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Mississippi Department of Education



21st Century Community Learning Centers Program Evaluation

Final Report

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October 2018

21st Century Community Learning Centers Program Evaluation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under federal legislation (Title IV, Part B, as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act), the purpose of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program is to create community-based learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities for children in high-poverty and low-performing schools. In addition, learning centers may offer a broad range of enrichment activities as well as educational services to the families of participating children.

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the State of Mississippi funding to fulfill this mission. In turn, Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) made awards to more than fifty afterschool programs across the state. Such funding supports the advancement of strategic goals established by the state board of education.

In effort to determine the extent of the program's progress and for accountability to the Department, MDE sought an external evaluator to provide an independent assessment of the effectiveness of sub-grantee programs. Thus, in June 2018, the Office of Federal Programs, which oversees the grant, contracted Align Education, LLC. Located in New Orleans, Louisiana, the consulting firm has significant experience in working with federal grant programs.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND KEY QUESTIONS

The overall purposes of the evaluation were to assess the short-term and intermediate outcomes of the 21st CCLC program among participants, and to make recommendations for continuous improvement to MDE and its sub-grantees. The grant aims to advance the goals of the Mississippi Board of Education by: (1) increasing academic growth and proficiency among students on statewide assessments, (2) increasing graduation rates, and (3) improving parent engagement in low-performing schools. In effort to assess progress towards these goals through the 21st CCLC program, the evaluation posed three major questions, each of which involved two or three minor questions for analysis. The key questions were:

Question #1. How successful were sub-grantees in implementing 21st CCLC programs?

Question #2. Did sub-grantees achieve MDE short-term and intermediate outcomes?

Question #3. What modifications should MDE and its sub-grantees make in order to accomplish the long-term goals of the state board of education?

EVALUATION SCOPE

At the onset of the project, MDE and the evaluator agreed that the new cohort of fifteen sub-grantees, funded for the first time in fall 2017, would be the focus of the evaluation. The study would assess their performance during the school year and the following summer (2018).

METHODOLOGY

Two factors had a major impact in shaping the evaluation's design. A Statement of Work issued by MDE in soliciting the external evaluator stipulated outcomes of interest and data sources for the study. In addition, MDE provided the evaluator with a logic model of the state's 21st CCLC program. The evaluator then revised the logic model in order to frame the needs of the evaluation more specifically. Consistent with the nature of the grant program, primary outcomes of interest pertain to students who participate in programs during the school year. Therefore, the study did not include summer programs in most analyses but provided descriptive statistics regarding their operation.

DATA

Data for the evaluation came primarily from three sources: Mississippi Department of Education, an online parent survey (N=98), and an online survey of 21st CCLC center directors (N=35). The Office of Federal Programs collected data on student participants and program centers as reported by sub-grantees in EXCEL spreadsheets. This information was then shared with the evaluator using a secure access point online provided by MDE.

Across the state's fifteen new sub-grantees, roughly 3,728 students participated in 21st CCLC program activities. Of these, 85 percent (3,157) did so during the school year and about 678 attended programs in the summer. (Among the latter, 107 also participated during the school year.) Notably, 48 percent (1,529/3157) of students who attended after school programs during the school year did so on a regular basis, defined as 30 days or more. The figure on the subsequent page compares regular versus non-regular attendees on several demographic characteristics.

LIMITATIONS

Certain limitations should be taken into account when weighing the evaluation's results. The study's non-experimental design precludes the ability to attribute outcomes directly to the intervention. Strictly speaking, outcomes should be interpreted as associations rather than as causes of participation in afterschool. Another key consideration was data quality. In several instances, substantial quantities of data were found either missing, unclear, or erroneous. Such circumstances may naturally influence the accuracy and quality of estimates generated by analyses.

