3, younger students were more like to be retained for longer periods. Fifty-four percent of elementary school students attended at least 30 days, compared to 35% of middle school students and 19% of high school students.

Figure 3
Number of Days Attended for Different Grade Levels (N = 25,642)



Successes and Barriers

Site administrators serving elementary schools felt they were more successful in recruiting and retaining students and encountered fewer barriers. Reasons for their success included:

- Activities that were interesting to children, fun, developmentally appropriate
- Referrals from school staff
- Positive relationships with parents and their need for after-school child care

Barriers specific for elementary schools included:

- Scheduling around half-day kindergarten
- Length of the day was hard for young children

As mentioned earlier, middle schools in particular found it challenging to recruit older students. This was most frequently due to competing opportunities, such as school-sponsored activities and sports. However, sites were most likely to be successful when they had:

- Diverse, fun activities
- Activities that improved student school performance
- Opportunities for student choice
- Staff who had the ability to form relationships with students or work with different maturity levels or who had content expertise

Gender

Recruitment and Retention

The percent of boys and girls recruited was evenly split. Girls were somewhat more likely to be retained (53% of girls attended at least 30 days compared to 47% of boys).

Successes and Barriers

Most programs considered themselves as successful in recruiting and retaining both boys and girls in their programs. For each program that retained more girls, another retained more boys. Few programs cited gender-specific reasons for their success. Those who did try to respond in gender-specific ways used strategies that included:

- Activities designed just for boys or girls
- Staff who could manage boys
- A mix of male and female staff
- Retaining community staff who taught gender-specific activities
- Sports for older boys

Student Opportunities for Governance

In this section we present data from the ARF and from student surveys. Grantees reported on policies for student involvement in governance and the extent to which students were involved through formal governance structures. At the site level, programs described the ways in which they provided opportunities for students to make choices and participate in decision-making about programming and day-to-day operations. Finally, the perceptions of students about their opportunities for decision-making are compared with what administrators said.

Highlights

- **Student involvement through formal governance structures.** Only one third of grantees had formal governance structures that included students, while others got student input through other means. All programs saw benefits to student involvement; however, programs with formal structures also said their involvement led to gains in student leadership, reduced behavior problems in the program, and better recruitment of new students.
- **Other types of student involvement.** At the site level, students often had opportunities to participate in decisions about programming and day-to-day operations, such as choosing activities, or meals. Some sites allowed students to help set rules or lead activities. Student involvement in these activities was thought to lead to higher satisfaction and improved student behavior in the program.
- **Student views of opportunities for decision-making.** Student were less positive about the opportunities for governance and decision-making than were program administrators.

Implications

More programs should move toward involving students through formal governance structures. Although most programs do involve students in decisions about activity design and day-to-day program operations, these types of activities do not provide the same opportunities to develop leadership skills. Sites who do involve students more formally report that they have better recruitment and fewer behavior problems.

Programs should seek regular input from students about their opportunities for involvement in decision-making. In general program administrators perceived that student had more opportunities for decision-making than students did. Regular student surveys would help administrator better assess what is really going on in the program.

Formal Governance Structures

Policies for student involvement were reported at the grantee level. During the 2005-06 year, most grantees planned for greater involvement of students, but few involved students through formal governance structures. For example:

- One-third of grantees had formal councils in which students participated.
- However, two-thirds used other methods to involve students, such as:

- Focus groups to get ideas from students
- Student surveys
- Student voting each marking period

From the perspective of the grantee administrators, programs with and without advisory boards had similar benefits of student involvement, including:

- Increased ownership of the program
- More student engagement
- Programming for family events

However, programs with formal student advisory groups were more likely to report:

- Student gains in leadership
- Increased recruitment of other students—a critical way to increase enrollment
- Fewer behavioral problems among students

Other Types of Student Involvement

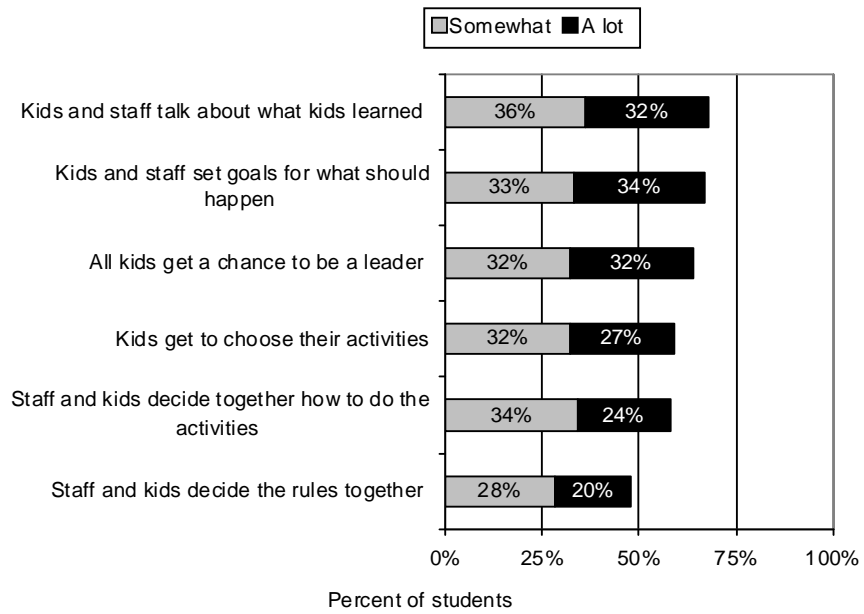
As reported at the site level, students generally had opportunities to make decisions about their programmatic involvement in the course of their daily participation, including activities that should be offered, which activities to attend, places to take field trips, and input about meals. Sites had different schedules, from daily to monthly, for allowing students to use these opportunities to make decisions.

- Several sites reported involving students in the following ways:
 - Setting program goals
 - Providing input about rules and activities
 - Being activity leaders
- A few sites (11/186 or 6%) recognized that student governance was a weak point that needed attention.
- Benefits of student involvement that sites mentioned included:
 - Greater student satisfaction with and commitment to activities
 - Increased retention of students
 - Better conflict resolution among students
 - Decreased suspensions from school

What Students Said

Students' opinions about their opportunities for governance and decision-making, gathered through surveys, are not quite as positive as site staff's reports on the ARF. For example, staff report that most students have opportunities to choose their activities, but that is not the students' perception (27% "a lot"). While the combined totals in Figure 4 are positive, in most instances, the proportion of students who think the action takes place "somewhat" is slightly larger than those who think that action is taken "a lot."

Figure 4
Student Perceptions of Governance and Decision-Making Opportunities
Grades 4-12 (N = 3,344)



Activities

This section includes data from the student survey and EZreports as well as from the ARF. Grantees responded to the patterns of attendance in their programs (number of students who attended different types of activities) and to what students said about the academic support. They also described the strategies they used to develop academic activities to meet their program goals and to embed academics in non-academic activities. Finally, they described changes they intended to make to improve activities.

