



# Annual Evaluation Report

## 2009–2010 School Year





# Purpose and History of Nebraska 21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) is a federally funded, competitive grant program designed to support the establishment of community learning centers serving students attending high-need schools. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) administers these grants for projects to offer students a broad array of services, programs, and activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (such as before- and afterschool or during summer recess).

In 1998, the 21st CCLC initiative was authorized under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 amended the initiative and transferred the administration to state departments of education.

The three goals of this grant program are: 1) improve student learning performance in one or more core academic areas; 2) increase social benefits and positive behavioral changes; and 3) increase family and community engagement in supporting students' education. Centers may provide a variety of services to

achieve these goals, including remedial education and academic enrichment learning programs, tutoring and mentoring services, services for English Language Learning students, technology education programs, programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy, drug and violence prevention programs, and counseling programs, among other services.

Further information on 21st Century Community Learning Centers is available through the United States Department of Education. The website is located at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>. For more information about the Nebraska 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant program, call the office at 402-471-0876 or visit the web site at <http://www.education.ne.gov/21stcclc>.



# Evaluation Purpose

The purpose of the 21st CCLC program evaluation is to provide: (a) descriptive information regarding these programs, (b) process data that will assist the project staff in continually improving the quality of services to the children and their families, (c) outcome data that will assist the programs in determining the extent to which the program achieved its anticipated outcomes, and (d) required data to meet the federal NCLB Title IVB program requirements. The evaluation was and will continue to be accomplished by collecting data across multiple sources and forms using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The evaluation design utilizes the same continuous improvement model developed by the Nebraska Department of Education for school improvement planning. (<http://www.education.ne.gov/CIPToolkit/>).

## Continuous Improvement Process

The overall design of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Program utilizes targeted academic and social/behavioral supports in before

school, afterschool, full days when school is not in session, and summer school offerings. Local programs develop their own models to suit local needs, but must meet or exceed the parameters



established in the grant application from NDE. Programs must base their model on local needs assessment data, describe curricular and evaluation approaches, and participate in a comprehensive, continuous improvement evaluation process. Programs select an external local evaluator to support their evaluation and continuous improvement process efforts. Programs are required to develop a core local management team, with recommended membership to include the project director, building principal, local evaluator, and other key stakeholders.



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The evaluation plan and tools for the Nebraska 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant program were developed by the external statewide evaluator. Local grantees develop their own objectives, which must include an academic objective, a social/behavioral objective for students, and an objective for family/community engagement. Goals are refined as data suggest changes. In 2006, the NDE 21st CCLC management team identified the elements of a quality afterschool program and began to incorporate them into the continuous improvement process for local programs.

Each year evaluation data is submitted by June 15. The external statewide evaluator analyzes, verifies the accuracy of the submitted data, and develops “Continuous Improvement Process Data Snapshots” for each program. Indicators of quality were established on targeted data process areas (such as 90% return rates or greater on teacher, parent and student surveys) and on outcome areas (such as ratings of 3.50 or greater on observation domain categories). These snapshots include site level outcomes, grant program level outcomes, district level outcomes, and state level outcomes. The snapshot provides a summary of each site’s and the overall program’s data outcomes compared to state outcomes, and is color coded in

yellow, orange or red to indicate any data outcome that does not meet state standards for the first or second year in a row. The NDE 21st CCLC management team met with representatives of grants completing years one or four across Nebraska during the month of August. The purpose of these meetings was to review the CIP Data Snapshots with their local management teams and to facilitate discussions on local plans to improve programs. Grantees completing years two, three, or five, met with external local evaluators to complete the same CIP process.

The state level management team and each local management team implements the action plans proposed to improve programs across Nebraska. Data are then collected in the subsequent year to measure program improvement.

*Technical Assistance and Professional Development.* NDE provided technical assistance and professional development activities for grantees in order to facilitate their continuous improvement. An ongoing technical assistance plan was developed based on the review of research on best practice for afterschool programs, the statewide evaluation findings, and discussions at each project’s continuous improvement process meeting. When requested, resources





were provided and some follow-up site visits occurred for program support in areas identified. Discussion forums were provided on topics of grant management, reporting, evaluation processes, global learning, embedding academics into activities, project-based learning, peer-support strategies, grant management, family engagement in student's learning, and discussion of the statewide evaluation report. A password protected e-learning system was utilized for data collection, grant management, communication, and provision of technical assistance. Monthly conference calls were offered on a variety of topics: afterschool activities in math, science, technology, arts and literacy, staff development, peer acceptance, summer school planning, grant management, evaluation, and the continuous improvement process. Project directors were required to attend the Nebraska project director annual meeting.

To assist projects in their continuous improvement process, the 21st CCLC state management team developed The Elements of Quality in 21st CCLC Programs, aligning the elements with the observation tool used by evaluators. A website for grantees was organized with resources available in each of the domains on the observation tool and the Elements of Quality. To strengthen

capacity to partner with families in support of their students' learning, coordination of efforts with the Nebraska State Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC) program continues. The Nebraska State PIRC implemented school-based PIRCs in 62 schools with 21st Century Community Learning Center programs.

New grantee orientations and new grantee staff development included assistance in program planning and implementation, operating an effective program, collaborating with families and community partners, and particular focus on linkages to school-day learning objectives, administrators, and staff.

## Summary of data collection systems

Site level data were collected in Microsoft® Access databases developed for each grantee and disseminated by the statewide evaluator. Data were also collected in the federal web-based data collection system Profile and Performance Information Collection Systems (PPICS) and in annual Continuous Improvement Process Summaries including action plans submitted by grantees.