Demographic Comparisons between Regular and Non-regular Attendees In 21st CCLC Programs During School Year 2017-18

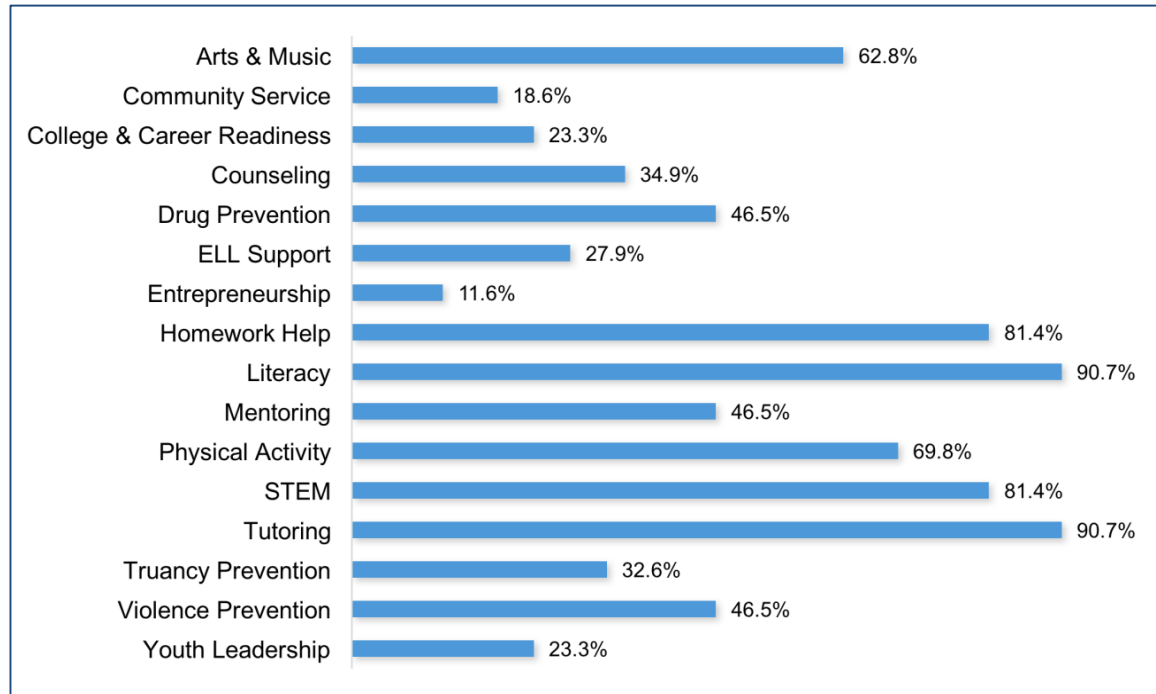
(Regular Attendees = 1,529; Non-regular Attendees = 2,199)



During the school year and summer, students and their families took part in a wide range of enrichment activities at 21st CCLC programs across the state. For a list of activity types, see the illustration on the next page.

Percent of Centers Implementing Activity Types

(N=49)

**MAJOR FINDINGS**

1. In general, sub-grantees implemented 21st CCLC programs as proposed in grant applications. Discrepancies were found in administrative records, however, between expected and reported student enrollment and some operational outcomes. Nonetheless, overall, afterschool administrators appear to have used effective practices in operating their programs.