Highlights

- **Changes in student activities.** In general, grantees reported that they worked to improve activities either by getting more input from parents and students, offering more student choice, or changing providers or activities. Activity changes included increasing the number/variety, and tailoring them to certain student populations or specific skills (e.g., technology).
- **Patterns of attendance.** Although academic activities are a required component, 13% of participants did not take part in any academic activities. After academics, recreation was the most frequently attended activity, followed by arts and youth development. Programs reported that their attendance figures were what they expected, but not all were satisfied with their attendance.
- **Academic activities.** Tutoring was the most frequently attended academic support activity (72%). A majority of sites did not describe specific ways that they designed activities to meet academic goals, nor did they mention any ways that they embed academics in non-academic activities.
- **Student perceptions of academic support.** Most students thought the program helped them stay caught up with homework and a majority had positive views about the program helping them learn. Eight percent said they did not do school work in the program, but this may have been a result of the way the questions were worded.
- **Plans for improving activities.** Planned changes for academic and non-academic activities were similar to those changes made in the last year. For academic activities, sites planned to use additional strategies of improving relations with schools and building staff capacities through better meetings and more professional development.

Implications

Programs appear to have been proactive in implementing strategies to improve activities. Sites mentioned using a variety of strategies to improve activities, such as getting more input from parents and students, offering students more choice, and increasing the variety and quality of activities offered.

Some programs are not operating at their desired capacity. Although few programs were surprised by their attendance figures, some hoped to increase attendance in the future. Presentation by some of the programs that are more successful at recruiting in specific activity areas might be very helpful to others.

Grantees might benefit from training/technical assistance on embedding academics in non-academic activities. When asked about their strategies for embedding academics in other activities, few grantees gave responses that were actually relevant to the question. This implies that there is some confusion about what embedding academics means.

Grantees were required to provide activities for students designed to improve their academic performance as well as to offer other enrichment and youth development activities. They were also required to provide activities to serve adult family members and increase family involvement in the program.

Student Activities

Changes in Student Activities

In 2005-06, grantees reported doing a number of things differently to improve student activities since the previous year:

- Getting advice from parents and students, including student advisory councils
- Offering students choice in activities
- Better selection of activity vendors (e.g., finding better vendors, those who can stay on site)
- Improving use of EZreports (ensuring correct data entry)

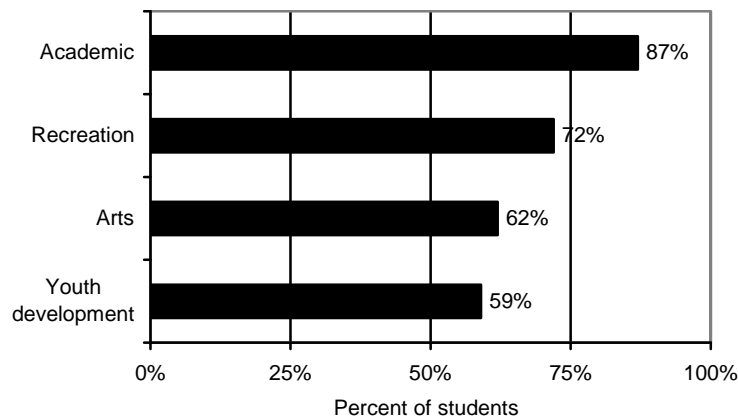
Many programs changed activities to improve them. For example, programs described:

- Tailoring activities better to students
- Focusing on middle school students' needs
- Extending time for specific activities
- Offering more activities
- Offering more technology activities

Attendance for Different Activities

Figure 5 shows the percent of students who participated in each type of activity. Although academic activities were a required programming component, a minority of students (13%) did not participate in any academic activities. Most (72%) students participated in recreation. The participation in arts and youth development programming was about equal (62% and 59%, respectively).

Figure 5
Percent of Students by Activity Type (N = 25,642)



Patterns of Attendance

Most sites said the pattern of attendance at their site was what they expected. However, responses to this question could have positive or negative connotations, such as:

- They were satisfied with attendance patterns
- Activities were not accurately reported in EZreports
- Students had other choices in addition to the 21st CCLC program
- They wished for higher participation in some activities, especially cultural, nutrition/health, and family involvement

The following response was typical of those who were satisfied with their attendance:

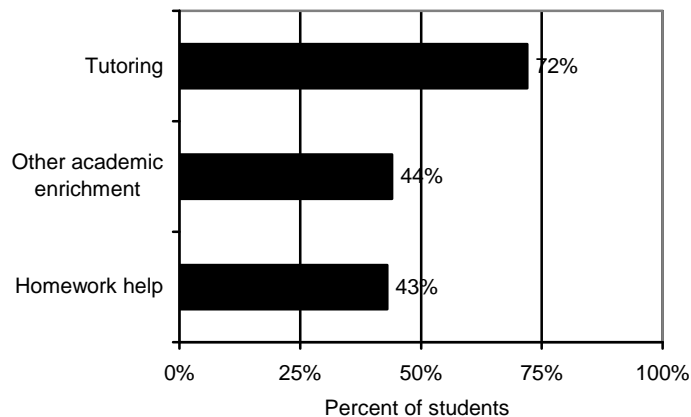
“We believe we have done a better job of promoting our program, and word of mouth has given us a boost as well. Students, parents and teachers are avid supporters and therefore act as our promoters.”

Academic Activities

Participation by Academic Support

Academic support includes tutoring, homework help and other academic enrichment. As Figure 6 shows, tutoring was the most frequently attended (72%) academic activity. Homework help and other academic enrichment were attended much less frequently and at approximately the same rate (43% and 44%, respectively).

Figure 6
Percent of Students by Academic Activity Type (N = 25,642)



Strategies for Academic Enrichment

Program sites were asked how well their activities were targeted to meet their academic goals and how they embedded academic enrichment in non-academic activities. Only 75 sites (40%) gave specific answers to these questions. Most sites simply said activities were very well targeted or “need some improvement.” Among those sites who mentioned strategies for embedding academics into nonacademic activities, the following strategies were mentioned:

- Using games to embed academics into other activities (25 sites; 13%)

- Using experiential projects to make learning fun (21 sites; 11%)

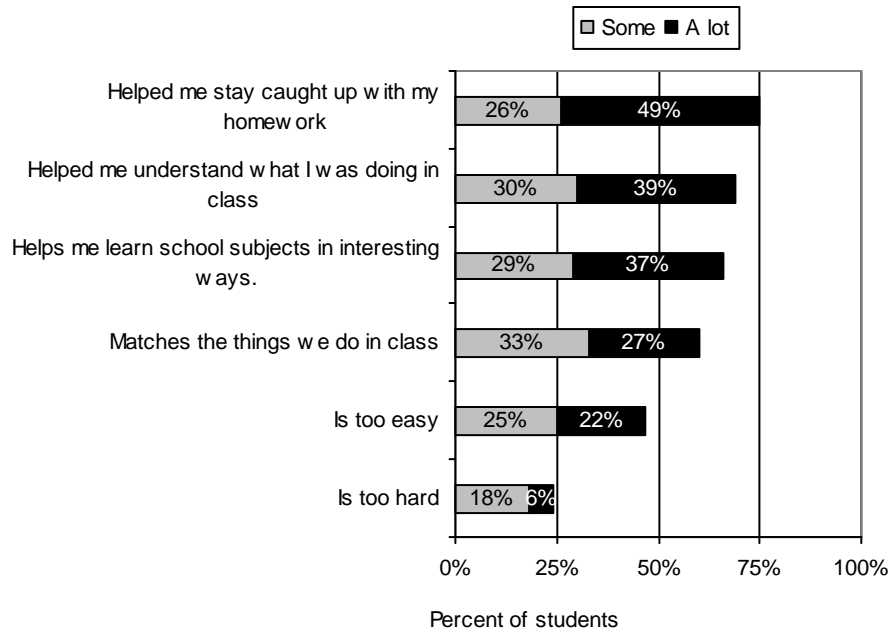
A variety of experiential projects were mentioned, including:

