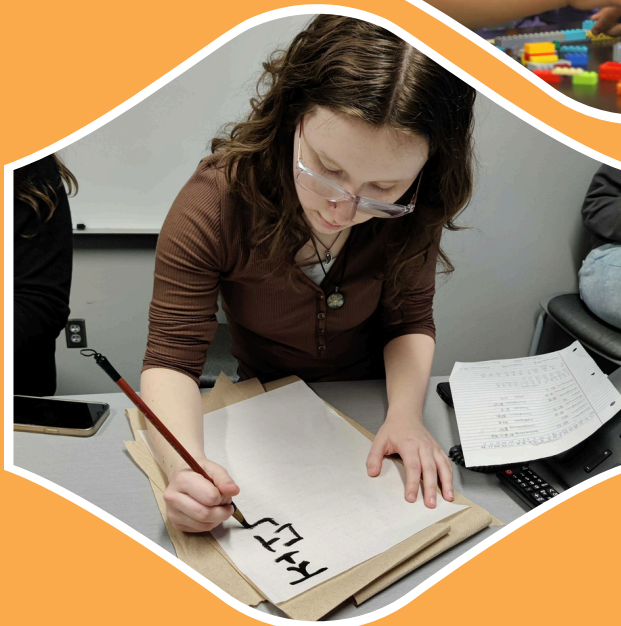




ANNUAL REPORT

Nebraska 21st Century
Community Learning Centers

2022-2023

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The contents of this Annual Evaluation Report are available online at
<http://www.education.ne.gov/21stccclc/ProgramEvaluation>

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All photos of students and staff featured in this publication were taken during Nebraska 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) programs or professional development events. Students pictured attend Nebraska 21st CCLC programs located in Auburn, Broken Bow, Cedar Bluffs, Chadron, Crawford, Crete, Fremont, Kearney, Kimball, Lexington, Lincoln, Lyons-Decatur, Nebraska City, Norfolk, North Platte, O'Neill, Ogallala, Omaha, O'Neill, Oshkosh, Schuyler, Scottsbluff, Walthill, Wood River, and York.

OVERVIEW OF 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 schools with high needs. The 21st CCLC initiative was authorized under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended, which moved the administration of the 21st CCLC program to state departments of education. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) administers these grants to offer students a broad array of services, programs, and activities aligned to the school day that occur during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session such as afterschool, out-of-school days (full days during the school year when school is not in session), or summer.

The 21st CCLC programs are required to establish and maintain a partnership with at least one community-based organization or other public or private entity. Programs are also required to identify a site-level management team

that includes the building principal, project director, site supervisor, and others identified by the site. These teams conduct regular meetings and are responsible for shared decision-making, reviewing evaluation data and developing action plans for continuous improvement.

Nebraska's 21st CCLCs create an afterschool environment focused on three overarching goals:



Improving overall student academic success



increasing positive behavior and social interactions



increasing active & meaningful family and community engagement

"Mis niños se han vuelto más comunicativos y les gusta participar en otras actividades, les gusta estar en CLC, están muy contentas y yo también."

— Parent of a 21st CCLC Student

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 Multilingual Learners, technology education programs, programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy, drug and violence prevention programs, and counseling programs, among other services. The programming offered in a 21st CCLC should be aligned to the school day and in collaboration with other federal and state initiatives.

21st CCLC project directors were instrumental in the development of a document that identifies the intersection between NDE's six tenets of AQuESTT, Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow, and the Nebraska 21st CCLC program. This document articulates the many initiatives and activities that support Student Success and Access and Teaching and Learning, the two domains of AQuESTT—a comprehensive system that is designed to ensure the success of all Nebraska students (see Appendix). This resource allows 21st CCLC project directors to effectively engage in conversations at the school and district level related to continuous school improvement and provides them with specific examples of afterschool program activities that align to program, school, and district improvement goals. Examples of afterschool program indicators that support AQuESTT include diverse, prepared program staff, a system that supports students' transitions from grade to grade and across levels, engagement of families and the community in schools and programs, additional learning time, college and career readiness activities, ongoing data collection and analysis, and ongoing professional development for program leaders and staff.

Beginning in 2003-2004, NDE has conducted an annual grant competition to award five-year 21st CCLC federal grants for out-of-school time programming. These 21st CCLC grant

In 2022-2023, grant awards totaled **\$6.8 MILLION** to benefit students in 142 sites in 38 Nebraska communities.

dollars are leveraged with other federal, state, and partner/local fiscal support to operate quality afterschool and summer programs.

Typically there are two types of competitive grants available (first-time grants and continuation grants). First-time grants were 100% grant-funded in years one through three, 80% in year four, and 60% in year five. Continuation grants (calculated at a daily rate that is 50% of the amount of the grantee's first-time grant) were awarded to quality 21st CCLC programs with level funding for a five-year grant period, and were available only to school buildings, which have successfully implemented 21st CCLC programming for five years. All data in this report were derived from these grantees. With the continued uncertainties and challenges as the pandemic continued and the difficulties to begin new programs under these circumstances, the state-level management team determined that the February 1, 2023 competition would be available only to eligible Continuation Grant applicants.

Grantees began reporting partner/local fiscal support in 2013-2014. Reports include the amount expended and/or the value of volunteer time and/or donated/discounted goods or services for the school year and, where applicable, summer program. Funding sources include other federal or state funding, community-based or faith-based organization support, parent fees, as well as other sources of funding. Although Nebraska grantees have many commonalities, it is apparent in the collection of this data from over 140 sites that there are also many differences, which makes it difficult to compare data.

For example, resources to operate a small rural elementary site may be quite different from those needed in a large urban middle school site. Some sites offer summer programming, but others



"It provides a safe place for students to be after school. The staff is always trying new programs to enhance the students' learning."

- Community Partner

do not. Some sites serve more than 300 students daily, while others average less than 40. Some sites were provided a wide range of unique partner/community supports, which are difficult to combine for statewide analysis. In addition, many components of a program were difficult to quantify, which resulted in too many variables to yield reliable conclusions. The state-level management team continues to review national data as well as methodologies used by other states in their quest to determine the average cost per student attending a Nebraska 21st CCLC program.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

21st CCLC project directors work with school building principals, local business and community leaders, and representatives of statewide organizations to identify partners whose goals align to those of the program. Mutually beneficial relationships are then established resulting in a wide variety of interesting and unique learning experiences for children and youth.

Partners supporting the work of a Nebraska 21st CCLC program include many of those identified as Partner Spotlight Organizations who offer support statewide. In addition, local partners are essential to program success, including local libraries, organizations committed to the health and well-being of members of the community, arts organizations, the local community college, or groups committed to preserving and ensuring an appreciation of the environment.

Examples of program support provided by partners include:

Content experts plan and lead clubs focused on their areas of expertise

Curriculum development

Preparation for a successful college experience

Exploration of potential careers

Staff professional development

Donation of specialty materials for implementation of a club or activity

Civic engagement and service-learning opportunities

Partnerships between 21st CCLC programs and postsecondary institutions across the state are mutually beneficial for both K-12 students and students participating in college coursework. Among the many benefits of these partnerships is the

experience it provides future teachers who gain valuable teaching experience in afterschool programs while receiving support and college credit. These mutually beneficial partnerships exist across the state, making postsecondary institutions valuable partners in the design and implementation of many quality 21st CCLC programs.

Examples of potential benefits for children and youth attending 21st CCLC programs include:

Relationships with college students who serve as mentors and role models

Opportunity to learn about the college experience and see college as an option for the future

Expanded learning opportunities for 21st CCLC attendees as college students share their interests and passions in the afterschool setting

Examples of potential benefits for college students include:

Opportunity for future teachers to gain real-world, practical experience while working with students in an educational setting

Leadership development

Serving as role models for children and youth in their communities

Opportunity for receiving valuable experience while meeting course requirements and earning college credit

21ST CCLC PARTNER SPOTLIGHT ORGANIZATIONS

In an effort to identify and grow partnerships between 21st CCLC programs and potential partners, the 21st CCLC Partner Spotlight initiative began in February 2017. The 21st CCLC Partner Spotlight is a feature that highlights the work of organizations committed to partnering with afterschool and summer programs across the state of Nebraska. Featured partners have demonstrated a commitment to working with program leaders and staff to identify ways to accomplish identified goals bringing

unique and engaging learning opportunities to students afterschool and in the summer.

One new Partner Spotlight organization was added during this reporting period: Future Kids, an organization committed to providing high-quality sports programs to children and youth in Nebraska. Detailed information about all 21st CCLC Partner Spotlight organizations is available at:

<https://www.education.ne.gov/21stcclc/partner-spotlight/>



21ST CCLC RURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The 21st CCLC Rural Advisory Committee was formed in August 2017 to discuss issues relevant to rural Nebraska programs and provide recommendations to the state-level management team. Committee members include representatives from six rural communities, large and small, including programs serving students across all grade-levels and located across all regions of the state. The group meets as needed to discuss topics such as updates to the evaluation and continuous improvement system, professional development needs, and program sustainability through partnering. There were no scheduled meetings during this reporting period.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing support for program leaders led by the state-level management team included:

- Monthly Update Newsletter that includes current and upcoming deadlines as well as professional development resources and opportunities
- Virtual grant management monthly technical assistance meetings
- Monthly online meetings for new directors in both new and established programs
- Targeted support for programs with specific needs, including virtual and in-person visits
- Required grant management and evaluation summer regional meetings
- My21stCCLC, a secure website for program directors that includes content focused on Evaluation, Grant Management, Partnerships, and Program Support
- 21st CCLC public website

In the fall of 2022, 21st CCLC Project Directors reported their anticipated professional development plans for the 2022-2023 school year by designating local, regional, statewide, and national offerings. This information was reported



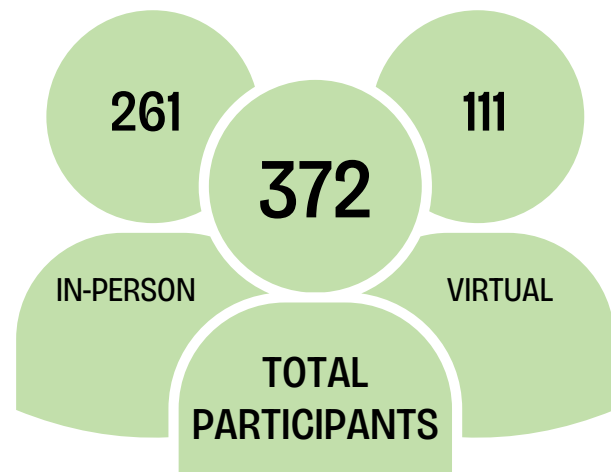
as part of the annual CIP Meeting Summary Report and allowed program leaders to describe offerings for the program leadership, staff, and training aligned to the program's CIP annual improvement goal. This process of articulating local professional development plans allowed program leaders and staff to determine their own learning needs, identify available resources, and allowed the state-level management team to support programs by providing webinars, in-person training, and online resources aligned to those identified needs.

Support was also provided to 21st CCLC programs in their efforts to align activities to NDE initiatives such as the Nebraska State Board of Education Position Statement on Quality Expanded Learning Opportunities, adopted October 8, 2017.