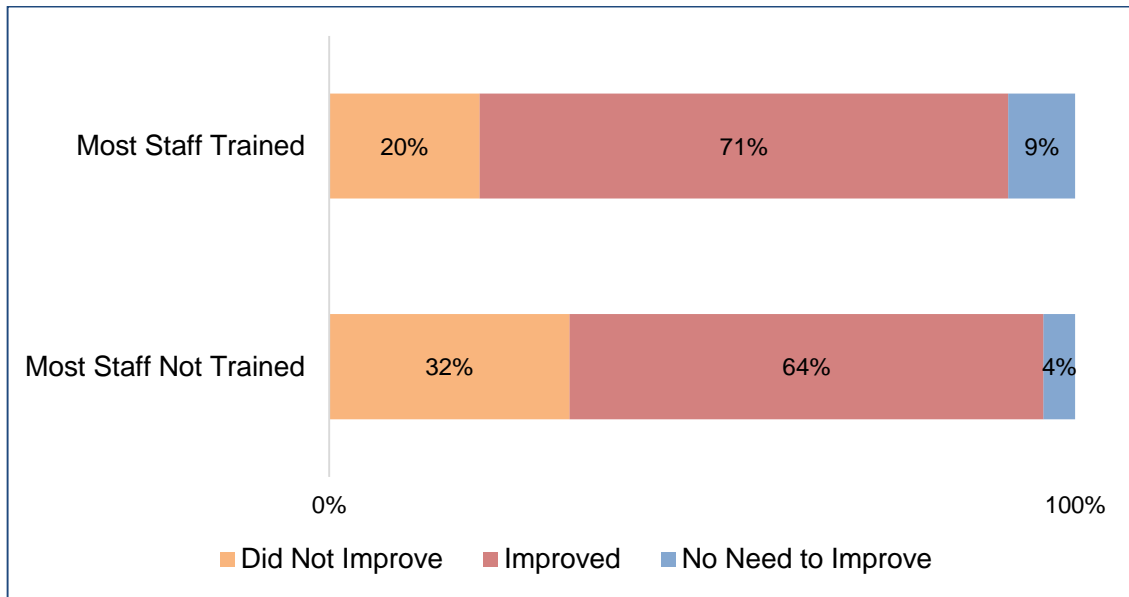
2. In general, relationships between student outcomes and participation in afterschool programs were positive and statistically significant. In addition, there was a positive and statistically significant relationship between student attendance and MDE training. Students who attended 21st CCLC centers where administrators indicated most or all staff members had received MDE training were more likely to show improvements in behaviors and grades at regular school. (See next page.)

3. Parents expressed positive perceptions and high levels of satisfaction regarding afterschool centers in general. Nearly 60% of those surveyed strongly agreed that their child benefitted from afterschool participation and that they were satisfied with the quality of services at their child's afterschool center overall. Moreover, most parents (75%) agreed or strongly agreed that they felt better able to communicate with school personnel about their child or other topics.

4. The main challenges that sub-grantees experienced during the school year and summer were family involvement, student engagement, and concerns about time or timing of grant activities at the state and sub-grantee levels.

Teacher-Reported Improvement in Reading/English Language Arts
By Level of MDE Training

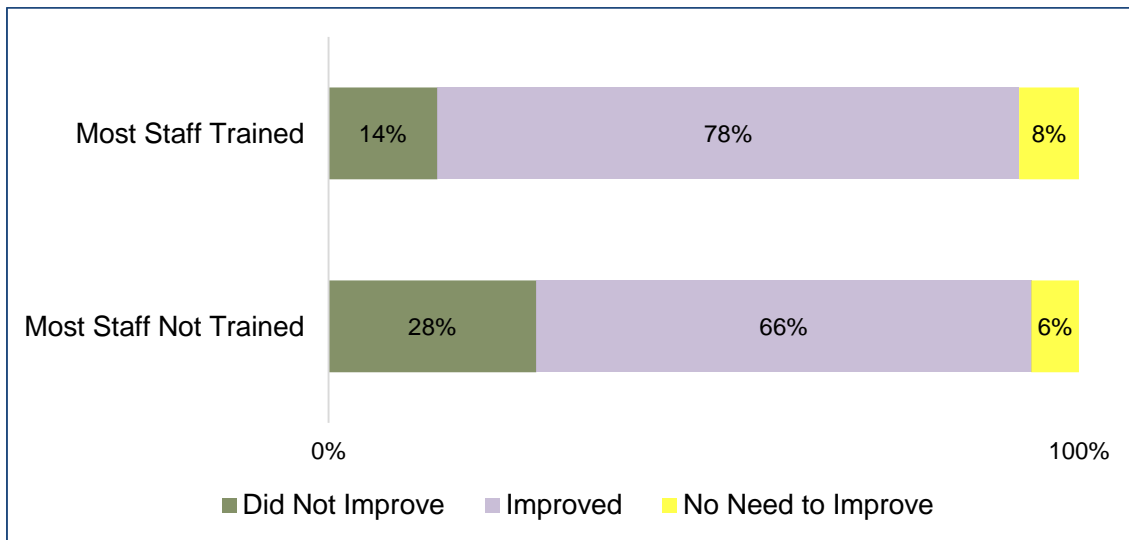
(n=701)