- MAGIC, a science project
- Builder’s Club and other clubs
- Lyricist’s Lounge
- An annual Broadway production
- A Christmas bank
- A graffiti wall, especially for students with limited English proficiency
- Nutrition or gardening programs
- Classes such as audio/visual production or song writing/recording
- Entrepreneurship classes, theme-based classes

What Students Said About Academic Support

Eight percent of students who completed the survey said they did not do any schoolwork in the program. This may be partially a result of students not considering some academic enrichment activities as schoolwork. The survey items, shown in Figure 7, could have biased their responses away from academic enrichment since all reference homework or in-class work. With regard to homework help, most students felt that the program helped them stay caught up. Over 50% (using the combined responses “some” and “a lot”) thought that it provided assistance in understanding their class work, presented it in interesting ways, and was closely aligned with what they were doing during the day. However, 47% reported that their 21st CCLC academic work was too easy.

Figure 7
Student Perceptions of Academic Support
Grades 4 to 12 (N = 3,435)



Proposed Changes to Student Activities

Sites mentioned several ways they intended to improve academic activities. The responses were similar for improving non-academic activities and were generally nonspecific, including having more interesting activities and making activities more relevant to students' needs. The following quote is typical of these responses:

“We will explore implementing more fun and engaging, interactive curricula to use in addition to homework help and tutoring.”

In addition:

- 15% talked of improving relationships with school personnel to better target activities to students' needs
- 8% mentioned involving students more in activity selection
- 5% indicated they will improve meetings or professional development so that staff are better able to provide activities
- A few mentioned more input from parents, staff, and students or collaborating with outside organizations.

Adult Activities

This section is based on data from site EZreports and parent surveys as well as the ARF. Sites reported on the strategies they used to involve parents in adult-oriented activities and in regular program activities. They discussed barriers to parent involvement and successful strategies for increasing parent involvement. Finally, we present the parent perceptions of the staff and the program.

Highlights

- **Recruitment for adult-oriented activities.** Sites mentioned similar strategies for involving parents in adult-oriented activities and special events; however, recruitment for adult activities was not successful for the most part.
- **Strategies for involving family members.** The most successful strategies mentioned for increasing parent involvement were holding family activities, inviting parents to see their children perform, and having open communication between staff and parents.
- **Barriers to parent involvement.** The two main barriers to parent involvement were work schedules (mentioned by 97%) and lack of transportation (88%). On third or less mentioned lack of parental concern for education, past negative experiences with schools, and language or cultural barriers.
- **Successful strategies for engaging parents.** Most grantees mentioned successful strategies that focused on making parents feel welcome and communicating with them regularly. Most intended to continue their current strategies in the coming year.
- **Parent perceptions of program and staff.** Most parents gave the program a grade of A (58%) or B (35%). Over 90% agree or strongly agree with statements indicating the program was respectful and welcoming to them and knew how to help their child.

Implications

Parents are generally satisfied with the programs their children attend. Programs have done a good job of making parents feel that they are welcome and respected and that the staff are meeting their children's needs.

Programs could benefit from technical assistance in strategies to engage more parents in adult-oriented activities. In spite of the fact that adult-oriented activities are a component of 21st CCLC programs, few grantees have established these activities. Recruitment has been largely unsuccessful for adult activities, yet most programs intend to continue using the same recruitment strategies.

Recruiting Family Members for Adult-Oriented Activities

Sites reported using similar approaches for recruiting family members for regular adult activities and special events. Table 6 shows that the most common recruitment strategies were sending materials home or inviting family members to events celebrating their children's successes. Only six sites made home visits to recruit family members to either adult activities or special events. However, recruitment for regular adult activities was not successful; only 12 parents were registered in EZreports as attending a

parenting class. For the most part, sites did not attempt to conduct adult-oriented activities, but rather concentrated resources on youth activities.

Table 6
Strategies Used to Recruit Family Members for Adult-Oriented Activities

<i>Recruitment strategies</i>	<i>Regular adult activities</i>	<i>Special events</i>
Send invitations, calendars or program schedules home with youth participants	75%	96%
Invite adult family members to events celebrating their children's successes or other end-of-program activities	69%	88%
Specifically target recruitment strategies to family members' needs, culture, etc.	43%	55%
Have open hours for activities such as using the computer lab, gym or weight room	27%	31%
Other strategies	24%	30%
Nothing formal	15%	15%
Make home visits	3%	3%

Note. N's ranged from 184-160 of 187 sites.

Ways of Involving Family Members

There was an obvious disconnect between the responses to check-off items, reported in Table 7 below, and sites' responses to an open-ended question regarding their most successful strategies. More than three-quarters of sites checked that parents volunteered, worked with staff to identify their child's learning needs, held family activities, and had parents participate in program evaluation. In the follow-up open-ended item, the three strategies frequently mentioned as most successful for sites were holding family activities, inviting parents to see their children perform, and having open communication between staff and parents. It may be that the sites used the strategies listed in the table, but the list did not include the strategies that they felt worked the best.

Table 7
Ways Programs Involved Family Members

<i>Family involvement strategy</i>	<i>Percent of sites</i>
Volunteer in program	82%
Parents work with staff to identify child's learning needs	80%
Hold family activities or field trips	78%
Have parents participate in program evaluation	78%
Have parents participate in design of program or selection of activities	49%
Have parents drop in to help their child with homework	46%
Provide parent education activities	42%
Provide adult education or adult literacy activities	24%
Nothing formal	20%

Barriers to Parent Involvement

Sites were asked to identify the barriers to parent involvement from a list presented. While a number of sites reported no barriers to parent involvement, most sites mentioned two:

- Parents' work schedules (97%)
- Transportation for parents without cars (88%)

Three barriers of lesser importance were also mentioned:

- Parental lack of concern for child's education (34%)
- Parents' prior unpleasant experiences with school (30%)
- Language or cultural barriers (21%)

In addition, in open-ended responses sites mentioned that one barrier was parents' decreasing involvement as children grow older

Successful Strategies

When asked what the most successful strategies were for engaging parents, sites responded:

- Having warm and welcoming staff
- Regularly communicating with parents about their children in various ways:
 - Required parent orientation
 - Talking to parents at pick up time
 - Telephone calls
 - Giving regular positive feedback to parents

The single most common goal for increasing staff-parent interaction in the coming year was "to continue what they are doing now" for most sites, although the examples of what they were "doing now" differed. Examples given included:

- Encourage parent to volunteer or participate in advisory council
- Provide family programming
- Communicate through calls, newsletters, and talking at parent pick up
- Promote "open door" policy for parents