STAY CONNECTED

In an effort to provide ongoing learning opportunities between annual conferences, the StayConnected webinar series began in February 2020. These 30-minute webinars are led by afterschool leaders and community partners, providing information relevant to afterschool program leaders and staff. Twenty webinars were offered during this reporting period. Examples of topics included student and family engagement; grant opportunities; behavior management; You for Youth; STEM; curriculum ideas for engineering, agriculture, physical fitness, and college and career readiness; and upcoming afterschool PD opportunities. All webinars were recorded and are available on the StayConnected website:

<https://www.education.ne.gov/21stcclc/stayconnected/>



Conference sessions focused on five themes: emotional health and wellness, entrepreneurship, environmental education, inclusion, and innovative programming. Conference highlights included:

- Longevity Awards presented to afterschool program leaders and staff
- Hands-on workshops providing materials attendees could take back to their programs
- 23 Walk 'N Talk Display Tables hosted by statewide community organizations.

GETCONNECTED NEBRASKA AFTERSCHOOL CONFERENCE

The annual Nebraska GetConnected Afterschool Conference was held on September 16, 2022, at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Convention Center in Kearney, with 372 individuals in attendance (261 in-person and 111 virtual).





Conference Partners included Nebraska 21st CCLC, Beyond School Bells, Click2SciencePD, Nebraska Extension, and the Nebraska Department of Education. The conference was planned and implemented as a result of the ongoing collaboration of these organizations. Detailed information about the conference including recordings of selected sessions are available on the 21st CCLC website.

<https://www.education.ne.gov/21stcclc/nebraska-afterschool-conference/>



PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL INITIATIVES

Harvard Kernels: In 2019 the Nebraska 21st CCLC program received \$49,000 in Title IV, Part A ESSA Statewide funds to participate in a statewide pilot research project with the Harvard Graduate School of Education EASEL Lab. These funds supported the professional development, training and materials to implement Harvard Kernels, which

are evidence-based strategies for positive behavior, in participating urban and rural 21st CCLC afterschool and summer programs for students in grades K-8. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and protocols that affected implementation, the Nebraska 21st CCLC program received a one-year no-cost extension to implement the pilot through August 2021. In February 2021, \$150,000 was provided through Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds to continue the pilot through August 31, 2023.

ESSER Collaborative ELO Grants: The Nebraska 21st CCLC program was assigned grant management and fiscal responsibilities to support NDE and their contractor, Nebraska Children & Families Foundation, in the GMS administration of nearly \$11 million in American Rescue Plan (ARP) supplemental funding intended to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic through afterschool and summer programming. These two-year grants were titled ESSER Collaborative ELO grants and had a grant period of 05/01/2022-09/30/2024. NDE identified selected school districts to expand or enhance current afterschool and summer programs funded by 21st CCLC, referred to as “Accelerator” sites. Another cohort referred to as “Incubator” sites were identified to use the funds to create first-time afterschool and summer programs.

21ST CCLC PROGRAMMING

The typical 21st CCLC afterschool schedule offers an intentionally planned program aligned to the three overarching Nebraska 21st CCLC goals:

1

IMPROVE OVERALL STUDENT
ACADEMIC SUCCESS

2

INCREASE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR AND
SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

3

INCREASE ACTIVE AND MEANINGFUL
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

Program schedules include time for academic support including optional homework help, a healthy meal or snack, time for physical activity, and enriching, hands-on clubs and activities.

HOMEWORK AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The majority of Nebraska 21st CCLC programs offered time for homework assistance and/or other activities that address the identified academic needs of students. These planned times and activities were provided daily and were formed for students as a result of consistent, ongoing communication and collaboration between afterschool staff and classroom teachers.



HEALTHY MEAL OR SNACK

Each 21st CCLC site participated in applicable USDA nutrition programs in order to provide students with a healthy meal or snack each day. Students were sometimes involved in planning, growing, and preparing these meals/snacks as part of their regular afterschool and summer learning activities. Afterschool partners such as NDE Farm to School and the Whole Child Initiative, as well as Nebraska Appleseed, provided ongoing support.



ENRICHMENT AND CLUBS

The heart of the 21st CCLC program is the time provided for students to engage in hands-on enrichment activities, allowing them opportunities to discover and explore topics of interest. These clubs and activities provided students with additional time to learn about topics that are not typically taught during the school day, or allow for more in-depth exploration and application of skills learned during the school day. Examples of clubs/enrichment activities offered in Nebraska 21st CCLC programs included:

☐ ART/MUSIC

☐ COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS

☐ COOKING

☐ DANCE

☐ EXPLORATION OF STEM
(INTEGRATED SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND
MATHEMATICS) TOPICS

☐ FITNESS

☐ LITERACY

☐ NUTRITION/WELLNESS

☐ OUTDOOR EDUCATION

☐ SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS

☐ TECHNOLOGY

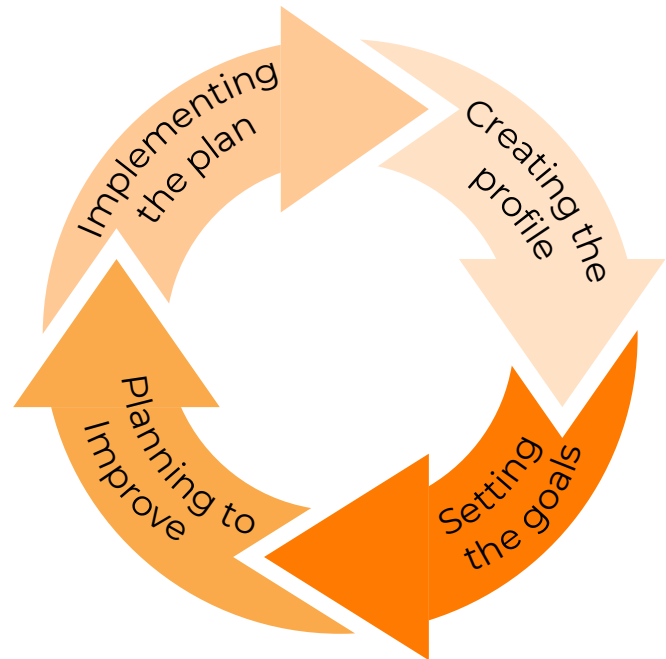
EVALUATION PLAN AND ACTIVITIES



The evaluation plan for 2022-2023 was based upon a continuous improvement model as 21st CCLC sites used data to set goals, develop action plans, implement those plans, and evaluate progress towards goals. Sites utilized data from the self-assessment, teacher surveys, parent surveys, student surveys, afterschool staff surveys, and community partner surveys. In addition, data were collected on student attendance and student demographics, including free/reduced lunch rate, Multilingual Learner status, and special education status.

As part of the continuous improvement model, all sites were required to hold Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) meetings in the fall semester of 2022. Attendance at those meetings was required for the building principal, site director, and other members of the management team, including the external facilitator (if contracted by the site). At the CIP meeting, sites reviewed data from 2021-2022 and developed their action plans for the 2022-2023 school year. Action plans were submitted to the state-level management team for review.

For 21st CCLC programs, external facilitators help facilitate the continuous improvement process. External facilitators led the teams through the self-assessment process, participated in management team meetings, provided guidance for the evaluation process, and facilitated the continuous improvement meeting. While recommended for all



grantees, external facilitators are required only for first-year programs.

Teacher surveys were collected for two purposes: 1) to fulfill the requirements for federal reporting; 2) to provide feedback to the programs on the progress of students enrolled within the 21st CCLCs. Surveys were administered in the spring of 2023 to teachers for all students who had attended the program at least 10 hours.

Parent surveys were disseminated in the spring of 2023 to parents of students who attended at least 10 hours. While not federally required, parent surveys provide information on the quality of the program, as well as levels of parent engagement with the program and school system. Parent surveys were administered digitally or with paper copies. Multiple languages were available.



All K-12th grade students who attended at least 10 hours were given the opportunity to provide feedback via online surveys administered at their respective 21st CCLC sites. The versions for each age group varied in the number of items asked and some of the content. The surveys for grades 3rd-12th originated from Kings County Executives (2015) and have been normed and validated for the school-age afterschool population.

An afterschool workforce survey was administered during the 2022-2023 school year. The purpose of the workforce survey is to inform the management team on strengths and challenges, collect feedback on professional development offerings, and provide a statewide snapshot of the Nebraska afterschool workforce. The

workforce survey items ask about reasons for working in the field of afterschool, confidence in skills/abilities needed to work in the program, relationships with students, and professional development. Workforce members are encouraged to provide open-ended feedback on programs' strengths and areas that need improvement. The workforce survey is administered via Qualtrics, an online survey platform.

The community partner survey was administered to the partners identified by each 21st CCLC site. Survey items were designed to measure strength of community partner relationships, capacity of each partner to provide supports, relationships with students and families, strengths of the programs, and possible improvements that could be made.

NEBRASKA AFTERSCHOOL QUALITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (NAQCIS)

The Nebraska Afterschool Quality and Continuous Improvement System (NAQCIS) Self-Assessment (Johnson, et al., 2019) was completed by 142 sites in the fall of 2022. NAQCIS is purposely aligned with quality framework indicators adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education and includes a self-assessment, external observation tool with a corresponding feedback form, and a monitoring form.

In addition to completing an annual self-assessment, each 21st CCLC site has two external observations and one monitoring visit within the five-year



grant period. External observations are conducted by the external evaluation team from UNMC in years 2 and 4 of the grant period. Feedback is provided to sites within 2 weeks of the observation. The monitoring visit occurs during year 3 of the grant period and is conducted by NDE personnel.

EVALUATION OUTCOMES

For this reporting period, outcomes are reported for quality (both external observations and self-assessment), teachers, parent, and student feedback, afterschool staff feedback, community partner feedback, and demographics of those served by the program.

Rationale: Quality matters in afterschool programs for student safety, social-emotional development, academic growth, and engagement with programming. Quality practices are aligned with the 21st CCLC goals and the Nebraska State Board of Education quality framework.





Nebraska Afterschool Quality & Continuous Improvement System (NAQCIS)

	Self-Assessment (Fall)	Surveys (Spring)	Federal APR (Each Term)	External Observation (Year 2, Year 4)	Monitoring Visit (Year 3)
Administration with sound management and well-developed systems					
College/career awareness and readiness					
Community-school partnerships and resource sharing					
Diverse, prepared staff including certificated educators					
Engaged learning					
Family engagement					
Intentional programming aligned with the school day program					
Ongoing assessment and improvement					
Participation, access and support during transitions					
Safety, health and wellness					



STUDENT OUTCOMES

Student outcomes are based on afterschool program attendance, school day attendance, and survey results from students, teachers, and parents.

Rationale: Many student outcomes, including school day attendance, engagement with the school and peers,

and academic achievement have a positive relationship with attending afterschool programming (Afterschool Alliance, 2024; U.S. Department of Education, 2023; Vandell et al., 2020). When parents are engaged in their student's education, increased school success and student outcomes, as well as improved attendance, result (Barger et al., 2019; Reschly & Christensen, 2019; The Aspen Institute, 2018).