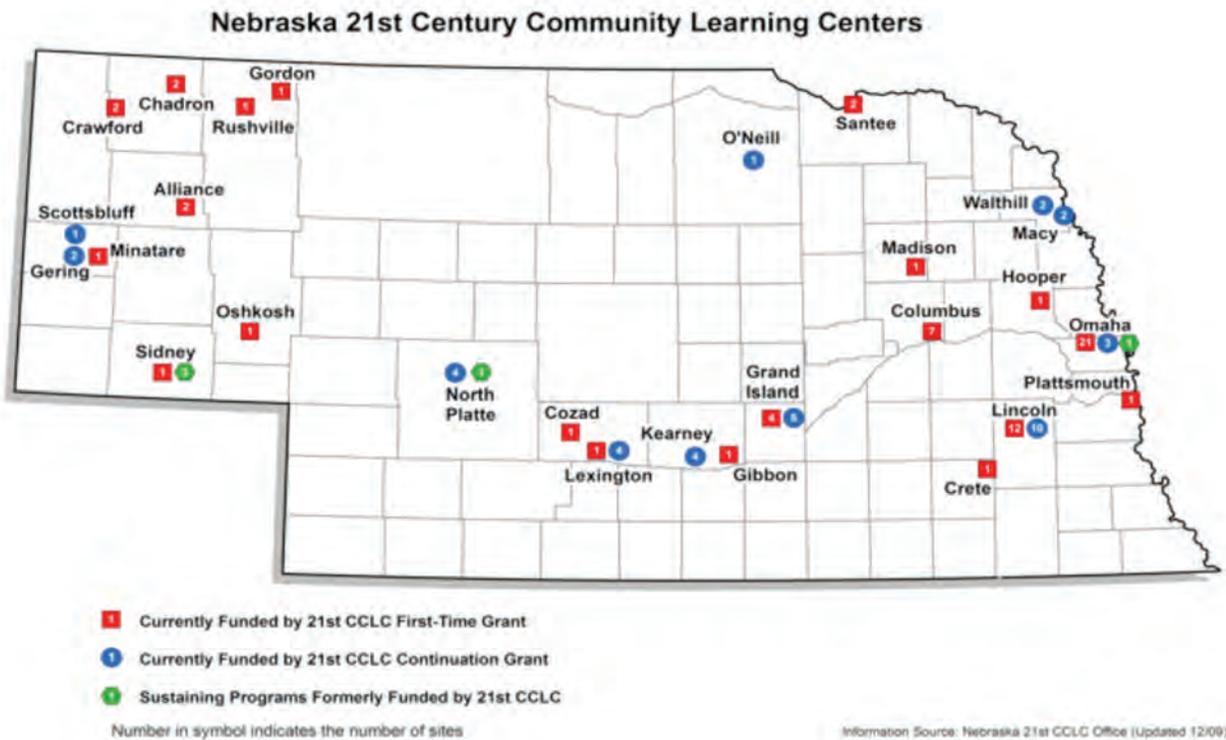
# Program Evaluation Findings

Program evaluation of the 21st CCLC programs includes examining progress on four outcomes. These outcomes include measured quality of these programs, student achievement, observed changes in student social or behavioral patterns, and changes in family or community support of student learning. This graphic provides a summary of the communities served in the 21st CCLC program for 2009-2010.

## Description of Grantees, Sites, and Students Served

### Project Demographics

In the past seven years of administration of these federal funds, the Nebraska Department of Education has awarded 40 First-Time 5-year grants in 27 communities (seven cohorts). There were a total of 107 Nebraska 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) sites for 2009-2010. Sixty-four sites were funded by a First-Time grant, 38 sites were funded by a Continuation grant and 5 sustaining sites were formerly funded by 21st CCLC.



## Student Demographics

While a total of 13,672 students were served in before-school, after-school, and out-of-school day 21st CCLC programs this year, demographic information is reported only for students who were regularly served, referred to as regular

attenders. The definition of a regular attender is a student attending 30 days or more during the school year. These programs served 8,061 regularly attending students during the 2009-2010 school year, which was an increase from 7,048 in 2008-2009 and 6,195 in 2007-2008. The programs were funded to

### Grade Levels for Regular Student Attenders for Nebraska 21st CCLC

| Grade Level             | # of Regular Student Attendees | % of Regular Student Attendees |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Kindergarten Students   | 910                            | 11%                            |
| First-grade Students    | 1125                           | 14%                            |
| Second-grade Students   | 1111                           | 14%                            |
| Third-grade Students    | 1150                           | 14%                            |
| Fourth-grade Students   | 1079                           | 13%                            |
| Fifth-grade Students    | 964                            | 12%                            |
| Sixth-grade Students    | 563                            | 7%                             |
| Seventh-grade Students  | 540                            | 7%                             |
| Eighth-grade Students   | 479                            | 6%                             |
| Ninth-grade Students    | 24                             | 0.3%                           |
| Tenth-grade Students    | 58                             | 0.7%                           |
| Eleventh-grade Students | 33                             | 0.4%                           |
| Twelfth-grade Students  | 25                             | 0.3%                           |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>8,061</b>                   | <b>100%</b>                    |

### Ethnicity for Regular Student Attenders for Nebraska 21st CCLC

| Ethnicity                     | # of Regular Student Attendees | % of Regular Student Attendees |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 479                            | 5.9%                           |
| Asian/Pacific Islander        | 148                            | 1.8%                           |
| Black/African American        | 1733                           | 21.5%                          |
| Hispanic/Latino               | 2279                           | 28.3%                          |
| White                         | 3422                           | 42.5%                          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>8061</b>                    | <b>100%</b>                    |





serve 6,176 regularly attending students during the 2009-2010 school year. These programs, therefore, served 129% of the students funded to be served during the school year.

*Grade levels.* The majority of students regularly served in 21st CCLC programs across Nebraska were in kindergarten through fifth grade (79%).

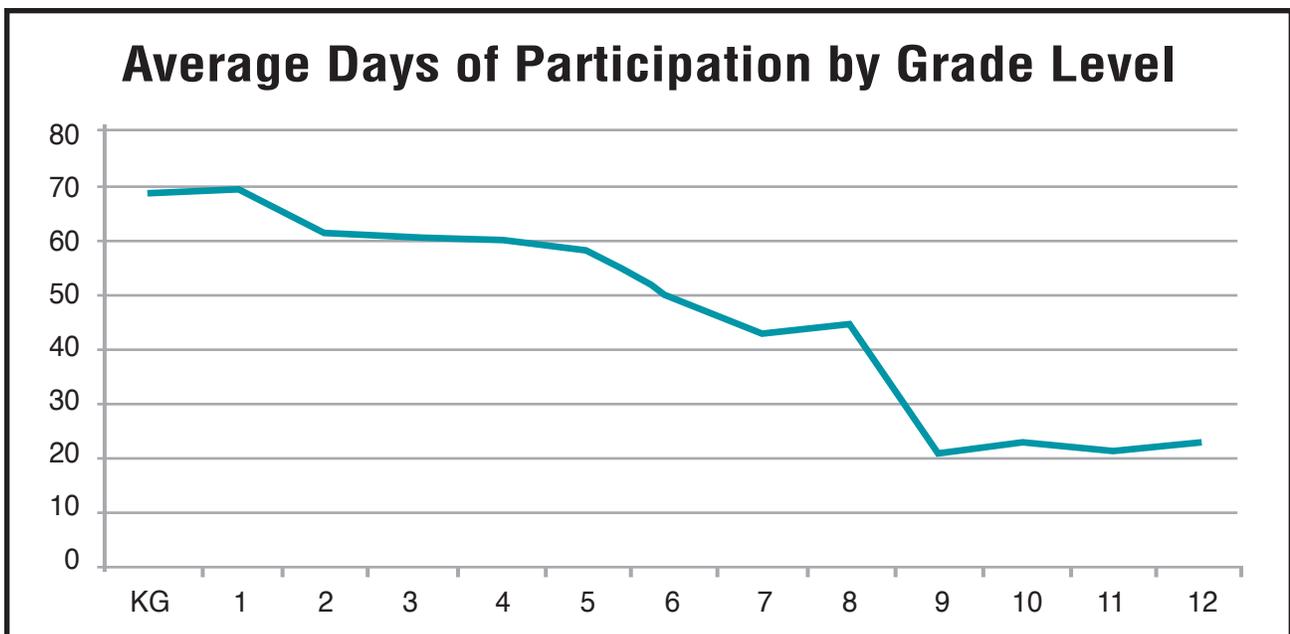
*Participation by Grade Level.* The participation of different grade level groups was examined. Below depicts the grade level and average days of participation across all students who enrolled in 21st CCLC programs in 2009-10. Participation generally declined by grade level. Further exploration would need to occur to determine the reasons for this trend.