Pearson's chi-squared test ($\chi^2 = 10.77$; p-value = .005)

Teacher-Reported Improvement in Mathematics
By Level of MDE Training

(n=638)



Pearson's chi-squared test ($\chi^2 = 10.00$; p-value = .007)

CONCLUSIONS

In general, sub-grantees were rather successful in implementing 21st CCLC programs. Almost all center directors indicated that their programs had been implemented as proposed. Importantly, analyses of multiple indicators of program operation, including student participation, revealed relatively high levels of consistency between what sub-grantees proposed in their grant applications and what they actually accomplished after receiving awards.

Most notably, analyses of data from sub-grantee teacher reports, parents, and center directors offered substantial and consistent evidence that the grant program's short-term and intermediate outcomes were accomplished. First and foremost, analyses found statistically significant and positive relationships between MDE training/assistance and all student outcomes. These findings are arguably the most important results revealed by the investigation.

The positive experiences that parents had with 21st CCLC centers may be the study's second most salient finding. Yet, despite the positive perceptions reported by parents toward afterschool programs, parent and family involvement stood out as challenges to afterschool programs, as reported by center directors in a survey. The low-level of parent survey participation underscored this concern.

Data quality was an issue of concern. Thus, the quantity of data found missing in the study threatens the validity of its findings. Notwithstanding this shortcoming, sub-grantees appear to have made substantial progress towards the short-term and intermediate goals of the state's 21st CCLC program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Professional Development

1. To improve the quality of sub-grantee programs, MDE should provide additional training and assistance in key areas identified in this study, namely: parent involvement, student engagement, and data management. Of course, these training should disseminate research-based strategies as well as pertinent findings from this report.
2. MDE should take the following steps to accomplish the above: Review the content of trainings and technical assistance provided in 2017, "Regional Technical Assistance Workshops" and "Evaluation Guidance." Use content from these trainings as a basis for repeating the workshops and designing new ones. The latter should build upon the former by addressing concerns identified in this study more specifically.
3. Provide opportunities for sub-grantees to learn from each other's successes. Accordingly, MDE is encouraged to incorporate sub-grantees as presenters or instructors in its professional development activities, allowing them to showcase their successes and share insights with other sub-grantees. To promote efficiency, some training might be conducted online as webinars. To promote effectiveness, some might be done in person at local or regional meetings.

4. Maintain ongoing communication and evaluation of professional development activities to determine levels of satisfaction and effectiveness as well as to inform the development of new training topics and needs. As a jumpstart in this direction, plan to hold the first in a series of professional development trainings by February 2019. Make it a point to conduct evaluations of all such activities to capture written feedback for easy reference in future planning.
5. To promote family involvement, particularly in summer programs, consider sub-grantee suggestions found in this study, such as making more home visits and host parental engagement events where they provide families with transportation to facilitate participation. Suggestions on this topic and others should be both an aim and a by-product of professional development activities. Therefore, encourage interaction and sharing of ideas at these events.
6. Thinking ahead, MDE trainings might also encompass the topic of developing sustainability plans to help prepare sub-grantees to eventually replace 21st CCLC funding. This topic received the lowest average score among sub-grantee applications, yet it is vital to their long-term success.