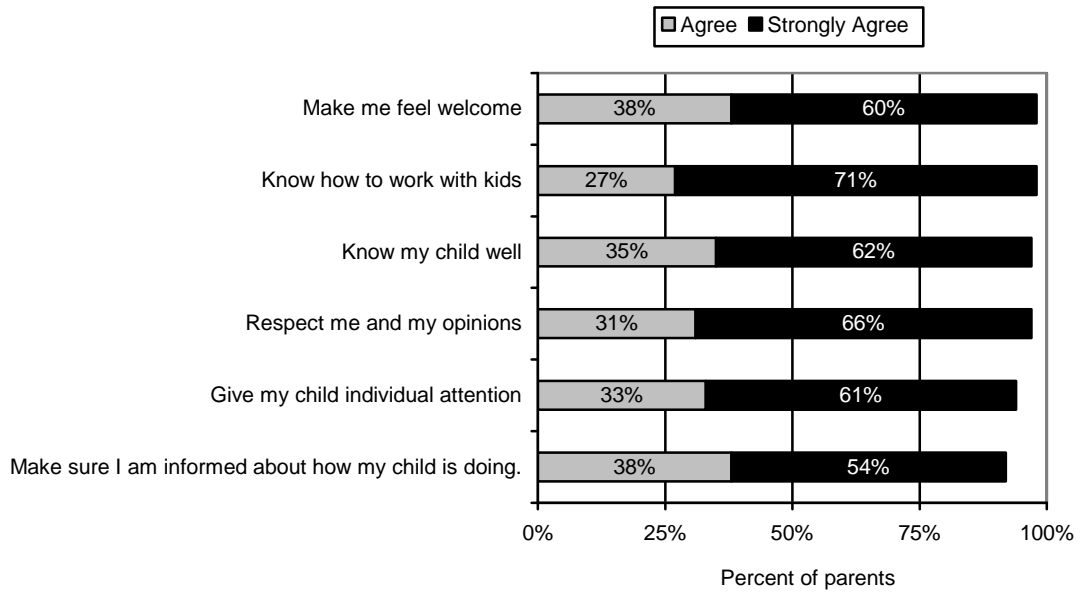
Parent Perceptions of Staff and Program

When asked what grade they would give their child's program, 58% of parents said they would give the program an "A," 35% a "B," 7% a "C", and only 1% a "D" or an "F." Figure 8 gives an overall picture of parental satisfaction with staff and programs. According to parents who responded on the survey, program staff:

- Were skilled in working with kids (71% strongly agree)
- Respected parents' opinions (66% strongly agree).

In general, while parents were very satisfied with the programs, they identified "make me feel welcome" and "make sure I am informed about how my child is doing" as the areas most in need of improvement.

Figure 8
Parent Perceptions of Program (N = 2,615)



Program Quality

Data for this section was compiled from three sources, the 2005-06 ARF, staff self-reports on program quality (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation's Youth Program Quality Assessment [YPQA]) and surveys of student and parent perceptions of the staff and program at their sites. In this section, sites also reported on strategies they might use to improve their program quality.

Highlights

- **Staff assessment of program quality.** Using the Youth Program Quality Assessment, staff generally rated their programs as high in providing a safe and supportive environment for youth. Ratings were somewhat lower for the dimensions of interaction and engagement, which involve more opportunities for student choice and decision-making.
- **Student perceptions of program and staff.** Overall, students were very positive about the program environment and their interest in being there. Students in grades 4-12, when asked about program staff, gave positive opinions about their attitudes, behaviors and skills. However, about one third reported staff behaviors that create a negative program environment at least "sometimes."
- **Parent perceptions of program activities.** Parents were overwhelmingly positive about program activities and the balance between recreation and academics. Ninety-seven percent said the program had "many interesting activities."

Implications

Programs are doing a good job of creating a supportive environment but would benefit from training about creating opportunities for higher-level skill building. Self-assessments conducted by program administrators and staff indicate that program environments are generally positive and were confirmed by positive parent and student ratings. However, results also indicate that staff have less competence in building high-quality interaction and student engagement.

Staff may benefit from training in positive behavior management skills. Although most students were very positive about staff attitudes and interactions, a significant minority had negative perceptions of staff interactions. This finding may indicate that some staff need to develop additional skills; alternatively, it may mean that some students are chafing against the program structure and rules. In either case, staff could benefit from professional development in how to manage student behavior in positive ways.

Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)

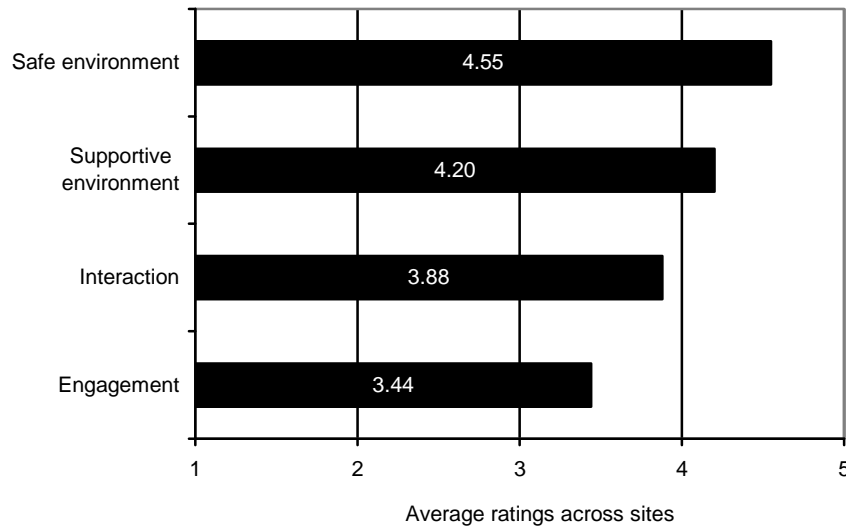
In 2005-2006, 80 sites used the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation's Youth Program Quality Assessment tool to measure quality in their program. High/Scope trained staff to use the tool and the results below reflect these staff's self-assessments of their programs. Here are the components of the four scales:

- **Safe environment:** Psychological and emotional safety, physically safe environment, program space and furniture, healthy food and drinks
- **Supportive environment:** Reframing conflict, active engagement, skill building, encouragement, appropriate session flow, welcoming atmosphere

- **Interaction:** Lead and mentor, small groups, students partner with adults and experience belonging
- **Engagement:** Students have opportunities to set goals and make plans, reflect, make choices

Figure 9 indicates the overall quality ratings of sites that used the YPQA. Overall, sites rated themselves as better at providing a safe and supportive environment than at interaction and engagement, which offer opportunities for student choice and decision-making.