Attendance: Regular school day attendance is critical for school achievement. National research on students who attended 21st CCLCs on a regular basis found that they had improved math and reading grades, homework completion, class participation, and behavior in class (Afterschool Alliance, 2019, 2024; U.S. Department of Education, 2023).

Belonging: Research on student belonging at school indicates increased positive outcomes for health, well-being, mental health, and academics when compared to students who feel less of a sense of belonging with school (Parchia, 2021; Ryan et al., 2019).

Social-Emotional Well-Being: Social and emotional well-being includes feeling accepted, having friends, persevering through difficult tasks, self-regulation, and having appropriate peer and adult interactions.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parent engagement outcomes are derived from parent and teacher surveys and program highlights.

Rationale: When parents are engaged in their student's education, increased school success and student outcomes, as well as improved attendance, result (Barger et al., 2019; Reschly & Christensen, 2019; The Aspen Institute, 2018). 21st CCLC sites make parent engagement a priority component of their programming. **Parent surveys were completed by over 6800 parents in spring of 2023.** Parents recognized the quality of the programs and the relationships between program staff and students. Parents appreciated students' access to afterschool supervision and academic enrichment. Overall, the sites were rated positively and seen as important resources in their communities.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Community partnership outcomes are based on community partner surveys, self-assessment data and program highlights.

Rationale: Community partnerships enhance programs in a number of ways: providing programming, resources, training and/or time, and financially supporting the program. Finding and maintaining community partners is essential to program success and sustainability.

Partner Surveys: Despite the pandemic restrictions and limitations on community partners' participation in programs during the 2022-2023 school year, **460 community partner surveys were completed.** The survey responses indicated strong commitment to programs and a belief that partnering with 21st CLCC programs was mutually beneficial.



"Students are excited for after school programming and the variety of clubs that are provided. They have good adult relationships with the program and the providers. Students are engaged with programming and eager to learn. I think that they have built a program environment amongst the participants where they feel safe and confident in their abilities and to be themselves."

~ Community Partner

WHO ATTENDED NEBRASKA 21ST CCLCS?



DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDENTS ATTENDING 21ST CCLC PROGRAMS

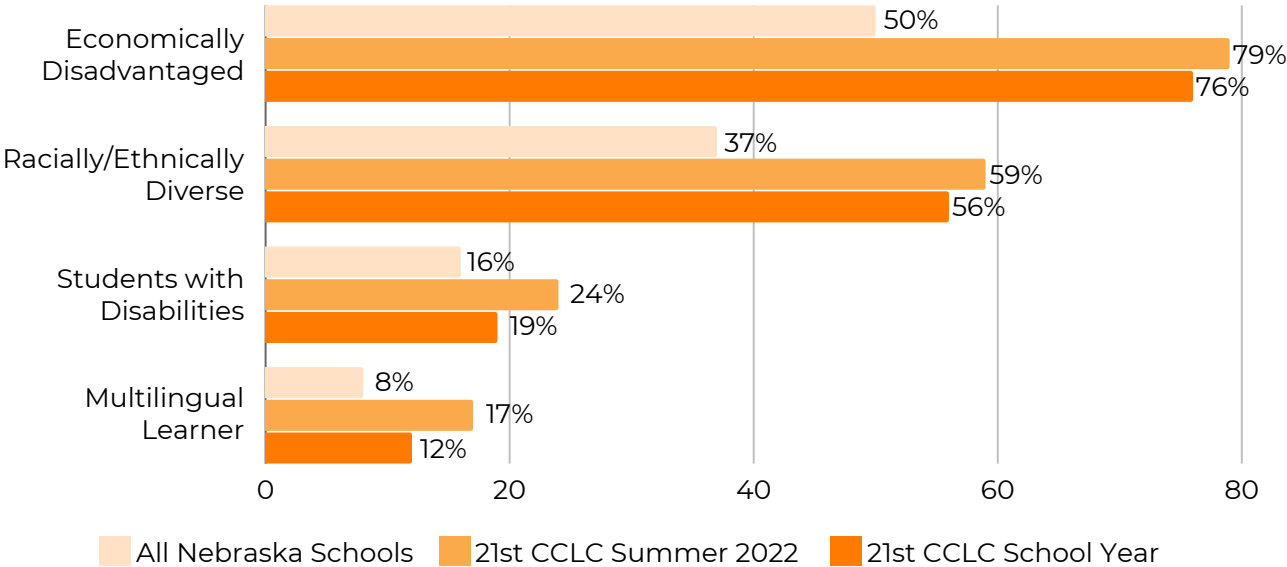
To ensure 21st CCLC programs serve high-need students who otherwise may not have access to the quality programming provided, the demographics of afterschool students are required to reflect the school day demographics at each site (within a margin of 5%). Factors include free/reduced lunch participation, race/ethnicity percentages, Multilingual Learner status, and students with disabilities. All student demographic and statewide assessment data were obtained and imported directly from the Nebraska Department of Education



based on district reporting. As shown below, programs in Nebraska served students with diverse needs at a rate higher than most statewide percentages, particularly economically disadvantaged students, Multilingual Learner students, and racially/ethnically diverse students.

NEBRASKA 21ST CCLC SERVED A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS RACIALLY OR ETHNICALLY DIVERSE

Inclusion was high for economically disadvantaged students



2022-2023 SCHOOL DAY ATTENDANCE	Attended	Absent	Total
All Nebraska Students	155.25	15.05	170.30
All Nebraska 40% FRL	153.81	17.35	171.16
Statewide 21st CCLC School Year Attenders	155.36	12.04	167.41

Programs varied in demographics depending on whether they were urban or rural. In 2022-2023, 65 sites were considered urban, and 77 were rural. Urban programs had higher percentages of students that were racially/ethnically diverse (65% vs. 45%)

and participating in the free/reduced lunch program (81% vs. 70%). Urban programs served more students designated as Multilingual Learners (13% vs 11%), while rural programs served more students verified for special education (20% vs 18%).



The Nebraska Department of Education has stressed the importance of decreasing the rates of chronic absenteeism. To this extent, the state-level management team examined attendance rates for 21st CCLC students who were regular attendees. The results of that analysis indicated that 21st CCLC attendees missed fewer school days on average when compared to ALL Nebraska students and Nebraska students attending schools with 40% or greater free/reduced lunch percentage. All 21st CCLC sites are required to have at least a 40% free/reduced lunch rate, so the comparison to those students is most comparable. There were some differences depending on type of program attended. Students in urban settings (Omaha and Lincoln) were absent more days (M=14.01 days) than students attending rural programs (M=9.77 days).

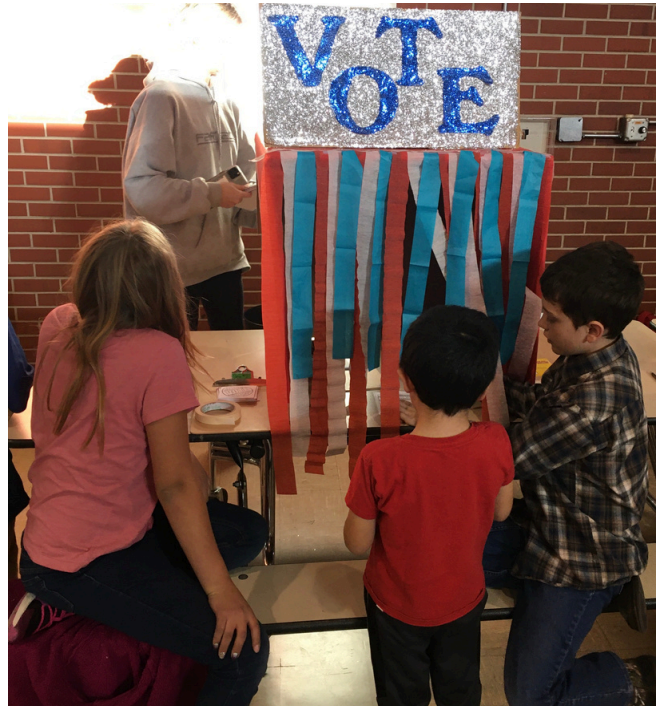
PROGRAM QUALITY



Program quality was assessed through two components of the NAQCIS system, the self-assessment, and an external observation. All sites were required to complete the self-assessment in the fall of 2022. Sites in years 2 and 4 of their grant periods were required to have an on-site, external observation completed by the UNMC evaluation team during the 2022-2023 school year.

The **NAQCIS Self-Assessment** (Johnson, et al., 2019) was completed by the site-level management team with team members reaching consensus on the items and agreeing to a rating. Ratings are based on a rubric and help sites to determine if items should be scored as emerging, emerging plus, maturing, maturing plus, or excelling. Teams rated their programs on the following components: 1) Administration with sound management and well-developed systems, 2) Diverse, prepared staff including certificated teachers, 3) Relationships and interactions, 4) Professional development, 5) Intentional programming aligned with school day and engaged learning, 6) Behavior management, 7) Family engagement, 8) Community-School partnerships and resource sharing, 9) Ongoing assessment and improvement, and 10) Safety, health, and wellness.

The **NAQCIS Site Observation** (Johnson, et al., 2019) was completed by an external evaluation team member(s) and provided feedback on the overall program as well as detailed feedback



on two specific clubs/activities selected by the site. The same rating system as the self-assessment was used for the observations, with items scoring as emerging, emerging plus, maturing, maturing plus, or excelling. Observations were completed in person by UNMC evaluators. After the observation, feedback was provided to the site director and management team within 2 weeks of the observation.

NAQCIS SELF-ASSESSMENT

The NAQCIS Self-Assessment was designed to be completed by a management team with knowledge and understanding of the goals and daily operations of the program. Members of the team have different roles and may bring different perspectives based on those roles. To complete the self-assessment, members of the management team observed the program within two weeks of the meeting, considered evidence to support their ratings, and came to a consensus on the status of their program across the multiple categories. The Nebraska Afterschool Quality and Continuous Improvement System Self-Assessment is an annual tool designed to assess the program's own evaluation of its performance on domains deemed necessary for a high-quality afterschool program. Individual items in each domain were rated by the program as emerging (1), emerging plus (2), maturing (3), maturing plus (4), or excelling (5).

Sites rated most aspects of their program as demonstrating at least **MATURING** levels of quality.

99%

Sites scoring Maturing or higher for Safety, Health, and Wellness

87%

Sites scoring Maturing or higher for Family Engagement

Safety, Health and Wellness and Relationships and Interactions were noted as strengths statewide and were a highlight for many sites. Across all areas of the self-assessment, fewer than 5% of sites rated themselves in the “emerging” category, indicating the vast majority of programs implement practices beyond beginning levels. Family engagement and community partnerships were two domains most identified by sites as needing additional resources and/or efforts.