Data Management/ Program Evaluation

7. The evaluation found 68 duplicate student records. In the future, MDE staff could require sub-grantees to upload their data into an online data validation tool that automatically checks the data for similar inconsistencies.
8. To enable more accurate estimates of student participation and outcomes, assign unique identification numbers to all students.
9. Based on the analysis of the student data templates, sub-grantees experienced confusion about the periods for reporting attendance. Specifically, it appears that attendance in fall 2017 was actually attendance in summer 2018. MDE should resolve this discrepancy immediately and inform sub-grantees accordingly.
10. Over a quarter of the outcome data on student behavior was missing for regular attendees. MDE, therefore, might consult with center directors who reported high response rates on this and other data elements in order to identify steps or guidance for improving data collection at all centers.
11. To improve data quality, encourage sub-grantees to review data internally on a monthly basis.
12. While providing teacher reports on student characteristics and outcomes to the evaluator was efficient, doing so was associated with substantial quantities of missing data and may also have invited biased self-reports by some teachers. In future evaluations, therefore, consider the feasibility of enabling the evaluator to collect such information directly from school systems and sub-grantees.

13. To the extent possible, identify and involve MDE evaluation stakeholders at the onset of, if not prior to, implementation of the evaluation process. Doing so will help to ensure that MDE's evaluation needs are sufficiently addressed.

Technical Assistance

14. Beginning this fall, monitor sub-grantee data collection activity on a quarterly basis. To do so, require quarterly submissions of attendance data for MDE review and then provide feedback within thirty days.
15. To improve data quality, consider another wave of technical assistance training that revises and reviews current data collection forms.
16. To resolve discrepancies reported in the numbers of centers and site directors/coordinators, MDE should conduct site visits to all centers this fall.
17. To improve efficiency in online survey administration and accuracy in reporting results, enable the evaluator to administer the survey directly by providing an up-to-date list of the intended participants and their emails.
18. In so far as some sub-grantees did not take part in the director survey and apparently did not submit other data to MDE for this evaluation, remind all sub-grantees to comply with general assurances indicated in their grant applications. In particular, emphasize item #10 (Public Law 107-110), which states: "The grantee will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation of each such programs conducted by or for the State educational agency, the Secretary or other Federal officials..."
19. To resolve conflicting information in grant applications regarding summer program operation, when monitoring sites during the fall and/or spring, confirm summer operation intentions. This action step may be performed along with other site visit activities or conducted independently as a simple survey via email or an online survey with other items being monitored.
20. In future trainings, instruct sub-grantees to collect teacher reports on student behaviors and achievement from teachers outside of their own programs, to the extent feasible. This step should help to reduce the potential for biased responses from teachers within the program.

21st Century Community Learning Centers Program Evaluation

BACKGROUND

In fiscal year 2017, the U.S. Department of Education awarded approximately one billion dollars to states and territories through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (21st CCLC). Under federal legislation (Title IV, Part B, as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act), the purpose of the program is to create community-based learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities for children in high-poverty and low-performing schools. In addition, centers may offer a broad range of enrichment activities as well as educational services to the families of participating children.

Through 21st CCLC, the Department recently awarded the State of Mississippi funding to fulfill this mission. In turn, Mississippi Department of Education funded more than fifty afterschool centers across the state in fiscal year 2018. Such funding supports the advancement of strategic goals established by the state board of education. Given the breadth of its purposes, 21st CCLC funding also aligns well with the board's stated vision:

“To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens.”

In effort to determine the extent of progress towards these aims and for accountability to the Department, MDE sought an external evaluator to provide an independent assessment of the effectiveness of sub-grantee programs. Thus, in June 2018, the Office of Federal Programs, which oversees the grant, contracted Align Education, LLC. Located in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The consulting firm has significant experience in working with the 21st CCLC federal grant program. Aside from evaluating the program in three other states, the company has trained evaluators of 21st CCLC programs nationwide, as a member of the American Evaluation Association. Furthermore, in recent years, the firm has provided professional development to program operators at national conferences on afterschool.