Figure 9
Site Self-Assessment Quality Scores (N = 80)



The sites reported three primary strategies for increasing student engagement:

- Offering more opportunities for student involvement in planning and decision-making (9/62 or 15%)
- Focusing staff professional development opportunities on issues raised by the YPQA (9/62 or 15%)
- Offering more student choice in selection of their activities (8/62 or 13%)

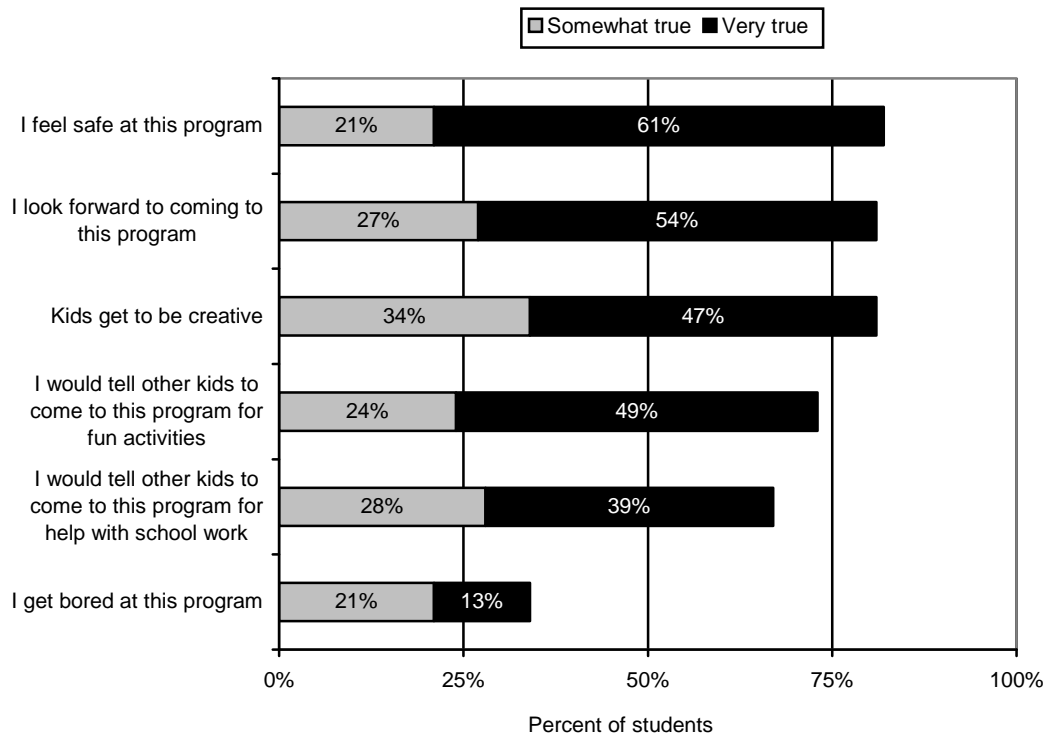
What Students Said

Perceptions of the Program

Overall, students who completed surveys were very positive about the program environment (Figure 10).

- Many students said they felt safe at the program
- It was a place where kids could be creative
- They wanted to come to the program; very few were bored
- They would tell their friends about the fun they had at the program

Figure 10
Student Perceptions of the Program
Grades 4 to 12 (N = 3,379)



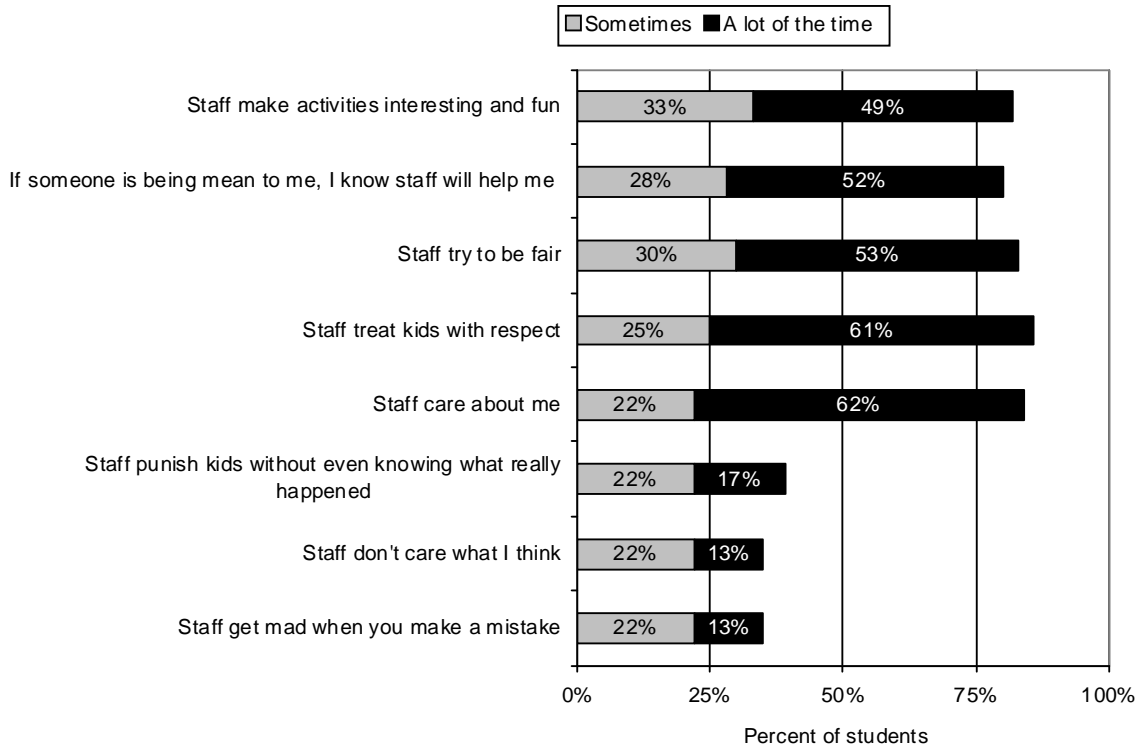
Perceptions of Staff

Students in grades 4 to 12 were asked their views of the staff in the 21st CCLC programs they attended. The summary of their responses (“a lot of the time” only) in Figure 11 shows that about 50% or more of the students had strong positive opinions about staff:

- Attitudes (staff care about me)
- Behavior (staff treat kids with respect, are fair, will help me)
- Skills (staff make things interesting and fun).

Likewise, only a small percent of the students thought the staff regularly acted in a punitive fashion (staff get mad at mistakes, don’t care what I think, and punish without information).

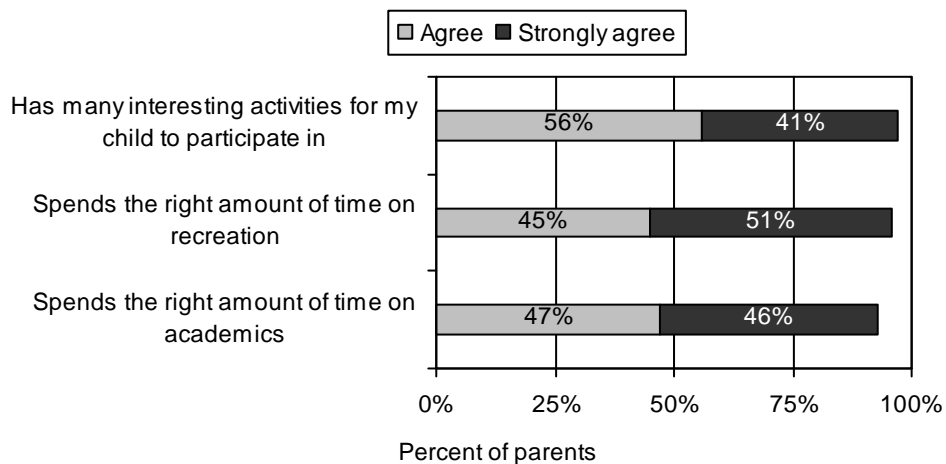
Figure 11
Student Perceptions of Staff
Grades 4 to 12 (N = 3,322)



What Parents Said

Since parents play a critical role in students' attendance at OST programs, it is gratifying that for sites with data from parents, high levels of satisfaction with program activities were reported. Figure 12 summarizes parents' satisfaction with the amount of interesting activities, recreation and academics in the programs their children attend.