**2022-2023 Statewide Self-Assessment Results
(N=142)**

Domain	Emerging	Emerging Plus	Maturing	Maturing Plus	Excelling
Administration with Sound Management and Well-developed Systems	1%	1%	10%	18%	70%
Diverse, Prepared Staff including Certificated Educators	0%	2%	17%	40%	41%
Relationships and Interactions	0%	1%	17%	52%	31%
Professional Development	1%	4%	27%	43%	24%
Intentional Programming Aligned with School Day & Engaged Learning	0%	3%	23%	49%	25%
Behavior Management	0%	5%	29%	48%	18%
Family Engagement	3%	10%	41%	32%	13%
Community-School Partnerships and Resource Sharing	1%	8%	20%	35%	35%
Ongoing Assessment and Improvement	4%	8%	19%	32%	38%
Safety, Health, and Wellness	0%	1%	13%	27%	59%

NAQCIS EXTERNAL OBSERVATIONS

External observations were completed during the 2022-2023 school year on programs that were in either year 2 or 4 of their 5-year grant period. An observation included a pre-observation interview with the site director, collection of artifacts and materials to support the observation, including daily schedules, parent communication materials, and/or activity/lesson plans for the clubs/activities being observed. Program teams met with evaluators via phone call or Zoom session within 2 weeks to go over what was observed, the scores, and any recommendations for the program. It was also a time for the program team to ask questions or to provide additional information to the evaluation team member.



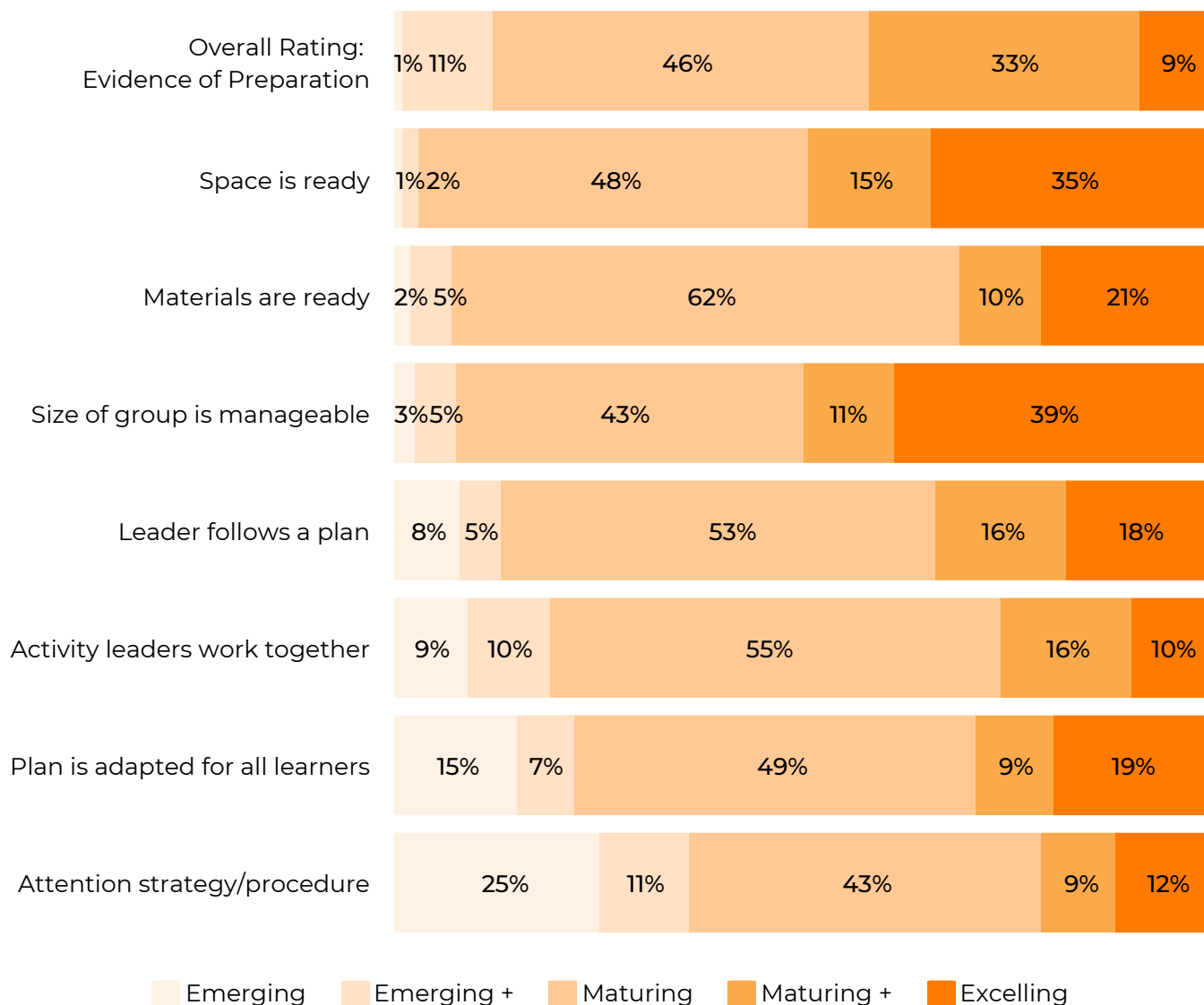
"This program started out being very beneficial to me when I was working and no one was available to watch him after school. Now that I am retired he enjoys the program so much that he normally chooses to stay in it."

~ Parent of a 21st CCLC Student

Activity and Club Observations: Sites selected activities/clubs for the evaluation team members to observe and provide feedback on preparation, student response, and instructional and engagement practices. Programs were asked to provide lesson plans for activities or clubs that were observed. It was not a requirement to select only exemplar clubs, as the purpose of evaluation is two-fold: 1) to provide information on overall quality and 2) to promote data utilization and continuous improvement. As a result, some activities were selected because they were new, in development, and/or needed suggestions for improvement.

Student engagement in activities continues to be a goal for 21st CCLC programs. Engaged students are more likely to continue attending the afterschool program and less likely to engage in disruptive and distracting behavior.

OBSERVATIONS FOUND THE MAJORITY OF ACTIVITIES WERE WELL-ORGANIZED WITH MATERIALS AND SPACES READY FOR STUDENT USE (N=121)

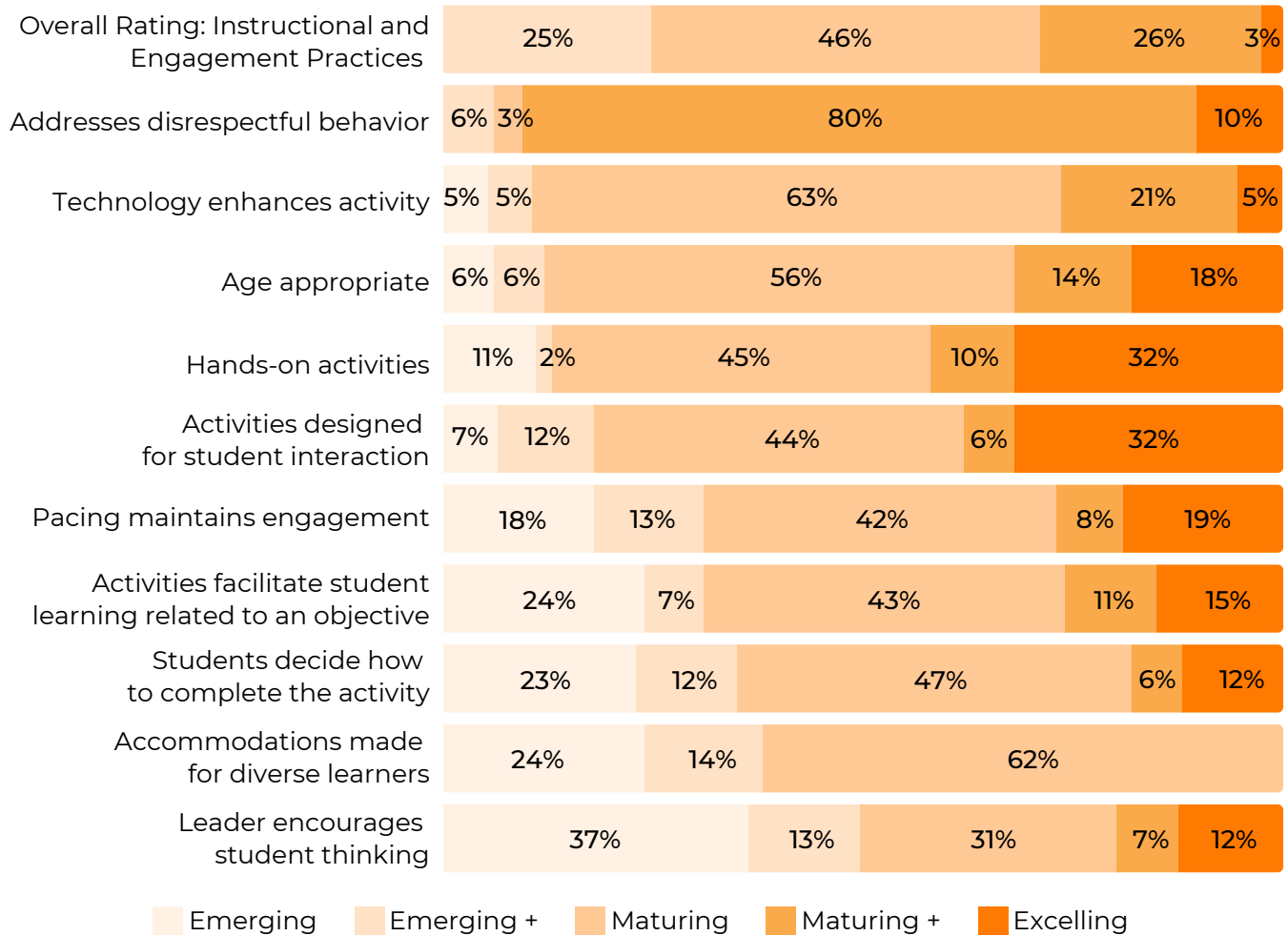


Data from activity observations (N=121) indicated activities had good planning and preparation prior to students attending with 88% of the activities attaining an overall rating of maturing or higher. Areas of strength included preparing activity spaces (98%) and materials (93%) ahead of time and

ensuring group sizes were manageable for the activity types and needs of participants (93%). Areas needing improvement included use of a consistent attention strategy or procedure and activities being adapted to meet the needs of all learners participating.

THE MAJORITY OF ACTIVITIES OBSERVED IN 2022-2023 WERE HANDS-ON AND AGE-APPROPRIATE FOR PARTICIPATING STUDENTS (N=121)

Encouraging higher order thinking and accommodating for the needs of diverse learners are areas to improve



Most observed clubs and activities (75%) met the 21st CCLC goal of maturing or higher for their overall instructional and engagement practices. Strengths included behavior management (93%) and offering age-appropriate activities (88%). In 89% of activities where technology use was observed (e.g., video lessons, computer games, recording equipment), the technology enhanced the activity.

Encouraging student thinking (i.e., asking questions that encourage conversation and help students make connections between activities and other learning) is one area to improve. Observations found that 50% of the clubs/activities observed were in the emerging and emerging plus categories. Growth of differentiation strategies would enhance the offerings of afterschool programs.

SURVEY OUTCOMES



SURVEY RETURN RATES

2022-2023 Survey Return Rates		
Survey	Respondents	Return Rate
Teacher	9911	92%
Parent	6817	60%
K-2 Student	3503	89%
3rd-5th Student	3727	86%
6th-12th Student	1860	60%
Community Partner	460	54%
Afterschool Staff	1004	NA

***Survey Return Rate Calculations:** The Teacher, Parent, and Student Survey Return Rates are calculated by dividing the number of completed surveys by the total number of students who attended 10 or more hours, who were not opted out of the survey process, and whose information was entered into the database by the February 1st deadline.