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The overall purposes of the evaluation were to assess the short-term and intermediate outcomes of 21st CCLC program among participants, and to make recommendations for continuous improvement to MDE and its sub-grantees. The grant aims to advance the goals of Mississippi Board of Education by: (1) increasing academic growth and proficiency among students on statewide assessments, (2) increasing graduation rates, and (3) improving parent engagement in low-performing schools. In effort to assess progress towards these goals through the 21st CCLC program, the evaluation posed three major questions, each of which involved two or three minor questions for analysis. Those questions are listed below.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SCOPE

Question #1. How successful were sub-grantees in implementing 21st CCLC programs?

- 1a. What assistance did sub-grantees receive from MDE and did it impact their performance?
- 1b. To what extent did sub-grantees implement programs as proposed?
- 1c. To what degree did sub-grantees use effective practices in operating programs?

Question #2. Did sub-grantees achieve MDE's short-term and intermediate outcomes?

- 2a. To what extent have expected changes in behavior or capacity occurred among participants?
- 2b. What level of progress have sub-grantees made towards their proposed objectives?

Question #3. What modifications should MDE and its sub-grantees make in order to accomplish the long-term goals of the state board of education?

- 3a. What challenges did sub-grantees experience in implementing their programs?
- 3b. What types of assistance do sub-grantees need in order to promote their progress?

At the onset of the project, MDE and the evaluator agreed that the new cohort of fifteen sub-grantees, funded for the first time in fall 2017, would be the focus of the evaluation. The study would assess their performance during that same school year and the following summer.

METHODOLOGY

Two factors had a major impact in shaping the evaluation's design. A Statement of Work issued by MDE in soliciting an external evaluator stipulated outcomes of interest and data sources for the study. In addition, MDE provided the evaluator with a logic model of the state's 21st CCLC program. The evaluator then revised the logic model so as to frame the needs of the evaluation more specifically; see Figure 1 on page 15 for an illustration. The logic model depicts the intent of the evaluation design not only to convey, but also examine relationships between the essential components of MDE's 21st

CCLC program. Other sources¹ also contributed to the study's framework and plan, which the evaluator developed and then reviewed with staff in MDE's Office of Federal Programs.

Notwithstanding the intent of the logic model, contextual factors surrounding the evaluation had a major role in determining its overall design and the specific methods used to explore evaluation questions. Where feasible, the study employed a pre-post evaluation design, comparing outcome measures of interest near the beginning and end of the school year. As the primary outcomes of interest pertain to students who participated in programs during the school year, the study did not include summer programs in most analyses but provided descriptive statistics regarding their operation. Thus, as the initial evaluation in a three-year funding cycle, the study's outcomes provide a baseline for future comparisons.

DATA

Data for the evaluation came primarily from three sources: Mississippi Department of Education, an online survey of 21st CCLC center directors, and an online parent survey. Both surveys were designed by the evaluator and reviewed by OFP staff members prior to online posting. The Office of Federal Programs collected both data on student participants and program centers as reported by sub-grantees in sub-grantee data spreadsheets (EXCEL). This information was then shared with the evaluator using a secure access point online provided by MDE. Aside from demographic characteristics, student data included: numbers of school and summer days attended, and teacher reports on changes of student behavior and achievement.

Students

Roughly 3,728 students participated in 21st CCLC program activities. Of these, 85 percent (3,157) did so during the school year and about 678 attended during the summer. (Among the latter, 107 also participated during the school year.) Notably, 48 percent (1,529/3157) of students who attended afterschool programs during the school year did so on a regular basis, defined as 30 days or more.