*Ethnicity.* The 21st CCLC programs served a diverse group of children and youth. The majority of students served (58%) were from an ethnic minority category.

*Gender.* Of the regularly attending students 49% were female and 51% were male.

*Eligibility for Free/Reduced Lunch.* Of the regularly attending students 74% were eligible for free or reduced lunch. This is a significantly greater percentage compared to all of Nebraska's schools (41.22%, data source is NDE State of the Schools Report, 2009-10).

*Eligibility for Other School Services.* Of the students served regularly this year,





### A typical afternoon in a middle school 21st Century Community Learning Center...

If students have homework they are expected to work on it during the first hour of programming. Students remain in these tutoring or homework zones for at least one hour unless they need additional help. Then they have the option to continue to work on their homework. After one hour of study, students return to the cafeteria for snack. Snack includes a small meal since many of them are starving by the time it is 4pm. Meals normally include a sandwich, vegetables, fruit and milk to drink. After snack, students attend their different enrichment clubs that they had signed up for. Those clubs include: Y Arts?, Service Learning, Guitar Club, Tech Club, Swimming, Book Club, Cooking Club, Robotics, African Cultural Connections, Raptor Recovery, and many more. Clubs change frequently to keep the interest of the students. Starting at 5pm students who ride the late bus are dismissed. Other students for the remaining time choose from board games, computer lab, or gym time until program ends at 6:00pm.

16% were English Language Learners. NDE State of the Schools Report (SOSR) data indicates that 6.56% of students in Nebraska’s schools were identified as English Language Learners (2009-10). For regularly attending students, 18% were verified for special education, compared to 15.27% (2009-10 SOSR data).

## Quality of 21st CCLC Programs

Quality programs have been linked to immediate, positive developmental outcomes, as well as long-term positive academic performance (Beckett, Capizzano, Parsley, Ross, Schirm, & Taylor, 2009; Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Bryant, and Clifford, 2000).

*Observations of Program Quality.* The *Observations for Quality School-Age Care & Programming* tool was developed by the statewide evaluator and used for program observations for the past six

| Domain  | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | Difference |
|---|---------|---------|------------|
| <b>Administration</b>                                 | 4.57    | 4.66    | +.09       |
| <b>Relationships</b>                                  | 4.43    | 4.47    | +.04       |
| <b>Family Partnerships</b>                            | 4.25    | 4.37    | +.12       |
| <b>School &amp; Community Collaboration</b>           | 4.47    | 4.53    | +.06       |
| <b>Environment, Safety &amp; Wellness of Students</b> | 4.52    | 4.56    | +.04       |
| <b>Programming</b>                                    | 4.16    | 4.24    | +.08       |
| <b>Overall</b>  | 4.40    | 4.48    | +.08       |

5-point scale with 1=not evident and 5=consistently evident



years. Each year, the statewide evaluator observes all Year 1 programs and any programs for which a new local evaluator is retained. Local evaluators are trained on utilizing the observation tool and inter-rater reliability is ensured through a process of comparing scores post-observation. Local evaluators are deemed reliable when they match within the prescribed intervals 85% or more of the time.

This year the statewide evaluator completed first and fifth year grant site observations and local evaluators with demonstrated reliability independently completed observations of Years 2, 3, and 4 grantees. The observation tool measures outcomes in overall administration of the program, interactions

### A typical afternoon in an elementary 21st Century Community Learning Center...

The afternoon begins with a healthy snack, milk or juice, and outdoor play. Basketball, jump rope, swinging ...students are having fun and exercising. After burning off some energy, students move into small groups to complete their homework, and receive tutoring assistance when appropriate. After homework has been completed, students move into choice activities for experiential learning. Art, cultural awareness classes, robotics, poetry writing, board games, chess, computer classes, singing, or Math Bingo might occur before students go home for the evening.

among students and staff, support for family involvement and engagement, linkages between the school and

| More Positively Rated Items, 2009-10 |  |             |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------|
| #                                    | Item Description   | Avg Ratings |
| A13                                  | A system is used to ensure there are sufficient materials to support program activities.                             | 4.96        |
| S3                                   | The site supervisor is provided space at the school for lesson planning, communications, and data management.        | 4.89        |
| E8                                   | Meals and snacks are nutritious and adequate in portion to meet the needs of the students.                           | 4.85        |
| A7                                   | Program practices and policies ensure staff to student ratios not to exceed 1:15 and very few whole group activities | 4.82        |
| S12                                  | The school and program staff share in the process of recruiting and retaining students.                              | 4.81        |
| A2                                   | Program policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of students and families in the community.               | 4.79        |





community, general environment of the program, and observed program content (e.g., homework, language, mathematics, science, fine and dramatic arts, recreational activities).

A total of 102 school sites were observed and rated in the winter of 2009-10. This represented 100% of funded school sites. Overall, ratings have generally continued to improve on the *Observations for Quality School-Age Care & Programming* findings.

*Domain Level Analysis.* Average domain ratings across programs were in the 4.0 to 5.0 range, suggesting that as a group the 21st CCLC programs were of good to excellent quality. More positive ratings were noted for all areas. The lowest rated

domain was *Programming*. The *Family Partnerships* domain improved the most, with an increase of 12 points noted.

Sites with a domain rating less than 3.50 were required to develop action plans for continuous improvement.