PARENT SURVEY OUTCOMES (N=6,817; 60% RETURN RATE)

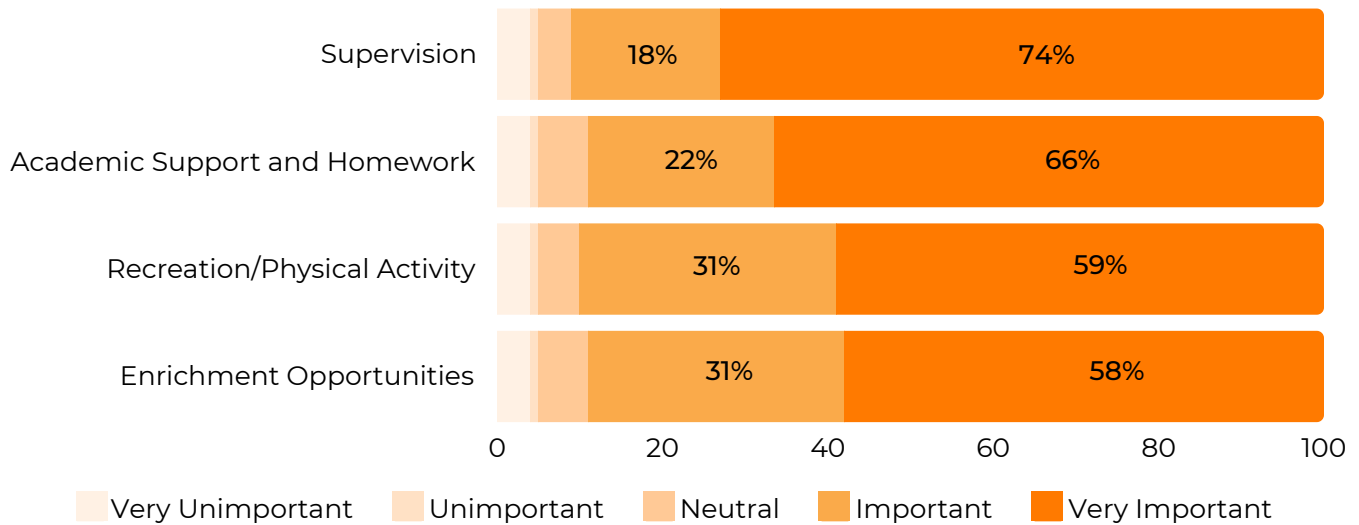
The parent survey was provided to parents of all students who attended at least 10 hours during the 2022-2023 school year. The survey provides a snapshot of program quality, student experiences and reasons for enrolling their student in the program. Parents were asked to rate the following items on a 1 to 4 scale (*1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree*).

Parents (N=6817) gave the programs high ratings across all items. Most

commonly, they responded that the program is a benefit to their child, that staff care about their child, and that they were satisfied with how the program manages student behavior. Parents also viewed the programs as safe places for their child to be and that their child enjoyed the activities offered. Parents were asked why they enrolled their students in 21st CCLC programming. They rated each component as being very unimportant, unimportant, neutral, important or very important. Supervision had the most parents rate it as important or very important (92%), but all of the components were rated as important or very important by at least 89% of parents.

SUPERVISION WAS RATED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR PARENTS ENROLLING STUDENTS IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMMING.

Parents also appreciate the opportunities for physical activity and academic support



All parents who completed the satisfaction survey had the opportunity to answer the open-ended question, **“Thinking about your experience with the afterschool program, what are some ways we could best provide support/resources to you as you support your child’s learning?”** In spring 2023, there were more than 1,600 responses to this open-ended question, ranging from strong support to constructive criticism highlighting areas for improvement.

These comments included commentary on the quality of the communication and parent engagement, the quality of the programming and academic support, and the quality of the staff. Many respondents offered suggestions for changes to support student wellness

and for program procedures. Details on each of these topics are described below.

Overall, parents had a positive view of the afterschool program. Despite the open-ended question prompting suggestions for improvement, more than half of the responses were exclusively praise and/or thanks to the program, its staff, and/or the programming it offered. Parents often called out staff members by name and described how staff built relationships with their children or supported children’s academic or emotional needs. Parents appreciated the engaging, hands-on expanded learning opportunities students experienced through 21st CCLC. They also discussed the impact of safe, reliable, and affordable afterschool programs on their families.

PARENTS RATED THE 21ST CCLC PROGRAM POSITIVELY ACROSS ALL AREAS (N=6,817)

They recognize the benefits for students' social and academic development

Afterschool program is a benefit to my child.	3.90
Afterschool staff care about my child.	3.86
I am satisfied with how my child's behavior is handled.	3.85
My child enjoys the activities offered in the program.	3.85
The afterschool program is a safe place, physically and emotionally.	3.84
The school and afterschool program have an effective partnership.	3.83
The afterschool program is of high quality.	3.82
The program helps my child build and maintain friendships.	3.81
My child experiences new things in the program.	3.80
I am satisfied with the level of communication.	3.75
Opportunities to engage in the afterschool program.	3.60

Communication: Many respondents called for better communication between programs and parents. They asked that programs send more information about clubs, including descriptions of the clubs offered, calendars, and information about activity leaders before sign-ups; photos or written updates on online apps to show what students did; notice of schedule changes; and suggestions for discussion questions or activities they

could use to follow up on and extend learning at home.

Parents wanted updates about students' academic progress and asked that program staff communicate strengths or weaknesses for skills they practiced during academic support times. Several respondents wanted program staff to inform them if students completed homework at the program or needed more time at home.

Parents wanted better communication regarding student behavior at programs. Many parents wanted more frequent updates on their students' behavior via phone calls, personal conversations at pick-up, or notes home. Some parents expressed frustration at students receiving consequences like suspensions from activities or programs for issues they believe could have been addressed earlier with better and earlier program-parent communication. A few parents also asked for programs to contact them directly when their children were affected by other students' behavior. They wanted to hear about the issues and resolutions from staff rather than feeling surprised when their children brought up the issues at home.

Several parents expressed concern with the timeliness of communication, especially for changes of plans like program closures, field trip opportunities, or rescheduled club/activity times. Parents reported needing more lead time to adjust their family's schedule and indicated they struggle to find care when programs give short notice for program closures or reduced hours of operation.

"¡Yo estoy muy contenta y satisfecha por el cuidado y disciplina de mis hijos muy buen equipo gracias por todo! Atodos los del club."

- Parent of a 21st CCLC Student



Parents suggested that programs send home regular program updates through newsletters, text messages, and/or online portals. Many parents asked that programs communicate using multiple methods, such as paper flyers and newsletters sometimes got lost when sent home with students. They also asked for programs to send daily or weekly reports about student behaviors or progress updates. Some parents requested that the programs have an actively monitored phone number they could call when necessary.

Family Engagement: Respondents would like more opportunities for family engagement with the program. Ideas included encouraging family volunteers and chaperones for field trips, allowing family members to participate in or observe club activities, scheduling more family engagement nights so they can meet staff and other families, and classes specifically for parents/guardians (e.g., English language classes).

Programming: Parents offered feedback on the activities students engage in at programs. Many parents simply asked for more activities. Some parents were dissatisfied with the amount of unstructured free play at their programs and wanted their students to spend more time in structured, small-group experiences with staff. Additionally, some parents noted that their students—especially older students—were losing interest in the activities offered. They encouraged programs to increase the diversity of activities so students had fresh options throughout the school year and across multiple years of participation. A small number of parents offered a different point of view and wanted programs to provide more unstructured play time and non-school-related activities. They believed students needed afterschool programs to provide a break from the school day.



Some parents offered specific ideas for additional activities they wanted programs to offer. Those suggestions included the arts (e.g., dance, music, and photography), academic activities (e.g., reading, language courses, and STEM), physical activities (e.g., skateboarding, weightlifting, and swimming), social-emotional skills, cooking, and sewing. Parents also asked for more field trips and suggested local individuals or organizations to partner with for programming.

Academic Support: Many responses included specific aspects of the academic support and enrichment that parents appreciated. Several parents said their students attend programs specifically for academic support. They also expressed thanks for homework help in areas they were unable to support (e.g., helping with languages parents did not speak or with unfamiliar technology).

Parents also offered suggestions for improvement. Most of these comments were requests to have students prioritize homework before any other enrichment activities or free play. These parents asked that the students be offered a quiet space with knowledgeable staff available to help students understand the material. Parents wanted staff to check in with students at arrival and during academic support time to ensure that students finished their homework before being allowed to participate in other activities.

Some respondents asked for programs and school staff to establish better communication about grades and homework so program staff knew more about students' academic needs and outstanding work without relying on students to provide that information.

Staffing: About five percent of the open-ended comments included critical commentary on the staff or supervision. Several parents noted the impacts of staff shortages on supervision and activity availability at programs. Many of these parents asked that staff salaries increase to keep existing staff members and attract new applicants. Some parents suggested professional development for staff to address gaps in safety and supervision. Specific training areas included trauma-informed care, Conscious Discipline, supporting students with disabilities, strategies for academic support, and bullying prevention.

Several parents witnessed or heard their student report a lack of supervision (e.g., insufficient staff presence in student play areas, students leaving programs without staff knowledge, staff focused on devices or each other rather than students). Some reported incidences of peer-to-peer bullying, aggressive play, name-calling, and other concerning student behaviors that staff members were unaware of or did not address. Other parents noted instances of staff rudeness or shortness, and comments they considered inappropriate.



However, a majority of the comments about program staff were praise. Parents named staff members who built relationships with their children and complimented directors on their handling of day-to-day programming decisions and emergency situations.

Student wellness: Many parents requested that programs include more activities and/or practices to support students' social and emotional wellbeing. They asked for games or group activities to help children meet others and develop friendships, group discussions about empathy and boundaries, times for one-on-one check-ins with staff, and support in regulating emotions or problem-solving when upset. Some parents suggested specific strategies staff could use when their children were upset or disengaged.

Program Structure: Parents would like to see changes in club availability during the school year and the summer. Parents noted that their own availability does not increase when school is closed and emphasized the importance of options any day school was not in session. Parents noted that the afterschool program was a safe place for their children and missed that peace of mind during program closures. Parents also commented that unplanned closures of the afterschool program for staffing issues or community events were particularly difficult to accommodate. Some parents also requested additional hours, including both morning availability and longer hours at the end of the day to offer more coverage for parents with extended work hours. Some parents expressed appreciation that their programs made changes during the 2022-2023 school year to be open during scheduled teacher development days.

A handful of parents requested specific changes to program procedures. Those parents wanted programs to communicate with schools about absences or changes to a child's afterschool plans so program staff didn't have to search students for or call parents. Other suggestions included quicker transitions between school dismissal and the start of afterschool program activities, improved communication among staff members during pick-up, and changing pick-up processes to reduce parent wait time.

