

# Michigan 21st Century Community Learning Centers

RESEARCH BRIEF

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## Afterschool Program Reduces High School Dropout Rates

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) is the federal funding stream for out-of-school time programming in schools and community-based organizations. The program aims to improve the academic outcomes of students from low-performing schools in low-income neighborhoods.

### Why examine schoolwide outcomes?

The most common way to gauge the success of an educational program is to see whether participants outperform nonparticipants. However, many factors other than program participation influence students' performance; most of these are hard for researchers to control. Another way to assess program effectiveness is to see how the program affects outcomes in the communities where it is active. If 21st CCLC is working, schools affiliated with 21st CCLC sites should outperform similar nonaffiliated schools.

### What difference does a 21st CCLC program make in a school?

Researchers at Michigan State University looked back at 19 years of data (school years 2004 to 2022) to compare the outcomes of Michigan high schools that were and were not affiliated with a 21st CCLC program. The researchers identified 51 high schools whose students had access to at least one year of 21st CCLC programming. For 44 of the 51 schools, the researchers identified comparable high schools, with similar socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, that were not affiliated with any 21st CCLC program. The other 7 schools were excluded from the analysis.

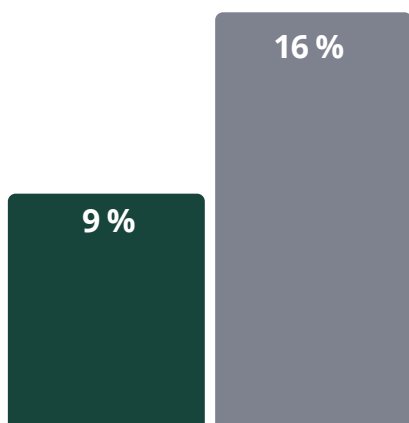
**Statistics showed that high schools with access to 21st CCLC programs had an average dropout rate of 9%, while similar schools without a 21st CCLC program affiliation had a higher average dropout rate of 16%.** However, the study found no significant impact of 21st CCLC on graduation rates. This finding warrants further investigation.

### What else influences dropout and graduation rates?

Analyses also showed that high schools in wealthier neighborhoods were better able to keep students attending through graduation. In addition, larger schools in both groups had lower dropout rates and higher graduation rates than smaller schools.

### Estimated Dropout Rates in High Schools

- WITHOUT a 21st CCLC Program
- WITH a 21st CCLC Program



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