*Item Level Analysis.* Item analysis on the observation data revealed that statewide average scores on most items were in the 4.0 to 5.0 range. For 2009-10, the six more positively rated items were in the 4.79 to 4.96 range, a slightly higher range than 2008-09 scores which were between 4.72 and 4.86. Most of the items that were more positively rated were the same as last year with the exception of one item from the administration domain focused on staff to student ratios (A7).

| Less Positively Rated Items, 2009-10 |   |             |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| #                                    | Item Description  | Avg Ratings |
| P5                                   | Science activities include in-depth, hands-on investigations where systematic inquiry is encouraged.  | 3.48        |
| F8                                   | A representative group of parents are included in shared decision making on key issues related to student learning.   | 3.77        |
| P4                                   | Mathematics is developed in students through the use of engaging learning games and activities, projects meaningful to students, or through technology which appears interesting to students. | 3.90        |
| P7                                   | Students can choose from a wide variety of activities each day.   | 3.95        |
| F7                                   | Staff provide, or connect parents to, opportunities designed to engage parents in supporting learning at home.  | 4.09        |
| P9                                   | A variety of instructional strategies are used to meet the needs of all students, including the needs of exceptional learners (special education to gifted).                                  | 4.12        |



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The six less positively rated items ranged from 3.48 to 4.12, a slightly wider range of scores than in 2008-09 which were 3.54 to 3.96. Although the majority of these ratings surpassed the state of Nebraska's Indicator of Quality—a score of 3.50 or greater—when compared to the higher scoring items, these scores indicate areas to improve. A programming domain relating to science activities received the lowest score, a 3.48. This score is just below the state's Indicator of Quality. Five of the less positively rated items were in the domain of Programming and one item was from the Family Partnerships domain. Statewide technical assistance efforts should focus on these various Programming areas while continued assistance should be provided to support including families in shared decision-making about program or school improvement.

## Teacher, Parent, Student, and Collaborative Partner Survey Outcomes

*Teacher Survey Outcomes.* Statewide, teacher surveys were collected for 6,904 students who were served 30 days or more. The return rate of teacher surveys for students who attended 30 days or more was 86%. The targeted return rate for teacher surveys was 90%. Grantees

not meeting the 90% return rate were required to develop an action plan to meet this requirement.

School day classroom teachers were asked to rate each student's performance on district objectives/standards on a 4-point scale with 4 being advanced, 3 proficient, 2 progressing, and 1 beginning. Domains included reading (including reading, speaking, and listening), writing, and mathematics.

A one-way between subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) compared teacher ratings of student performance in reading, writing, and mathematics. Students were assigned to Group 1 (attended less than 30 days), Group 2 (30 -89 days), or Group 3 (90 or more days). The alpha level for each ANOVA was 0.05.

Reading: A one-way between subjects analysis of variance compared teacher ratings of student performance by group assignment in reading. This test was found to be statistically significant,  $F(2,6849)=4.74, p<.01$ . Students who attended 90 days or more were rated the highest in reading ( $M=2.84, SD=0.85$ ). Students who attended 30-89 days were rated in the middle in reading ( $M=2.78, SD=0.85$ ) and students who attended less than 30 days were rated the lowest in reading ( $M=2.76, SD=0.82$ ).



Writing: A one-way between subjects analysis of variance compared teacher ratings of student performance by group assignment in writing. The difference in ratings on this test were not statistically significant,  $F(2,6862)=2.34$ ,  $p=.097$ .

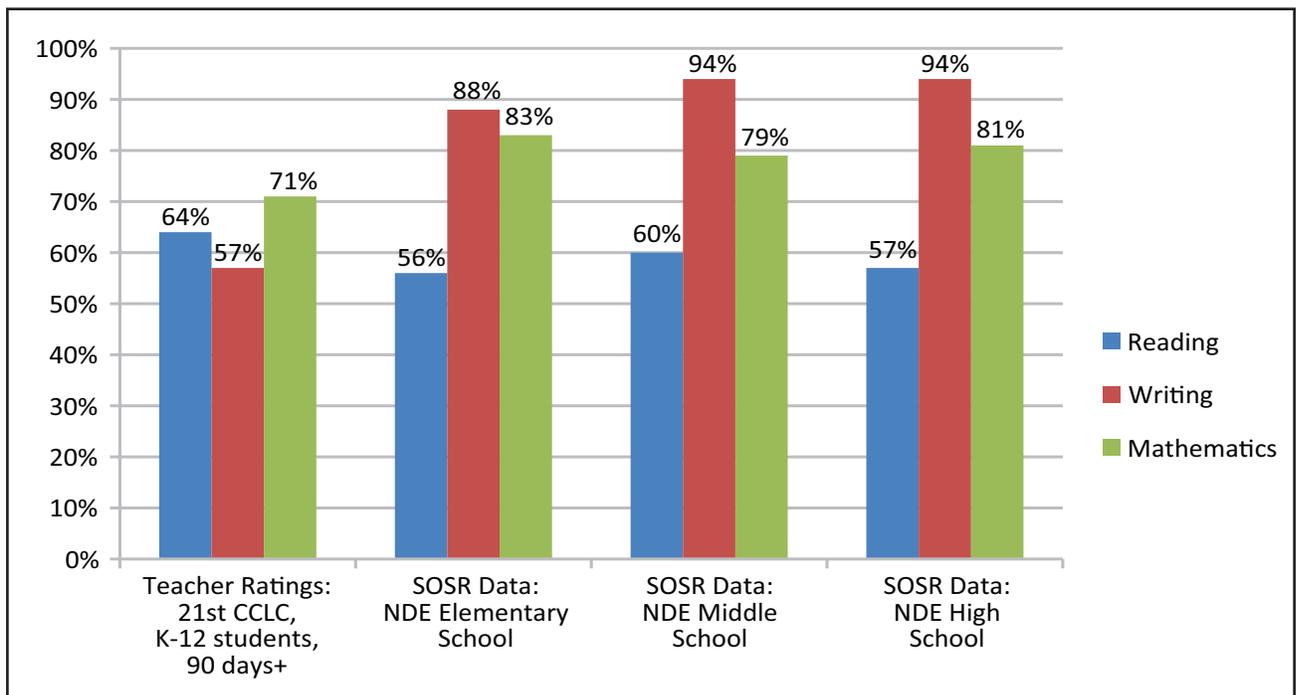
Mathematics: A one-way between subjects analysis of variance compared teacher ratings of student performance by group assignment in mathematics. This test was found to be significant  $F(2,6905)=11.82$ ,  $p<.001$ . Students who attended 90 days or more were rated the highest in mathematics ( $M=2.91$ ,  $SD=0.78$ ). Students who attended 30-89 days were rated in the middle in mathematics ( $M=2.85$ ,  $SD=0.81$ ) and students who attended less than 30 days

were rated the lowest in mathematics ( $M=2.76$ ,  $SD=0.78$ ).

Overall, students who attended greater than 90 days were rated significantly higher in reading and mathematics than students who attended afterschool programming less than 90 days.