Other Feedback: A small number of parents had specific concerns. These concerns were typically one-off events that unfolded in a way the parents did not prefer. Concerns included food options, transportation, and procedures for enrollment and billing.

Summary: Overall, the open-ended comments were more positive than negative. Parents who offered suggestions/criticism often sandwiched them between compliments or qualified them with factors outside programs' control. Those with ideas for improvement to the program tended to focus on ideas for academic support, additional enrichment activities, and family engagement. Parents also asked for improved communication and staff training on areas such as behavior management and academic support. While many parents asked for improvements in communication, activities, and staffing, a similar number offered thanks and praise about the same areas.

I absolutely enjoy this afterschool program because my girls are always happy to stay. The girls have such a good time doing all the activities that they have for them such as cooking club, gardening, etc.

– Parent of a 21st CCLC Student

TEACHER SURVEY OUTCOMES (N=9,911; 92% RETURN RATE)

As one part of the evaluation process, classroom teachers rated individual students who attended 10 or more hours on engagement in learning and their social, emotional, and behavioral development. Using grade-level expectations, teachers determine if each student either falls below, meets, or performs above expectations. They then rate the student growth from fall to spring on each survey item. Survey results for grades 1-5 are reported as part of the federal evaluation process.

Open-Ended Feedback: Teachers had an opportunity to “provide any comments concerning the impact of the afterschool program on this student.” Many teachers used this space to identify specific strengths and areas for academic, behavioral, and/or social improvement for each student. They also discussed the benefits of students’

participation in the afterschool programs and offered suggestions for ways programs could further support student growth.

Social impacts: Many students reportedly grew socially because of their afterschool experiences. Teachers shared stories of how their students established friendships with participants from other classrooms or grades, opened up more to their peers, and practiced social skills like listening, compromise, and empathy. Many teachers discussed students’ opportunities to serve as helpers and role models during afterschool activities, which let them practice leadership skills and take pride in their contributions to the programs. Some teachers asked for programs to support students with conflict resolution strategies during afterschool programming, as unresolved “drama” sometimes created problems later in the classroom.

Students reportedly speak highly of programs and look forward to the activities and their time with peers and staff. Many teacher comments specifically mentioned how much their students talk about the fun they are having and get upset on days when they have to miss programs or leave earlier than they’d like. Teachers also shared stories about students excitedly sharing about activities they did or using recess or free time to work on projects for afterschool clubs.



Behavioral impacts: Safe, structured time afterschool improved student behavior. Many teachers discussed how students benefited from having a safe place to go where they had access to caring adults and peer interactions. The consistency of routine and expectations between school and afterschool staff—plus the specific strategies afterschool staff taught and practiced with students—resulted in better social-emotional regulation and decreased behavioral issues.

While many teachers complimented the structure at sites, some respondents suggested the programs at their schools needed more structure to make the transition from school day to afterschool easier and more predictable for students. Some teachers also asked for better communication from afterschool staff about behavior issues during program time.

Academic Impacts: Teachers noted growth in academics—specifically homework completion—when students attended the afterschool program. Many teachers commented that students used academic support times for help with understanding and completing work. Several said that students benefited from the access to 1:1 assistance and extra time to focus on work that they might not have at home. Teachers named specific areas where students improved, including reading, math, English language mastery, and learner success skills (e.g., organization,

time management, and perseverance). However, several teachers also noted they still have students struggling with late or missing homework even though they reportedly worked on it during the afterschool program.

Teachers also commented on areas where some students were still struggling. A few noted they already work with afterschool staff to design goals and/or support strategies for use both in school and during program time. Several asked for programs to include specific interventions (e.g., add more academic support time or systems to check for homework, encourage students to focus on work during support times, practice spelling words or math facts, etc.) to help these students succeed.



High School Teacher Feedback: High school teachers noted slightly different benefits and struggles for their students related to the afterschool programs. Only a fraction of high school teachers answered the open-ended question. These teachers typically used general terms for their answers (e.g., “moderate impact” or “doing great”) and did not articulate progress the student demonstrated over the year and/or if their participation in the afterschool programs had any impact on the student. Some teachers described what they observed of students while also discussing limitations on their knowledge of other subject areas or social contexts. Those who did comment on the program noted how students benefitted from personalized academic support or mentioned improvements to specific areas like social connections, motivation, or attendance.

High school teachers also identified continuing struggles some students had. Teachers noted issues with class participation, inconsistent attendance,

“I know [she] gets extra help and encouragement from the staff. They have encouraged her to fill out the FAFSA and have offered her assistance with that.”

– Teacher of a 21st CCLC Student



and missing or incomplete homework. Some teachers suggested that their students could benefit more from the academic supports offered if they were less distracted by social interactions. A few teachers qualified their responses with additional factors (e.g., trauma, family changes) that needed to be addressed before those students could fully benefit from afterschool program resources.

Summary: Overall, teacher comments were balanced between student successes that the afterschool programs supported and suggestions for program improvements or additions that they believed would benefit students. Teachers generally appreciated the afterschool program, and many shared stories they’d heard from students about specific clubs or expanded learning activities.

STUDENT SURVEY OUTCOMES

K-2 (N=3503, 89% return rate)
Grades 3-5 (N=3727, 86% return rate)
Grades 6-12 (N = 1860, 60% return rate)

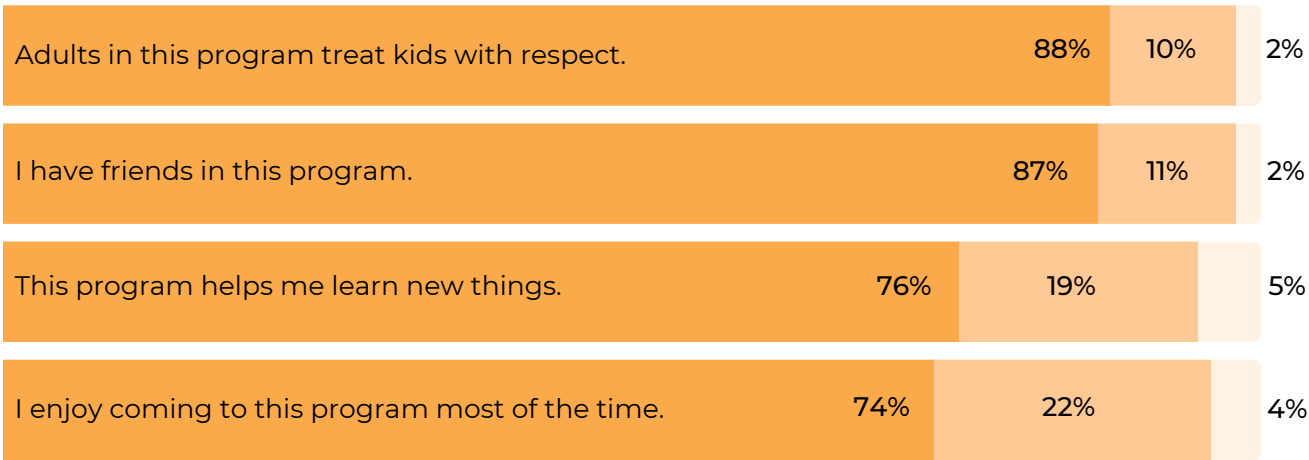
All K-12 students who attended ten hours or more during the year were given the opportunity to provide feedback and complete age-appropriate surveys. All student surveys were online and linked to both program and student ID numbers.

K-2 students completed a four-item survey on their experiences in 21st CLCC sites. Choice options for each item were: Yes, Sometimes, or No. K-2 student responses indicated positive relationships and interactions with staff and other students. Most students



reported that they felt respected by staff, enjoyed coming to the program most of the time, and had friendships with other students in the afterschool program.

NEARLY ALL K-2 STUDENTS REPORTED STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS AND 21ST CCLC STAFF (N=3,503)



Yes Sometimes No

STUDENTS IN GRADES 3-5 SAW CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PERSISTENCE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT (N=3,727)

Students said they work harder if they make mistakes in school

Program Belonging & Engagement	3.41
Persistence	3.20
Self-Control	3.12
Academic Self-Efficacy	3.02
Mastery Orientation	2.79

Youth Engagement Survey: Students in grades 3-12 completed versions of the student survey (Youth Development Executives of King County, 2015). The survey asked questions across several areas pertaining to each student personally and then regarding the impact of the program they had attended. Students were asked to rate each item on a four-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, and 4=Strongly Agree). Domain means were calculated at the statewide level.

For 3rd-5th grade students (N=3,727), the highest ratings were for Program Belonging and Engagement (M=3.41). Items under this domain ask about having friends (M=3.58), adult respect toward students (M=3.57), and enjoying attending the program (M=3.29).

Students reported they could “learn the things taught at school” (M=3.46) and



they work hard to “complete school work” (M=3.36). Mastery Orientation continued to be the lowest-rated domain with students reporting lower levels of agreement that they do homework because “I am interested in it” (M=2.73) or because “I enjoy it” (M=3.61).

STUDENTS IN GRADES 6-12 GRADE REPORTED THAT AFTERSCHOOL STAFF HELPED THEM LEARN TO MANAGE THEIR OWN BEHAVIOR (N=1,860)

Earning good grades and getting a college education were important

Self-Management	3.15
Academic Identity	3.13
Academic Behaviors	3.11
Program Belonging & Engagement	3.06
Mindsets	2.97

For 6th-12th grade students (N=1,860), Self-Management had the highest average (M=3.15), followed closely by Academic Identity (M=3.13). Students credited the program's role in behavior guidance, with the highest item being "This program has helped me stop doing something when I know I shouldn't do it" (M=3.29). Students indicated that they value doing well in school, as the items "Getting good grades is one of my main goals" (M=3.27) and "Getting a college education is important to me" (M=3.19) were rated positively. Lower-rated items were in the domain of Mindsets, with the lowest-rated items being "I stay

focused on my work even when it's boring" (M=2.79) and "I stay positive when things don't go the way I want" (M=2.81). Students reported that the program has helped them develop relationships with staff and peers, in addition to providing academic supports and opportunities to develop new skills.

Summary: Students of all ages continue to give high ratings for program belonging and engagement. Older students also recognize the role that good grades and hard work play in achieving both short- and long-term goals. Across sites, most students enjoy coming to the program, have connections to friends and staff members in the program, and learn new things. Students report that 21st CCLC programs are helping them to learn and develop social skills and self-regulation strategies that will help them to be successful at school and in life after graduation.

"[Her] attendance and overall well-being has greatly improved through the afterschool program."

– Teacher of a 21st CCLC Student

AFTERSCHOOL STAFF SURVEY OUTCOMES

In 2022-2023, afterschool staff had the opportunity to complete an afterschool workforce survey developed by the evaluation team. A total of 1,004 staff members, including site supervisors and program directors, completed the survey with 81% of respondents working as staff members, 11% as site supervisors, and 8% as program directors.