Figure 12
Parent Perceptions of Activities (N = 2,608)



Student Outcomes

In addition to the ARF, data for this section came from school records and from teacher, parent, and student surveys. We first present information about the extent to which Michigan achieved the federal targets for student improvement among Michigan program participants in general, among students with room for improvement, and among students who attended regularly. Next, we present the explanations that sites gave for differences in outcomes among sites and for changes in outcomes seen over time. Finally, we present parents' and students' perceptions of program impact and comments that sites gave in response to these perceptions. Also included are staff comments on the consistency about program impact among parents, students and teachers perceptions.

Highlights

- **Michigan's outcomes compared to federal targets.** Among all regular participants, Michigan has not met the federal targets for reading and math but comes close to meeting the federal targets for classroom performance. Among students who have room for improvement, Michigan is meeting the targets for improvement in reading and math.
- **Regular attendees compared to non-regular attendees.** Students who attend regularly are more likely to remain stable or improve their performance in reading and math grades compared to student who do not attend regularly. This may be a result of the program, or it may be because students who attend more regularly also attend the school-day program more regularly and are benefiting from consistent instruction.
- **Site-level performance.** Most sites did not meet the federal target of having 45% of participants improve in reading and math grades. When only students with room for improvement were considered, the percent meeting the target for reading rose from 23% to 47%, and for math it rose from 18% to 54%. Program administrators gave several explanations for differences in performance across sites: different grade levels of participants (elementary vs. middle school), the presence of more low-performing students in some sites, and curriculum used at different sites. The three most common explanations for changes over time provided by administrators were that from year to year, different students had attended, programs had emphasized different activities or issues, and students had attended at different levels.
- **Parent perceptions of program impact.** The vast majority of parents responding to the program improvement survey (over 90%) agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped their child learn new things, develop new skills, do better in school, and improve their social adjustment.
- **Student perceptions.** Students reported a variety of program impacts, including help with academic performance, staying away from risky behaviors, social and leadership skill development, and opportunity for exercise and healthy eating.
- **Plans for future changes.** Programs were asked about their plans to improve achievement among program participants. Programs with lower teacher ratings and those with consistent ratings by teachers, parents, and students planned to improve communication with teachers. Those with consistent ratings mentioned other strategies such as building relationships with students and parents, improving curricula, and improving staff quality by using certified teachers or implementing professional development based on program quality assessments.

Implications

Although Michigan programs received high ratings from students, parents, and to a certain extent, teachers, they have not been able to reach federal performance targets for academic improvement and lag behind the rest of the country on these measures. Programs have shown more improvement among students who had more room for improvement (i.e., had a GPA of less than 3.0 in the first marking period). Based on comments made by the program administrators about reasons for their performance, several strategies for improving performance seem likely to bring better results:

- **Focus on attracting and retaining lower-performing students.** Those with more room for improvement do appear to benefit more from participation, and those who participate more regularly tend to show more improvement. Most programs do not retain students from year to year, but having the same student enroll multiple years would probably provide a better opportunity to affect their overall performance.
- **Focus on improving activities and using curricula that are linked to the school day and intended to produce the changes you seek.** Several program administrators cited factors such as improved activities and focusing on grade-level curricula as factors in improved performance. Communication with school-day teachers was seen as important. Interesting activities also encourage students to participate.
- **High-quality staff are essential to reaching program goals.** Programs cited improvements in staff qualifications (e.g., using more certified teachers), better professional development, and selecting staff who can maintain a positive atmosphere and reducing staff turnover as important strategies for improving performance.

Michigan's Outcomes Compared to Federal Targets

Among All Students

Improvement in Grades

The federal target is for 45% of students who have attended the program for at least 30 days to improve in reading and math grades. As Figures 13 and 14 below show, Michigan has not yet met these targets. Compared to the U.S. as a whole, a smaller proportion of Michigan students improved in both reading and/or math grades.

Figure 13
Percent of Students Who Have Improved in Reading Grades

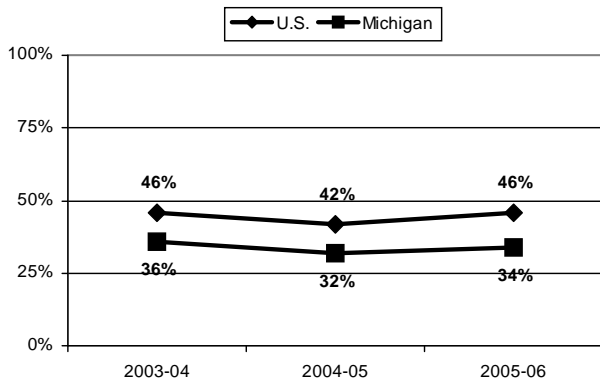
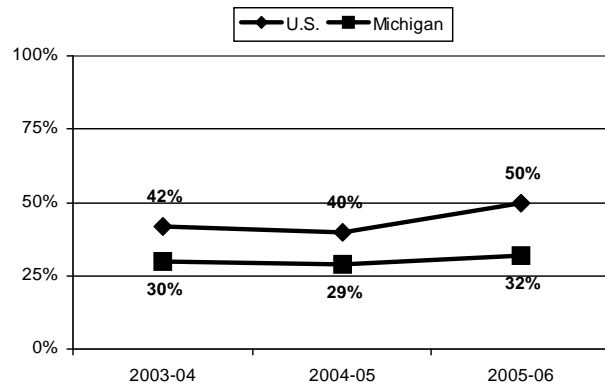


Figure 14
Percent of Students Who Have Improved in Math Grades



Teacher Ratings of Behavior Improvement

The federal target for the percent of students attending at least 30 days who have improved homework completion and classroom behavior as rated by their teachers is 75%. As Figures 15 and 16 show, Michigan has been close to the federal target each year and has usually exceeded the performance of all students in the U.S. The percent of Michigan students who met the federal targets declined slightly in 2005-06, reached it in 2004-05, and has exceeded the federal rates most years.