By grade level, regular attendees comprised 74.2% elementary, 21.5% middle, and 4.3% high school students. By gender, 50.7% were male and 49.2% were female (0.1% missing). By race and ethnicity, 69.6% were Black or African American, 24.0% were White, 4.6% were Hispanic or Latino, and 1.8% were from other backgrounds. By socioeconomic status, 75.5% were eligible for free or reduced price lunch and 8.1% were ineligible (16.4% missing data). In addition, 3.3% were limited English proficiency (LEP) students (10.0% missing data), and 8.9% were receiving special education services (31.5% missing data). Notably, both high school students and White students were less likely than others to attend after school programs on a regular basis. See Table 1 on page 16 and Figure 2 on page 17, for illustrations of student data.

Parents

The parent survey explored their participation in and perceptions of afterschool activities and services. For eligibility, one parent or adult family member per student participant had to agree with two conditions: (1) that their child participated in a 21st CCLC program during the school year, and (2) that they, the parent or family member, agreed to participate voluntarily in the survey. The result was a convenience sample of 98 parent participants across all sub-grantees.

As a convenience sample, results are unlikely to be representative of all parents. The majority (73%) were women. Most (75%) were between the ages of 25 and 45 years old. By race/ethnicity, 68% identified as African American or Black, 20% identified as Caucasian or White, and the remainder included Asian Americans, Hispanics, and other groups. As for education level, 40% had some college, 26% finished high school, 13% had a bachelor's degree, 9% had a master's or doctorate, and 1% had less than a high school diploma. See Figure 4 on page 22.

Centers

Thirty-five staff participants from 12 sub-grantees took part in the director survey. According to the Office of Federal Programs there were 52 centers and 45 directors in 2017-18. Hence, the director survey response rate was about 78%². Survey items are discussed in detail under findings. Notably, there were discrepancies in the numbers of centers and directors identified (see Table 2, page 18). The evaluator found 49 centers listed in the data spreadsheets collected by MDE. Moreover, based on the survey responses, about nine directors or site coordinators did not participate. Center-level data include several elements describing the number of centers, operational times, staff members, and activities.

Operations

The sub-grantees reported operating times in terms of hours, days, and weeks. Specifically, the centers documented 1) number of hours open per week before, during, and after school, 2) number of hours operating per week on weekends or holidays, 3) total weekly operating hours, 4) number of days open per week, and 5) total number of weeks open.

Most centers opened after regular school day time and on weekdays. Table 3 (page 19) shows the typical operational schedule for the 21st CCLC program by sub-grantee. The average hours open per week after school ranged from 3 to 25 hours, and total weekly operating hours varied between 7 and 35 hours. Most programs ran 3 or 4 days a week and for 15 weeks in total. At first glance, the Boys & Girls Clubs of East Mississippi sub-grantee provided most frequent hours of service in spring. However, data from only one participating center was recorded and could have possibly skewed the results. Moreover, the participating center in the Tougaloo sub-grantee reported to begin implementing the program in March, which explains a smaller number of weeks open compared to other centers. On average, the state-level data reveals that a center ran the 21st CCLC program 4 days a week for a total of 12 hours and for 15 weeks in spring.

Staffing

The centers indicated the number of regular staff members by position and employment type during spring operations. Each position reflected different responsibility and training and could be recruited by centers through paid or volunteer opportunities. In general, a center participating in the 21st CCLC initiative reported hiring 7 school day teachers and 2 other non-instructional staff offering services such as security and transportation. Additionally, a typical center recruited 1 college student and 1 school day teacher as volunteers.

During the school year, a typical center employed 17 staff members, 12 were paid and 5 were volunteers. As Figure 3.1 (page 20) displays that school day teachers accounted for 64 percent of all paid positions. Other non-instructional staff represented 21 percent, and another 6 percent were administrators. The top three positions among volunteer staff members were college students (26 percent), school day teachers (24 percent), and high school students (15 percent).