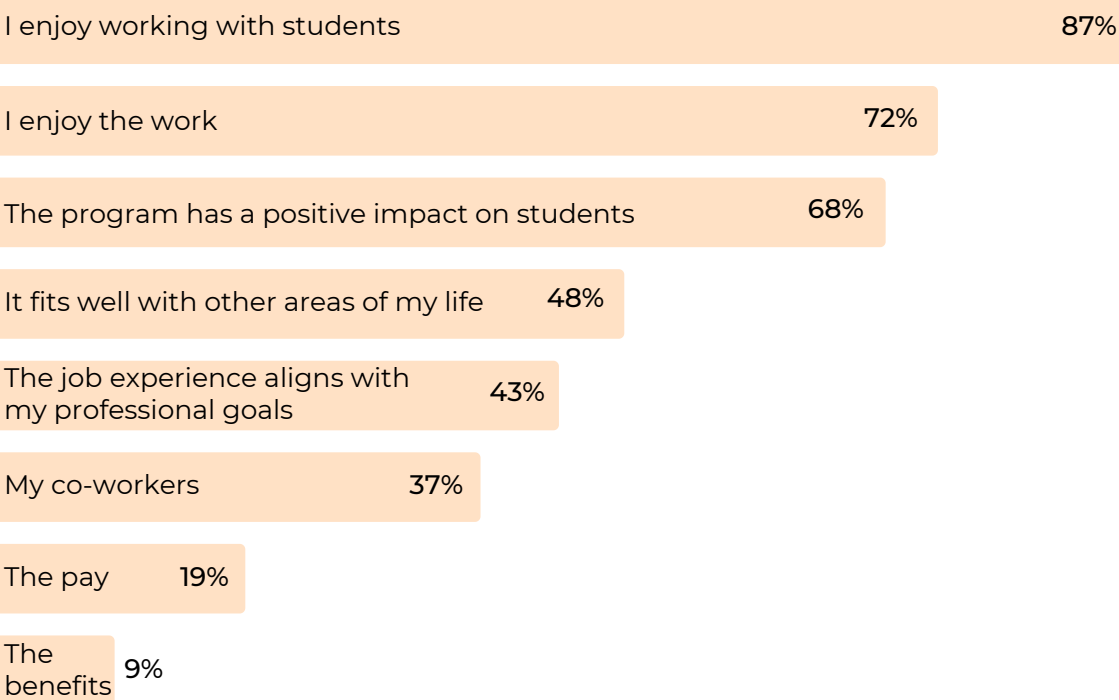
Statewide, afterschool programming is implemented and delivered primarily by those identifying as female (85%).

Demographics reported indicate a diverse workforce for afterschool programs, with 63% White, 22% Hispanic/Latino, 14% Black/African American, 3% Native American/American Indian, 3% Asian, and 4% preferring not to answer. Ages of staff tended to be younger, with 61% of staff being age 30 or younger, 22% ages of 31-49, 12% ages of 50-64 and 4% ages of 65 or older.

For some 21st CCLC programs, the majority of afterschool staff are college students, so turnover is expected as they graduate. For education majors, 21st CCLCs provide a training ground for

AFTERSCHOOL STAFF WORK IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS BECAUSE THEY ENJOY THE WORK AND SEE THE IMPACT ON STUDENTS (N=1004)

About 2/5 of respondents see a connection between 21st CCLC and their professional goals



working with students of diverse ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Partnerships between 21st CCLC programs and postsecondary institutions across Nebraska are mutually beneficial for both K-12 students and students participating in college coursework.

Seventy-two percent of program staff reported attending at least some postsecondary education, with 38% attaining a degree or certificate post-high school. Of the staff working in the programs, 20% hold bachelor's degrees, and 8% have a master's degree. A high percentage of those with some college credits are students currently enrolled in Nebraska colleges and universities and working in the program. Additionally, 14% of the workforce were current high school students.

Turnover in afterschool programs is an issue, as 72% of staff have worked in the afterschool program for three years or less. Another 16% have worked in the program for 4-6 years, and 12% have been

"I love working with children while helping them learn who they are while building positive relationships and helping them get the best learning experience possible!"

— 21st CCLC Staff Member

in the program for 7 years or longer. About half of staff saw themselves leaving their programs within two years (54%). Top reasons for leaving were graduation, relocation, and retirement, which are all personal reasons unrelated to the afterschool program.

Afterschool staff see their work as valuable and an opportunity to make a difference for students in their communities. Staff recognize the impact that afterschool programs can have on students' academic success and social-emotional wellbeing.



Afterschool Staff Preparation and Confidence:

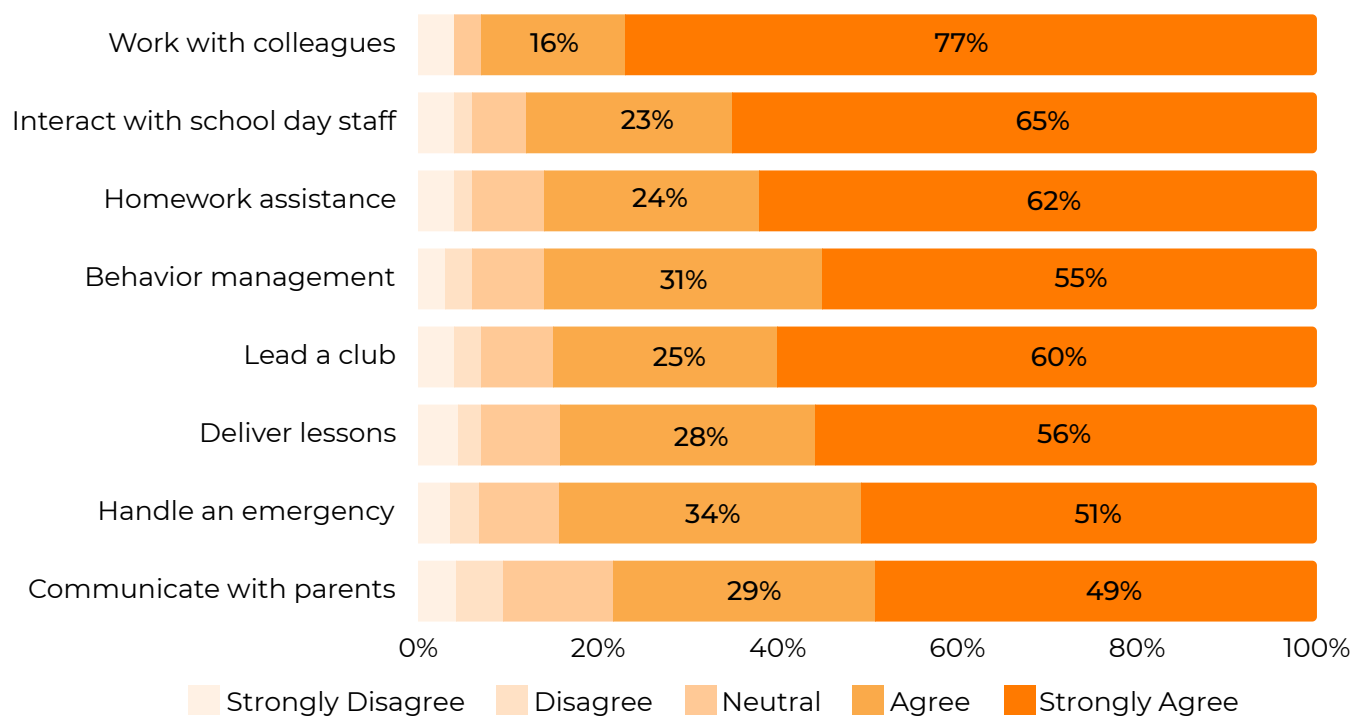
Respondents were asked to rate their levels of preparation for performing many of the job responsibilities involved in an afterschool program, which include assisting with homework, managing student behavior, and handling an emergency.

Overall, afterschool staff felt prepared to implement and deliver required programming. Staff felt prepared to work with others (93%), interact with school staff (88%), help with homework (86%), address student behavior (86%), and lead a club (85%). While not a concern, staff were less comfortable communicating with parents.

One area needing some improvement was preparation for handling health and safety emergencies. Professional development and training around emergency preparedness was one of the most frequently requested items for professional development, indicating a need for all staff to be trained. It is possible that all staff were trained at the beginning of the school year, but staff hired after the beginning of the school year did not receive the same level of safety training as part of the employee onboarding process. Embedding information on health and safety procedures within the orientation process and throughout the year would benefit all sites and staff members.

PROGRAM STAFF REPORTED FEELING PREPARED AT HIGH LEVELS ACROSS ALL JOB RESPONSIBILITIES (N=1,004)

Fewer than 10% felt unprepared for any of the surveyed categories



Professional Development and Training:

When asked about future professional development, more respondents preferred in-person training (35%). Preferences for other modes of delivery were combination in-person and online training (33%) and completely online training (16%), while 16% had no preference. The most frequent obstacles to receiving and/or completing professional development continued to be lack of time and scheduling conflicts. Other obstacles mentioned included lack of trainers and lack of resources (e.g., inability to travel or pay training costs).

Afterschool staff and leadership provided input as to which topics would be of most interest and most useful for

future training and/or professional development. When asked about future training, the following topics emerged:

- ▶ BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT
- ▶ SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING
- ▶ SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
- ▶ EMERGENCY PROCEDURES
- ▶ CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
- ▶ DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES
- ▶ LEADERSHIP SKILLS

COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY OUTCOMES

Engaging community partners is one key to building a sustainable afterschool program. 21st CCLC programs are required to have at least one community partner, but most sites have multiple partners providing a variety of resources, including providing additional funding, materials, programming, and volunteers. Without statewide and local partnerships, the programs would be unable to deliver an array of diverse programming.

To better understand the collaboration with community partners, a partnership survey was developed in 2016-2017 and was disseminated to community partners designated by each site



through an online platform. The multi-item, online survey asked questions about collaboration, capacity for giving, relationships, communication, and training needs and asked for open-ended feedback.

Responding partners included community-based organizations (38%), universities and colleges (8%), extension offices (7%), arts/creative arts organizations (7%), local businesses (6%), foundations (6%), local school districts (5%), public libraries (4%), museums/zoos (3%), local government agencies (2%), state agencies (1%), and faith-based organizations (1%). Another 12% fell into the “other” category and were mainly non-profit organizations.

Contact Hours: The number of contact hours varied, with 59% of the partners reporting that they provided 21 or more hours in a year, 19% reporting they provided 11-20 hours, 12% provided 6-10 hours, 8% provided 1-5 hours and the remaining partners did not provide contact hours during the school year.

51% of community partners provided 21 or more contact hours to programs during the 2022-2023 school year



Far fewer community partners provided contact hours during the summer, with 56% of survey respondents reporting no summer hours. Contact hours were fewer for those who partnered with programs in the summer, with 74 partners reporting 6-10 contact hours, 56 reporting 21 or more hours, 40 reporting 11-20 hours, and 35 reporting 1-5 hours .

Alignment of Community Organization and 21st CCLC Site: Nearly all (92%) of the partners believed their organization’s work was aligned to the school’s goals for their students. On a scale of 0-100, partners (n=460) rated the strength of their relationship with the afterschool program, with the mean score being in the mid-high to high range (M=86.00, sd=16). A majority of the partners (62%) indicated they have had a lot or a great deal of opportunity to develop relationships with students/families.