Figure 15
Percent of Students Who Improved in Homework Completion/Classroom Participation

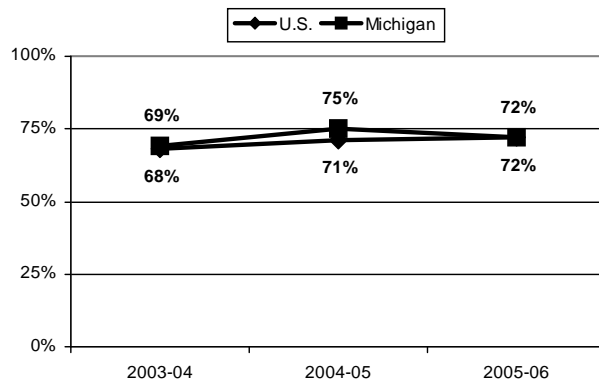
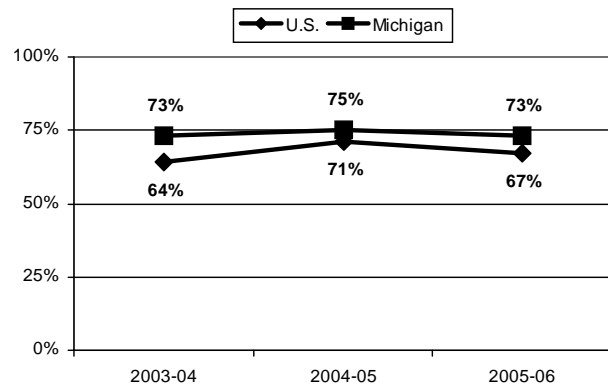


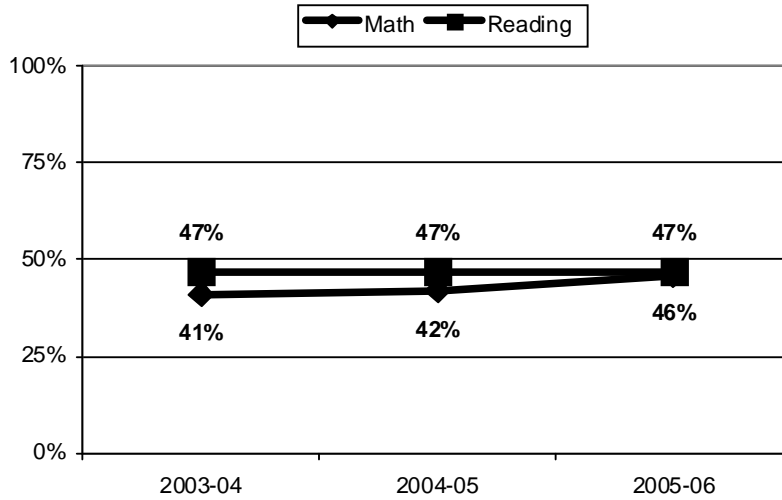
Figure 16
Percent of Students Who Improved in Classroom Behavior



Among Students with Room for Improvement

One issue with the calculation of improvement in grades compared to the federal targets is that students who are already performing at the highest level are included. For these students, improvement is not possible, and their grades can only remain stable or decline. When we include only students who have room to improve over time (here defined as receiving a reading or math grade of less than 3.0 at the first marking period), the percent of students who improve during the year increases substantially, with 47% of students improving in reading and 46% of students improving in math as of 2005-06. Over three program years (Figure 18), the percent of students with room for improvement who have shown better math grades has gradually increased and the percent improving in reading has remained stable.

Figure 18
Percent of Students Who Have Improved in Reading and Math
Grades Among Those with Room for Improvement



Regular Attendees Compared to Non-Regular Attendees

Students who attend regularly are expected to show more improvement on outcomes than students who do not attend regularly. In 2005-06, students who attended at least 30 days were more likely to show improvement or remain stable in both reading and math grades than students who attended less than 30 days (Figures 19 and 20). It must be noted that it is unclear from this data whether students who attended longer were more likely to show improved grades due to the program, whether students who were better-performing students simply were more likely to come regularly to the program, or whether the regular students also had better school-day attendance as well, thus receiving more consistent instruction.

Figure 19
Percent of Students Who Improved in Reading
Grades by Length of Attendance

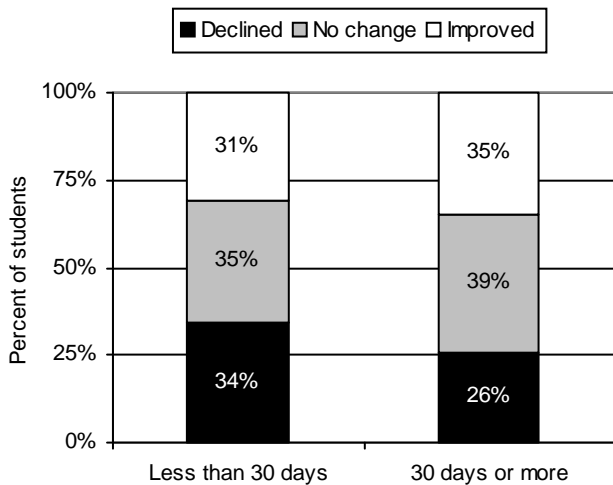
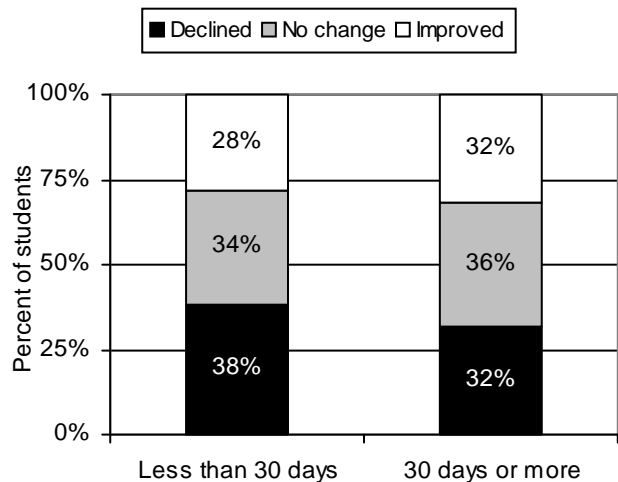


Figure 20
Percent of Students Who Improved in Math
Grades by Length of Attendance



Site-Level Performance

The sections above discuss the percent of students that improved across all sites. In addition, each site had an objective to meet the federal target. In 2005-06:

- Most sites did not meet the federal targets of having at least 45% of students improve in reading and math grades
- 23% of sites met the federal target for improved reading grades and 18% of sites met the federal target for improved math grades

However, when only students in need of improvement (that is, with grades at the first marking period of less than 3.0) were included:

- 56% of sites met the federal targets for improved reading grades
- 46% of sites met the federal targets for improved math grades

How Administrators Explained Differences among Sites

When asked to account for the site differences in performance, 18 grantees reported that it was not applicable or that they had insufficient data to answer the question. Only one grantee indicated he/she was unsure why there were differences. Another could not account for the differences because “We are as committed with qualified staff and curriculum at all sites.” A third was going to check their data input accuracy, and a fourth was going to talk with the school principals about working together on this problem.

Among those who gave explanations to account for differences, responses were similar for reading and math. For grantees serving a combination of elementary and middle school students, three explanations involved differences between elementary and middle school students. Administrators answered that:

- Elementary school students attend more often and thus receive more instruction
- Elementary school students have fewer behavior problems and can focus more on homework
- Elementary students are more similar in their range of abilities than are middle schoolers

Other explanations focused on student characteristics or programming at the sites:

- The presence of more low-performing students
- Regular use of a curriculum that emphasized reading or math
- Sites in different school districts that used different approaches

How Administrators Explained Changes in Sites’ Performance Over Time

Figures 19 and 20 above show the rates of change across the state, but these patterns varied substantially from site to site; some sites showed consistent improvement, some showed consistent declines, some showed no change, and some showed no discernable trends. When asked to explain the pattern of change at their sites, 48, or 26%, of the sites had no data or entered “not applicable” as their comment. Six did not have data for multiple years; several of those mentioned that 2005-06 was their first year. Five sites said that their data was inaccurate, while “ask the school-day teachers” was the response offered by several of these sites, suggesting that these site administrators view grade improvement as a school-day rather than after-school responsibility. Sites who responded tended to provide three explanations for variations in performance over time:

- **Response discrepancies.** Some sites attributed the differences to the fact that the data is about different students each year (with some overlap).