The next area examined was the percentage of students who attended 90 days or more who were meeting/exceeding standards by content area, as compared to all Nebraska students (data source: NDE SOSR, 2009-10).

Additional data will be collected next year to determine whether 21st CCLC students who attend 90 days or more score similarly





### Teacher Survey Data

| Items   | Students Attending Statewide 21st CCLC |            |             |
|---|--|------------|-------------|
|   | 0-29 days                              | 30-89 days | 90-188 days |
| <b>Number of Surveys</b>                        | 579                                    | 2911       | 3871        |
| <b>Turning in homework on time</b>              | 0.46                                   | 0.72       | 0.80        |
| <b>Completing homework to your satisfaction</b> | 0.49                                   | 0.82       | 0.87        |
| <b>Participating in class</b>                   | 0.72                                   | 0.83       | 0.97        |
| <b>Volunteering</b>                             | 0.49                                   | 0.61       | 0.65        |
| <b>Attending class regularly</b>                | 0.28                                   | 0.52       | 0.62        |
| <b>Being attentive in class</b>                 | 0.48                                   | 0.57       | 0.68        |
| <b>Behaving well in class</b>                   | 0.37                                   | 0.52       | 0.61        |
| <b>Academic performance</b>                     | 0.67                                   | 0.86       | 0.98        |
| <b>Coming to school motivated to learn</b>      | 0.41                                   | 0.63       | 0.75        |
| <b>Getting along well with other students</b>   | 0.43                                   | 0.61       | 0.70        |
| <b>Family support of student's learning</b>     | 0.37                                   | 0.54       | 0.61        |
| <b>Average Change</b>                           | 0.43                                   | 0.66       | 0.75        |

7-point scale ranging from -3=significant decline to + 3=significant improvement

to all Nebraska students on each of the content area assessments. Note: Nebraska fully implemented a new reading assessment (NeSA Reading) in 2009-10.

Teachers were also asked to rate students on the following student behaviors by reporting their level of change (if any) from fall to spring. Results were limited to students with unique Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS) numbers. Surveys used a 7-point scale with 3 representing significant improvement, 2 moderate improvement, 1 slight improvement, 0 no change in behavior, -1 slight decline, -2 moderate decline, and -3 significant decline. Teachers were also

allowed to mark if a student was already excellent in a particular area in the fall or if an area was not applicable, such as homework in some kindergarten classrooms.

It is clear that greater participation was associated with higher average gains in all categories.

*Parent Survey Outcomes.* Parents of kindergarten through 12th grade students who were regular 21st CCLC attenders across Nebraska were surveyed regarding their ratings of the 21st CCLC programs on a number of different areas in order to assess the quality of services and





| Parent Survey Data        |  |            |             |
|---------------------------|--|------------|-------------|
| Why Enrolled              | Students Attending Statewide 21st CCLC |            |             |
|                           | 0-29 days                              | 30-89 days | 90-188 days |
| Extra help in school      | 23%                                    | 38%        | 31%         |
| Extension activities      | 33%                                    | 18%        | 15%         |
| Supervision or child care | 15%                                    | 23%        | 38%         |
| Recreation                | 9%                                     | 7%         | 5%          |
| Multiple reasons          | 20%                                    | 13%        | 11%         |

perceived outcomes for their children. A new survey was utilized in 2008-09; therefore, comparison to earlier years is not possible. The statewide return rate for parent surveys was 65%. The targeted

return rate for parent surveys was 90%. Grantees not meeting the 90% return rate were required to develop an action plan to meet this requirement.

| Parent Survey Data          |   |  |            |             |
|-----------------------------|---|--|------------|-------------|
| Rating                      |   | Students Attending Statewide 21st CCLC |            |             |
|                             |   | 0-29 days                              | 30-89 days | 90-188 days |
| Number of Surveys Collected |   | 632                                    | 1936       | 3214        |
| 1                           | The 21st CCLC program is a great benefit to my child/youth.   | 3.83                                   | 3.89       | 3.92        |
| 2                           | The 21st CCLC staff are excellent (caring, reliable, skilled).  | 3.78                                   | 3.86       | 3.89        |
| 3                           | The 21st CCLC staff communicate with me regularly about my child's progress in the program.                           | 3.21                                   | 3.51       | 3.61        |
| 4                           | The 21st CCLC program is a safe place, physically and emotionally.  | 3.84                                   | 3.87       | 3.89        |
| 5                           | The activities offered are good and my child enjoys them.   | 3.85                                   | 3.87       | 3.89        |
| 6                           | My child learns more by participating in the 21st CCLC program.   | 3.72                                   | 3.78       | 3.79        |
| 7                           | The 21st CCLC program helps my child build and maintain friendships.  | 3.73                                   | 3.81       | 3.85        |
| 8                           | My child's behavior is handled well in the afterschool program and I am kept informed about strengths and challenges. | 3.48                                   | 3.69       | 3.75        |
| Overall Average             |   | 3.68                                   | 3.79       | 3.82        |

1=Disagree, 4=Agree





Parents were asked to identify their primary reason for enrolling their child or youth in the 21st CCLC program. The following are their responses.

These data suggest that the majority of parents (46%) enroll their children for remediation or enrichment opportunities as their primary reason followed by supervision or child care.

One question asked was whether or not grade level of student made a difference in the reasons parents enroll their youth into 21st CCLC programs. To test this question, the results for fifth grade were analyzed. Parents of fifth grade students

who attended 90 days or more enrolled their youth for extra help in school (35%), extension activities (16%), supervision or child care (36%), recreation (3%), and multiple reasons (10%). While these results represented slightly greater percentages in the targeted purposes (extra help and extension), results were not significantly different.

The next table reflects parent ratings of eight items relevant to 21st CCLCs. These ratings are arranged on a 4-point scale with 4 indicating “agree” and 1 indicating “disagree” with the identified statement.

| Parent Survey Data                                      |   |  |            |             |
|---|---|--|------------|-------------|
| Percentage of Parents Responding Affirmatively to Items |   | Students Attending Statewide 21st CCLC |            |             |
|   |   | 0-29 days                              | 30-89 days | 90-188 days |
| 1.  | Read newsletters from school  | 77                                     | 74         | 83          |
| 2.  | Talk to or exchange e-mails with school teacher or teachers at least monthly                                    | 43                                     | 43         | 43          |
| 3.  | Visit school during parent events (like parent-teacher conference, back to school night, etc.)                  | 84                                     | 78         | 87          |
| 4.  | Review homework every day, even if it is finished in the afterschool program                                    | 73                                     | 69         | 80          |
| 5.  | Volunteer (help teacher, field trip, school events, help with book fairs)                                       | 27                                     | 26         | 29          |
| 6.  | Support learning at home (extra learning activities, board games, family outings, computers, internet, reading) | 79                                     | 72         | 83          |
| 7.  | Participate in advisory groups (PTA, school improvement committees, parent advisory groups, PIRC councils).     | 21                                     | 21         | 19          |
| 8.  | I share important information about my child with the 21st CCLC and/or school staff.                            | 49                                     | 52         | 61          |





Greater participation was associated with higher ratings on all items. Programs with parent ratings of less than 3.50—the indicator of quality—were required to develop action plans to address program improvement.