Community partners collaborate with 21st CCLC sites for several reasons. Most of the partners see it as a benefit to students (94%), a way to provide experiences for students (79%), share goals with the 21st CCLC site (72%), and report that the partnership meets a need/goal for their organization (71%). Ninety-five percent of partners said they have a clear understanding of and have fulfilled their agreement with the 21st CCLC program, with 13% of respondents reporting that they also provided additional services and/or supports.

Program Strengths: When asked to share the strengths of the programs, partners identified several. Common strengths were communication among staff members and with programs, strong staff-student relationships, support of partner-provided programming (e.g., staff attending activities to supervise behavior and help students, spaces on-site to store

“From our end, we appreciate being able to share experiences with children that may not have the time or ability to visit us with their families. Through the afterschool program, the children are exposed to offerings in their community, knowledge that will be beneficial as they become adults in our community.”

– Community Partner

materials), program leadership and organization, and commitment to providing new and engaging learning opportunities for students. Many partners also highlighted students’ enthusiasm and positive behaviors during activities.

Improvements: In addition to strengths, partners were asked to provide suggestions for improvement. Some partners asked for consistency of students attending activities to help them with preparation and relationship building. Others requested that programs assign partners to separate rooms to reduce distractions from other clubs and help them plan their use of space. While many partners praised communication, some wanted more consistent contact with programs or for programs to share more information about their organizations with families.



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- 1 When compared to all Nebraska students, 21st Century programs served higher percentages of students with disabilities, racially/ethnically diverse students, Multilingual Learners, and economically disadvantaged students during the 2022-2023 school year. Percentages for all four student groups were even higher for programs operating in Summer 2023.
- 2 Relationships were a strength of the programs, as parents, students, community partners, and programs consistently gave high ratings to staff-student interactions, respect, and care for students.
- 3 Programming was of high quality. Most observed activities met or exceeded the program goal for Evidence of Preparation and for Instructional and Engagement Practices.
- 4 Post-COVID, program attendance continues to increase. School-year attendance reached a new high in 2022-2023, and Summer 2022 attendance was within 30 students of reaching pre-pandemic levels.
- 5 Parents felt that 21st CCLC was a benefit to their children and rated programs highly for their safe environments, behavior management, and enjoyable (engaging) activities.
- 6 Supporting students' social-emotional well-being continues to be a priority for programs. Students of all ages continue to give high ratings for Program Belonging and Engagement.
- 7 Self-Management —typically one of the lowest-rated domains on the 6-12 student survey— was the highest-rated domain for secondary students.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE PLANS

- 1 Improve communication about engagement opportunities, program operations, and individual student needs with parents/family members.
- 2 Strengthen the capacity of staff to differentiate activities to meet the needs of diverse learners and to provide more opportunities for student voice and decision-making during clubs.
- 3 Identify additional opportunities for training on health and safety procedures, behavior management, and family communication strategies to improve staff feelings of preparation.
- 4 Continue using data from NAQCIS self-assessments, observations, and stakeholder surveys to identify statewide and site-level areas for improvement.



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APPENDIX

21st CCLC Quality Framework aligned to the Nebraska State Board of Education Position Statement on Quality Expanded Learning Opportunities, Adopted October 8, 2017.

Intersection of the Six Tenets of AQuESTT and Nebraska 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program.

NAQCIS Self-Assessment Self-Ratings 2020-2023.

The online version of the Nebraska 21st CCLC 2022-2023 Annual Report is posted at <http://www.education.ne.gov/21stcclc/ProgramEvaluation/> and includes the following survey instruments referenced in this report:

- Teacher Survey
- Parent Survey
- K-2 Student Survey
- 3rd-5th Grade Student Survey
- 6th-12th Grade Student Survey
- 21st CCLC Partner Survey





For more information, please visit: www.education.ne.gov/21stCCLC

**Nebraska State Board Position Statement
Expanded Learning Opportunities
Adopted October 6, 2017**

The Nebraska State Board of Education believes that in order to help prepare future generations of Nebraska youth for success in life, Nebraska's schools, families and communities must work together to provide multiple opportunities for healthy growth, development and academic success.

The Nebraska State Board of Education recognizes that the traditional school calendar does not fit all students' needs. The typical school day may not provide adequate time for students needing additional educational and enrichment opportunities in order to experience academic success; particularly students who are limited English proficient, live in poverty, or those who may start the school year learning below their grade level. Quality Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) programs build on, support, and enhance learning during times when students are not in school (before and after school, weekends, and summer) and are, therefore, a critical component of Nebraska's educational landscape and one that should be intentionally supported and developed in communities across our state.

Quality expanded learning principles include the following:

- Administration with sound management and well-developed systems
- College/career awareness and readiness
- Community-school partnerships and resource sharing
- Diverse, prepared staff including certificated educators
- Engaged learning
- Family engagement
- Intentional programming aligned with the school day program
- Ongoing assessment and improvement
- Participation, access and support during transitions
- Safety, health and wellness

The Board, therefore, encourages Nebraska school district partnerships with community stakeholders to adopt a vision for quality expanded learning opportunities.

Intersection of the Six Tenets of AQuESTT and Nebraska 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program



STUDENT SUCCESS AND ACCESS



Positive Partnerships, Relationships and Student Success

21st CCLC programs are implemented through a strong foundation of positive partnerships between formal and informal educators, families, community organizations, and local businesses. Through these partnerships, students are provided with hands-on, enriching learning opportunities afterschool, on non-school days, and during the summer that are aligned to, and reinforce school day learning objectives.

21st CCLC program indicators:

- Local, regional, and state-wide partnerships bring unique learning opportunities to students
- Student voice and choice leads to more engagement and deeper learning
- Alternative space for learning meets diverse student needs and interests
- Interactions between school day and afterschool educators, families, community partners, and local businesses enhance student learning
- Diverse, prepared staff form relationships with students and families across calendar years
- Variety of leadership, partnerships, and service learning opportunities support positive youth development



Transitions

21st CCLC programs provide students with transitional support from school year to school year, and during the summer. Because students are provided with opportunities to attend programs each school year, and the summers in-between, students are intentionally provided with support during key transitional periods. Program staff, school day staff, older students, families, and community members work together to provide orientation, mentoring, and programming that prepares students for the next phase of their educational experience.

21st CCLC program indicators:

- Continuity of program staff who remain with students from school year to school year and during the summer
- Experiences that develop skills needed for successful transitions (e.g., entering kindergarten, across grades, across buildings)
- Orientation and mentoring opportunities across all grade levels and throughout the summer
- Assistance for families as they support children and youth transitions



Educational Opportunities and Access

21st CCLC programs provide students who may benefit from additional educational support time to learn outside the regular school day through engagement in student-centered opportunities aligned to school day learning objectives. Through partnerships with formal educators, families, and community organizations, students are allowed unique opportunities for community engagement, college and career exploration, homework support, activities that promote physical well-being, and social emotional development.

21st CCLC program indicators:

- Collaboration through regular communication between school day and afterschool educators
- Opportunity to learn in a different way through expanded, student-centered learning projects
- Application of skills learned during the school day through integrated projects
- Additional learning time and support
- Students allowed a voice in program planning and choice of activities offered, which can lead to a more engaged learner



TEACHING AND LEARNING



College and Career Ready

21st CCLC programs provide time outside of the regular school day for students to connect in meaningful ways with local business and industry, colleges, school day educators, and program staff to develop interests and skills for future success.

21st CCLC program indicators:

- Collaborations with colleges and universities to develop interest in and awareness of postsecondary educational opportunities
- Collaborations with local businesses to develop interests and skills necessary for future careers
- Provide activities that develop career ready skills such as collaboration, communication, problem solving, critical thinking, and creativity
- Provide activities that align to relevant career pathways



Assessment

21st CCLC programs employ sound data collection and management practices focused on the Continuous Improvement Process. Frequent formal and informal assessments (both internal and external) allow program staff to know students not only as learners but as individuals. Assessments provide regular feedback on program quality from students, school day partners, and families for ongoing program improvement.

21st CCLC program indicators:

- Focus on continuous improvement
- Data contributes to knowing the whole child
- Data collection opportunities allow feedback from formal and informal educators, students, families to guide program improvement
- Data used to guide ongoing staff professional development
- Data collected informs not only 21st CCLC program staff, but also school day educators in knowing students and families more holistically



Educator Effectiveness

21st CCLC programs employ both formal and informal educators who partner to provide additional learning time for students who may benefit from added educational supports. Ongoing professional development is provided to develop skills, knowledge, and support to grow positive relationships with students, families, and community partners. The overall diversity of staff reflects the cultures of families attending the school and serve as models and mentors for students.

21st CCLC program indicators:

- Professional development supports planning and implementing student-centered, experiential learning opportunities
- Ongoing shared professional development (e.g., school day staff, afterschool staff, volunteers, community partners)
- Support to develop quality relationships with students for more engaged learning
- Leadership development of both program staff and students
- Continuity in program staff, volunteers, and community partners across school years and during the summer promotes high program quality



*21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) support quality expanded learning opportunities when students are not in school (afterschool, summer, and days when school is not in session). The Nebraska Department of Education administers this federally funded, competitive grant program authorized under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. For more information about Nebraska's 21st CCLC program, visit www.education.ne.gov/21stcclc.

10/21/2015

NAQCIS SELF-ASSESSMENT SELF-RATINGS 2020-2023

Administration

	Emerging	Emerging +	Maturing	Maturing +	Excelling
2020-2021	0%	0%	5%	21%	74%
2021-2022	0%	0%	13%	20%	68%
2022-2023	1%	1%	10%	18%	70%

Diverse, prepared staff

2020-2021	0%	1%	16%	43%	40%
2021-2022	1%	2%	19%	43%	36%
2022-2023	0%	2%	17%	40%	41%

Relationships & Interactions

2020-2021	0%	1%	13%	44%	43%
2021-2022	0%	2%	11%	47%	40%
2022-2023	0%	1%	17%	52%	31%

Professional Development

2020-2021	2%	9%	21%	37%	30%
2021-2022	1%	7%	30%	32%	30%
2022-2023	1%	4%	27%	43%	24%

Intentional Programming Aligned with the School Day

2020-2021	1%	3%	20%	45%	32%
2021-2022	0%	3%	21%	49%	27%
2022-2023	0%	3%	23%	49%	25%

NAQCIS Self-Assessment Self-Ratings 2020-2023

Behavior Management

	Emerging	Emerging +	Maturing	Maturing +	Excelling
2020-2021	2%	1%	23%	49%	25%
2021-2022	1%	3%	28%	48%	19%
2022-2023	0%	5%	29%	48%	18%

Family Engagement

2020-2021	4%	17%	30%	34%	15%
2021-2022	2%	16%	35%	32%	15%
2022-2023	3%	10%	41%	32%	13%

Community School Partnerships

2020-2021	2%	6%	23%	36%	33%
2021-2022	1%	9%	20%	42%	27%
2022-2023	1%	8%	20%	35%	35%

Ongoing Assessment and Improvement

2020-2021	3%	3%	21%	37%	36%
2021-2022	3%	3%	22%	31%	40%
2022-2023	4%	8%	19%	32%	38%

Safety, Health & Wellness

2020-2021	1%	2%	9%	26%	62%
2021-2022	0%	3%	11%	33%	53%
2022-2023	0%	1%	13%	27%	59%