- **Differences in program emphasis.** In suggesting explanations for drops in performance over the years, some sites reported that they were concentrating on homework completion rather than reading or math specifically, or addressing subjects other than reading or math, in those years.
- **Attendance:** Sites indicated that improvements were due to students' more consistent attendance, while sites who had decreases in performance indicated that attendance had become less consistent.

Other explanations for **increases in performance** included:

- More academic enrichment activities and the use of embedded learning strategies
- Using school-day or certified teachers
- Having a curriculum coordinator who trains teachers in current (reading) strategies
- A positive program atmosphere
- Changing the curriculum and/or offering more interesting programs
- Replacement of prior negative staff with new positive staff
- Adjustments in the program to meet children's individual needs

Other explanations for **declining performance** included:

- A high degree of staff turnover
- A need for improved data entry (EZreports training) for staff to increase data accuracy
- Refocusing recruitment on the neediest (lowest performing) students
- An increase in the number of students with behavioral issues
- Inconsistent attendance

For the most part, sites have attempted to address the academic needs of students, although change has been slow to occur. As one administrator commented about the declining performance at his/her site:

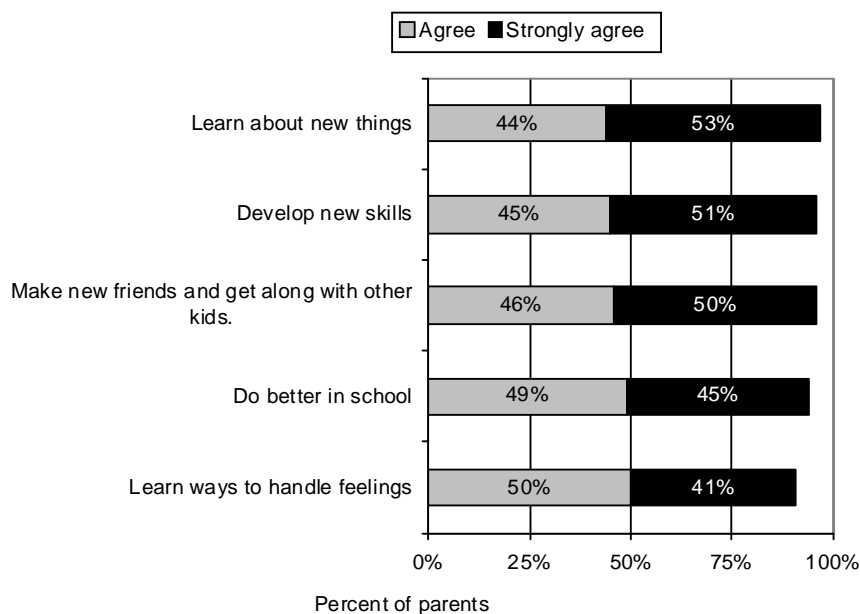
“This was not a trend I expected to see, quite frankly... We have also spent a lot of time strengthening the academic activities that we are offering in these areas.”

Participant Perceptions of Program Impact

Parent Perceptions

Most parents responding to the survey perceived the program as having had a positive impact on their child's school performance and social adjustment (Figure 21). Parents were most likely to agree or strongly agree that the program helped their child learn about new things, develop new skills or make new friends and get along with other kids. The vast majority also agreed that the program helped their child do better in school and learn to handle feelings.

Figure 21
Percent of Parents Reporting Program Impacts
on Their Children (N = 2,612)



Student Perceptions

Student participants perceived the program as helpful to them in a variety of ways (Figure 22). Among those who had room for improvement, about half said the program helped them improve in math or reading. Students were most likely to say the program helped them stay away from drugs or alcohol (54%); about half said it helped them solve problems in positive ways or feel good about themselves. Given the current concern about obesity among youth, it is interesting to note that almost half said the program helped them get exercise and 47% said it helped them learn about eating healthy food.

Plans for Future Changes

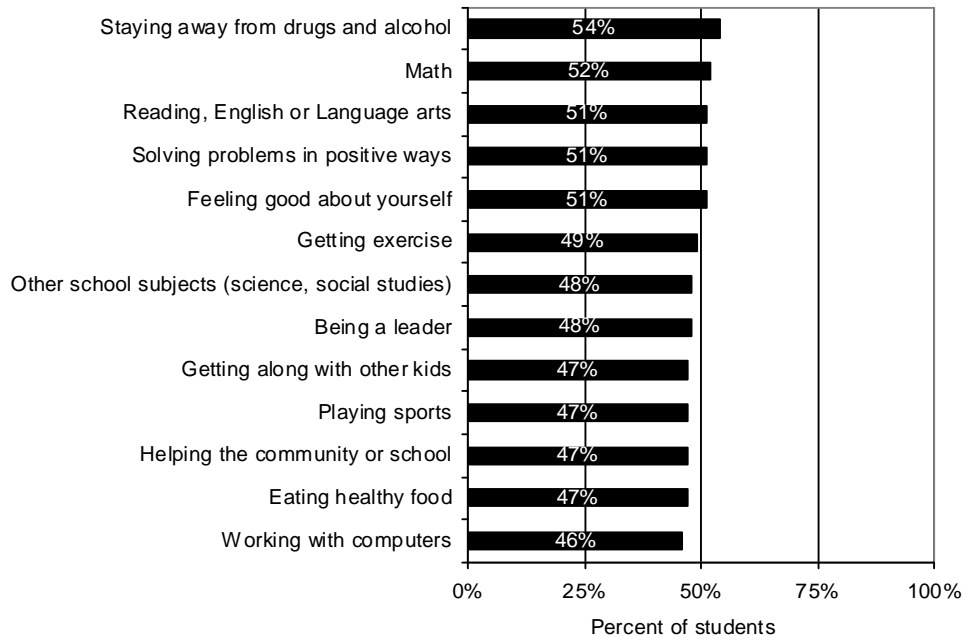
After reviewing teacher, parent, and student perceptions of program impact, program administrators were asked to discuss the extent to which there was consistency in their evaluations. They were also asked to describe the changes they planned to make to improve student achievement outcomes in the next year.

Programs that had less positive teacher responses most frequently planned to improve communication with teachers.

Programs that found consistent responses also planned changes, including:

- Improving teacher communication
- Maintaining enrollment; building relationships with students
- Improving activities and grade-level curricula
- Use more certified teachers in academic classes
- Use the YPQA tool to set their professional development agenda

Figure 22
Percent of Students Reporting Program Impacts
4th to 12th Grade (N = 3,185)



- Develop student committees or use other methods for increasing their involvement in program planning
- Increase parent involvement
- These proposed changes were not necessarily tied to specific responses from students, parents, or teachers.