Parents were also asked to identify types of parent involvement activities they demonstrated during the past program year. Parents responded either “Yes” or “No” to the following items. The table depicts the percentage of parents indicating “Yes.”

Parents of students with the greatest levels of participation were parents with the greatest percentages of “yes” to reading newsletters from the school, visiting school during parent events, reviewing homework every day, volunteering, supporting learning at home, and sharing important information about their child with program or school staff. Percentages were exactly the same across all participation categories on the item “Talk to or exchange e-mails with school teacher or teachers at least monthly.” Parents of students with the greatest levels of participation were less likely to participate in advisory groups.

*Elementary Student Survey Outcomes.* Surveys are collected from students 3rd grade and older attending elementary

programs and who have attended 30 days or more during the school year.

Statewide, there were 3,297 eligible 3rd through 5th grade students who attended 30 days or more. There were a total of 2,565 elementary student surveys collected yielding an average return rate of 78%. The targeted return rate for student surveys was 90%. Grantees not meeting the 90% return rate were required to develop an action plan to meet this requirement. Students were asked to rate each item with no (0), sometimes (1) or yes (2).

As was also noted in last year’s evaluation report, results were mixed on student survey outcomes. Greater levels of student participation in the program (greater number of days attended) were associated with similar, increased, or decreased outcomes reported by students on various items. Overall, ratings were essentially the same (ranging from 1.63 to 1.65). For example, students with greater participation were more likely to have a safe way home from the program. However, students with greater participation were less likely to have greater outcomes on satisfaction or relationship items: liking how they are learning things, getting along with others, or believing the adults care about them. Students in the highest participation group also reported being less likely to





| Elementary Student Survey Data |   |  |            |             |
|--------------------------------|---|--|------------|-------------|
|                                |   | Students Attending Statewide 21st CCLC |            |             |
|                                |   | 0-29 days                              | 30-89 days | 90-188 days |
| Number of Surveys              |   | 451                                    | 967        | 1598        |
| 1.                             | Getting good grades in school is important to me.                     | 1.89                                   | 1.87       | 1.88        |
| 2.                             | I feel accepted by other kids in the 21st CCLC program.               | 1.48                                   | 1.49       | 1.50        |
| 3.                             | I feel accepted by other kids in school.                              | 1.59                                   | 1.54       | 1.55        |
| 4.                             | I feel safe in the 21st CCLC program.                                 | 1.73                                   | 1.79       | 1.73        |
| 5.                             | I get my homework done in the 21st CCLC program.                      | 1.17                                   | 1.53       | 1.49        |
| 6.                             | I talk to my family about my homework or what I'm learning in school. | 1.47                                   | 1.39       | 1.34        |
| 7.                             | I'm getting good grades in reading (or language arts) at school.      | 1.65                                   | 1.59       | 1.65        |
| 8.                             | I'm getting good grades in mathematics at school.                     | 1.72                                   | 1.62       | 1.68        |
| 9.                             | I follow the rules at school.   | 1.78                                   | 1.72       | 1.72        |
| 10.                            | I follow the rules in the 21st CCLC program.                          | 1.76                                   | 1.76       | 1.71        |
| 11.                            | I get along well with the other students in the 21st CCLC program.    | 1.65                                   | 1.57       | 1.52        |
| 12.                            | I get along well with the other students in school.                   | 1.68                                   | 1.61       | 1.57        |
| 13.                            | I like the activities in the 21st CCLC program.                       | 1.65                                   | 1.66       | 1.57        |
| 14.                            | I like how we learn things in the 21st CCLC program.                  | 1.60                                   | 1.65       | 1.57        |
| 15.                            | The adults in the 21st CCLC program care about me.                    | 1.78                                   | 1.80       | 1.77        |
| 16.                            | I have a safe way to get home from the 21st CCLC program.             | 1.85                                   | 1.87       | 1.90        |
| Overall Average                |   | 1.65                                   | 1.65       | 1.63        |

0=No, 1=Sometimes, 2=Yes

talk to their families about homework. Differences were relatively modest.

This raised additional questions to be addressed. Are there differences between students who attend the most? Are students less satisfied with certain areas of programming if they attend more

often? To address differences in student populations, the evaluator analyzed the student demographic data of students in both groups. There were no significant differences in gender, ethnicity, free/reduced lunch status, English proficiency, or special education status.



Additional information will be gathered to identify why the results are different and particularly why the group with greater rates of participation reported lower

quality ratings on items related to relationships with others and one additional item on liking the activities in the program.

| Middle/High School Survey Data |  |  |            |             |
|--------------------------------|--|--|------------|-------------|
| Items                          |  | Students Attending Statewide 21st CCLC |            |             |
|                                |  | 0-29 days                              | 30-89 days | 90-188 days |
| Number of Surveys Collected    |  | 227                                    | 644        | 453         |
| 1.                             | Getting good grades in school is important to me.                      | 1.81                                   | 1.78       | 1.80        |
| 2.                             | I feel accepted by others in the 21st CCLC program.                    | 1.68                                   | 1.63       | 1.62        |
| 3.                             | I feel accepted by others in school.                                   | 1.62                                   | 1.60       | 1.56        |
| 4.                             | I feel safe in the 21st CCLC program.                                  | 1.75                                   | 1.75       | 1.73        |
| 5.                             | I get my homework done in the 21st CCLC program.                       | 1.25                                   | 1.38       | 1.38        |
| 6.                             | I talk to my family about my homework or what I'm learning in school.  | 1.15                                   | 1.21       | 1.23        |
| 7.                             | I'm getting good grades in reading (or English) at school.             | 1.50                                   | 1.53       | 1.60        |
| 8.                             | I'm getting good grades in mathematics at school.                      | 1.40                                   | 1.47       | 1.53        |
| 9.                             | I follow the rules at school.  | 1.61                                   | 1.67       | 1.63        |
| 10.                            | I follow the rules in the 21st CCLC program.                           | 1.71                                   | 1.72       | 1.69        |
| 11.                            | My friends encourage me to make good choices.                          | 1.60                                   | 1.50       | 1.41        |
| 12.                            | I get along well with the other students in the 21st CCLC program.     | 1.59                                   | 1.62       | 1.57        |
| 13.                            | I get along well with the other students in school.                    | 1.56                                   | 1.60       | 1.52        |
| 14.                            | I like the activities in the 21st CCLC program.                        | 1.59                                   | 1.60       | 1.54        |
| 15.                            | I like how we learn things in the 21st CCLC program.                   | 1.55                                   | 1.54       | 1.45        |
| 16.                            | The adults in the 21st CCLC program care about me.                     | 1.75                                   | 1.74       | 1.70        |
| 17.                            | I have a safe way to get home from the 21st CCLC program.              | 1.85                                   | 1.85       | 1.86        |
| 18.                            | I would like to go to college some day.                                | 1.85                                   | 1.82       | 1.83        |
| 19.                            | I am involved in community service or other activities to help others. | 1.10                                   | 1.24       | 1.11        |
| 20.                            | There are ways I can make my community a better place.                 | 1.60                                   | 1.66       | 1.60        |
| Overall Average                |  | 1.58                                   | 1.60       | 1.57        |

0=No, 1=Sometimes, 2=Yes



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Programs with student ratings below 1.50 (the indicator of quality) were required to write action plans to address program improvement.

*Middle/High School Student Survey Outcomes.* Surveys are collected from students in middle or high school who have attended 30 days or more during the school year. Statewide, there were 1,618 eligible sixth grade and older students. There were a total of 1,097 middle/high school student surveys collected, yielding an average return rate of 68%. The targeted return rate for student surveys was 90%. Grantees not meeting the 90% return rate were required to develop an action plan to meet this requirement.

In a similar pattern as was observed in the Elementary Student Survey outcomes, middle and high school student results were mixed. Additional information to identify why the results are different and particularly why the group with greater rates of participation reported lower quality ratings on items related to relationships with others and one additional item on liking the activities in the program.

Programs with student ratings below 1.50 (the indicator of quality) were required to write action plans to address program improvement.

## Partner Ratings of Collaboration

*Collaboration Survey Outcomes.* Collaboration surveys were used to measure the quality of collaboration between the program representatives, school teachers and administrators, and community partners. Grantees were required to survey school staff (predominantly school administrators and teachers) and community partners to measure ratings of collaboration. Return rates are difficult to calculate, given the widely varying school sizes and community contexts.

Statewide, a total of 2,768 collaboration surveys were collected. On average, each grantee collected 67 collaboration surveys—55 school partner surveys and 12 community partner surveys. It is difficult to calculate a return rate for school and community partners. To estimate a calculation, one would need to consider the number of staff in each school building in which a 21st CCLC site is operating (school partners). To estimate for community partners, one would need to consider at least those who serve on the management team, share planning, serve as a subcontractor (such as a local evaluator, community agency, etc.), or provide some level of programming for students. Surveys were set up on a 5-point Likert Scale with “5”





## Collaboration Survey Data

| Items |   | 21st CCLC Statewide |                    |
|-------|---|---------------------|--------------------|
|       |   | School Partners     | Community Partners |
|       | Number  | 2261                | 507                |
| 1     | The 21st CCLC program provides an afterschool program that strengthens student academic achievement.  | 4.40                | 4.61               |
| 2     | The 21st CCLC program provides support for student social and behavioral development.   | 4.16                | 4.68               |
| 3     | The 21st CCLC program helps to engage families and the community.   | 4.04                | 4.30               |
| 4a    | The 21st CCLC program appropriately uses classroom spaces, gym or cafeteria spaces, media center, computer labs, and outdoor space.   | 4.22                | NA                 |
| 4b    | The 21st CCLC program has sufficient resources to support students and families (physical space, materials, adequate budget, and at least are working toward a sustainability plan).                        | NA                  | 4.15               |
| 5a    | I work with the 21st CCLC staff to connect programming to content offered during the school day (e.g., connects to standards, offers extension of an activity or concept taught earlier in the day, etc.).  | 3.39                | NA                 |
| 5b    | We work together to connect afterschool programming to content offered during the school day, yet make sure the learning is offered differently in afterschool (hands-on more than paper and pencil tasks). | NA                  | 4.52               |
| 6a    | I view the 21st CCLC as a part of our school, not a program offered by an outside agency or staff.  | 4.16                | NA                 |
| 6b    | I view the 21st CCLC as a collaborative effort of the school, the program, and our agency. We have regular meetings to share planning and to review outcomes.   | NA                  | 4.17               |
| 7     | Communication with the 21st CCLC program staff is effective. I know when the program is being offered, who is attending, what's occurring, and am notified when there are changes.                          | 3.80                | 4.33               |
| 8     | School staff and 21st CCLC program staff systematically share information to support student homework completion.   | 3.65                | 4.11               |
| 9     | We regularly share staff development offerings or training opportunities.   | 3.26                | 3.60               |
|       | Overall Average   | 3.87                | 4.28               |

1= strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree



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being strongly agree and “1” being strongly disagree.

Generally, ratings were greater from community partners (4.28) than from school partners (3.87). Both school and community partners provided very positive ratings of the program addressing student academic achievement, supporting social/behavioral skills, and supporting family engagement (the overarching goals of the Nebraska 21st CCLC program). All community partner ratings and most school partner ratings were above the indicator of quality rating—3.50 or greater. Areas which were identified as being below the indicator of quality by school partners included:

- I work with the 21st CCLC staff to connect programming to content offered during the school day (e.g., connects to standards, offers extension of an activity or concept taught earlier in the day)
- We regularly share staff development offerings or training opportunities

Statewide, additional technical assistance will be provided to address these areas and the state is developing an action plan.

Programs with ratings below 3.50 on any item were required to develop action plans to address continuous program improvement.

## Summary and Recommendations

### Benefits for All Students

Ratings indicate that Nebraska’s 21st Century Learning Centers are of high quality across all domains and overall. In fact, most scores have increased since last year. This means that the 8,061 students enrolled in these programs participated in programming that exhibits the type of holistic approach to afterschool education that positions students for improved academic success.

Success stories shared with us by programs indicate that students who participate benefit from having the support of teachers, parents, counselors and program staff who work together to identify solutions for the unique challenges impacting each child. One story that stood out came to us from a mother who explained that her bright son was struggling after her divorce, but that the program worked diligently to find his strengths and work with him to develop them. She ended her letter by explaining that his story is actually quite common and explains how beneficial it is to have a program available to provide support for many children in need.



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## Patterns Over Time

Across all data sources (teacher and parent surveys, some items from student surveys), increased participation resulted in higher scores suggesting that programs provided benefits that improved over time. This makes a case for families helping their children and youth to consistently utilize these programs in order to reap the greatest benefits.

There were a few areas that decreased over time and are worth further exploration. One item of note was from the student survey prompt: “I talk to my family about my homework or what I’m learning in school.” Perhaps the low rating indicates that the students engaged in these programs complete their schoolwork during program hours and spend less time discussing it at home. However, the importance of families maintaining a connection to their children’s school and school work, regardless of where the homework is completed, is well documented in the research literature. Additional items that decreased with increased participation are relational items around student comfort with peers at school and in the program, as well as feeling that adults in school and in the program care about them. This pattern has continued since last year and is deserving of additional exploration to

determine what the root cause or associative factors might be.

## Future Directions and Continuous Improvement

There are particular areas of interest worth exploring in the future. For example, the highest rated items tended to be more organizational (such as staff-student ratios, policies/procedures, materials available for use) and the lowest rated items tended to focus on curricular areas (e.g. science and math activities, activity choices) or family engagement in program development. Exploration would also be worthwhile to determine why participation declines by grade level. There are opportunities for programs to reach for continuous improvement in adopting a more comprehensive or choice-based curriculum while standing firmly on a foundation of quality organizational and administration practices. Continuous improvement should also focus on strengthening partnerships with family and community members.

It is recommended that the NDE 21st CCLC management team continues to refine their system of intervention for programs not continuing to meet the indicators of quality over an extended period of time.



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# Appendix 1: Success Stories submitted by Grantees

*Names have been changed to pseudonyms*

## #1 Elementary Success Story

Guillermo is a Hispanic 4th grade boy who began attending the 21st Century Afterschool Program last year. When he started he had trouble completing his homework, never wanted to work on it during homework time at the program, and would not ask for help. His teacher made him stay after school often because of unfinished work. His school work was not a high priority for him. In addition, he was disrespectful to afterschool staff and other students. The staff found him challenging because he lacked social skills, caused disruptions, often teased and belittled other students. Guillermo did not have many friends at the program.

Guillermo attended the program every day. This gave the afterschool program staff the opportunity to work closely with him and in small groups. Making homework fun was one of the first challenges. A successful strategy the staff used was to reward Guillermo with extra recess time, playing a game of his choice, or letting him have a special treat

when his behavior was appropriate as well as when he was able to complete his homework. Gradually he gained respect for the staff and he began to trust them. He started talking more with staff and caused fewer disruptions at the program. The afterschool program staff watched Guillermo interact with his peers and would remove him from an activity if he teased or belittled someone. Staff talked one-on-one with Guillermo helping him realize that he was hurting other students' feelings. Guillermo started showing great improvement by the end of the school year.

This year Guillermo does not have to stay after school because he completes his homework at the afterschool program. In fact, he will even ask for extra time to work on it if he is not finished and is not afraid to ask questions. Guillermo is now very respectful to all teachers and adults. When he enters the afterschool program he says hello to staff by name and always has a smile on his face. He is very helpful not only to adults, but to other children as well, correcting math papers for second



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graders and answering other homework questions. His social skills have greatly improved and he has many friends at the program. He is no longer disruptive and younger students look up to him. We enjoy having Guillermo in the afterschool program.

## #2 Middle School Success Story

*(Written by a parent)*

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to tell you how grateful I have been for the past three years of my son's involvement in the afterschool program. To fully understand my gratitude, you need to know my story and my son.

Three years ago I divorced my son's alcoholic father. This left me as sole provider with little family support. Unfortunately, like many boys of his age and circumstance, my bright son was acting out. He became the class clown and was popular with other students but not with teachers. His grades went down and his behavior reports and frequent calls from teachers left me frustrated. Then came middle school... What is a working mom with limited resources to do for after school during the few 'latch key' hours? Too old for daycare and babysitters, too long of a waiting list for the Big Brother program, and no local

family left me with some difficult choices. I know it is not the schools responsibility to raise my children – believe me I know all too well that job lies with me, but when I heard about the 21st CCLC program, I knew this was the answer I needed.

So for three years now my son has been staying after school and taking the late bus home. He is involved with sports, gets a full snack or meal, goes to computer lab, gym, extra help with various subjects, has homework time, and most important to him, an expansion of his social skills. His after school hours are filled with purposeful activities. His once mediocre academic record has changed to an honor roll status and the one poor behavior reports have converted to one of positive comments.

The staff have been of great support to my son. They are a wonderful team and truly have made a difference in our lives. They have kept his behavior in line and call me when necessary. Over the past few years these calls have lessened as his behavior improved. My son once had little respect for authority but now knows his limits and has developed a trust with them.

So, I want to thank you for the past three years of this program and encourage you





to do whatever is necessary to continue the support and funding necessary. I am telling you my son's story not because I think it is a special one, but unfortunately, it is an all too common one. For every parent who takes the time to write and thank you for the difference this program has made, you and I know there are many more who benefit.

The middle school years are delicate ones and often become the turning point in our children's lives. A program like this one makes a positive impact and can permanently impact the direction children take as they enter the high school years. So thank you for the impact it has made on my son. I brag to my family back east about the program and have siblings who wish their children had similar opportunities. At work I talk to co-workers who have children enrolled in private schools and cannot believe that such a program is offered by the public school system. The program's wonderful reputation is spreading.

Sincerely,  
Parent

P.S. My son has several friends with similar circumstances, I listen to their conversations when they visit or ride in the car, they all love the program and benefit from it one way or another. One of

them spends a lot of time at my home and calls me his third Mom. I asked why not 2nd after his Mom and he said, nope that spot is reserved for the afterschool program leader.

### #3 High School Success Story

Born in New Orleans, Louisiana, a product of a single-family home and a displaced survivor of the Hurricane Katrina disaster in Louisiana, Charles entered high school in 2007 as a sophomore.

Charles and his parent decided to set into motion the process to complete and pass subjects he had failed during his sophomore year in Louisiana. They knew that by working hard, and getting the help and support needed would be his keys to success. Charles decided to join the afterschool program (a program designed to help, mentor and support students facing academic challenges).

Despite the support of this program, Charles experienced a few challenges when he decided to join the varsity football team. His grades again began to decline due to lazy habits and more time and energy given to sports activities.

However, under the mentoring of staff and the patience and push from the team, Charles was able to establish better study



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habits as well as time management skills. The team spent snack and class times as well as weekends to keep Charles on track. A staff member was in constant contact with his parent (mother) regarding Charles' progress and issues Charles had with paying attention and staying focused. Charles' guidance counselor also monitored grades weekly to assure everyone was on track.

With this outstanding support, Charles began to excel academically, socially and personally while in the program. He also earned three credits and is prepared to walk in the graduation ceremony this year. His family and the team are very proud of Charles. He and his family are particularly grateful to the staff for their dedication to success of each and every student.



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