Services

Program centers provided a wide variety of services and activities to support the initiative. The centers reported frequency and participation for activities under 16 categories that captured the primary purpose of the activity. For example, the category of College & Career Readiness defines “an activity that prepares students to enroll and succeed in a credit bearing course at a postsecondary institution or a high quality certificate program with a career pathway to future advancement.” In addition, regardless of promoting college and career readiness in independent sessions, centers were encouraged to incorporate the awareness in designing other services and activities offered.

The 16 categories listed below show the breath of activities offered by the program that aimed to enhance students’ academic achievement as well as mental, physical, social, and other qualities in development. Figure 3.2 (page 21) indicates the average proportion among 43 centers implementing each type of activities. The most common activities administered in spring were Literacy and Tutoring sessions where they were offered by 91 percent of the centers in the program. Eighty-one (81) percent of the centers conducted sessions targeting Homework Help and STEM, respectively. Physical Activity was also popular where 70 percent of the centers provided the service. Conversely, Entrepreneurship sessions were least likely to be implemented by centers.

LIMITATIONS

Certain limitations should be taken into account when weighing the evaluation's results. The first has to do with the design of the study itself. Although the evaluator's initial intent was to conduct a quasi-experimental analysis, it was not feasible to obtain comparison data within the study's timeframe. The reader should be aware therefore that the study's non-experimental design precludes the ability to attribute outcomes directly to the intervention. Strictly speaking, outcomes should be interpreted as associations rather than as causes of participation in afterschool.

Another factor, key in any study, was the quality of data. In several instances, varying quantities of data were found either missing, unclear, or erroneous. Such circumstances naturally may influence the accuracy and quality of estimates generated by analyses. Moreover, all student-level data elements (variables) provided by MDE to the evaluator were reported by sub-grantees, which may introduce bias in the analysis. Additional information regarding methodology and limitations is provided in findings under each evaluation sub-question.

Figure 1. 21st CCLC Program Evaluation Logic Model

21 ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS			
Program Goals: To advance goals of Mississippi Board of Education by: (1) increasing academic growth and proficiency among students on statewide assessments, (2) increasing graduation rates, and (3) improving parent engagement in low-performing schools.			
Activities <i>(In order to serve the needs of program participants effectively, we will enact these activities.)</i>	Outputs <i>(We expect these activities to produce the following evidence of service delivery.)</i>	Short-term Outcomes <i>(Within year 1)</i>	Intermediate Outcomes <i>(Within years 1 - 2)</i>
1. Coordinate sub-grantee approval process.	# and topics of technical assistance trainings among prospects # prospects at trainings # application reviews and guides used to assess them	Sub-grantees acquire knowledge of programmatic and fiscal operations for effective 21 st CCLC implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved delivery of 21st CCLC programs • Improved participation in 21st CCLC programs among students and parents • Decrease in number of school behavioral and disciplinary issues • Increase in school attendance and academic achievement
2. Provide ESSA guidance and training.	# and topics of technical assistance trainings among sub-grantees # and % participants at trainings	Sub-grantees use evidence-based strategies and effective practices to implement and develop 21 st CCLC programs.	
3. Conduct on-site monitoring sub-grantees.	# and topics of on-site monitoring of sub-grantees # and nature of recommendations for continuous improvement		
4. Perform annual statewide evaluation.	Report of statewide effectiveness of MDE and sub-grantee efforts; # and nature of recommendations for continuous improvement	Transparency of program processes and outcomes; increased capacity of MDE and sub-grantees to identify and address areas of strength as well as weakness	

Table 1. Regular versus Non-regular Student Attendees
in 21st CCLC Programs by Sub-grantee

(N=3,278)

		Regular Attendee?		Total	
		No	Yes		
Sub-Grantee Name	Alcorn School District	Count	234	205	439
			53.3%	46.7%	100.0%
	BGC of East Mississippi	Count	21	118	139
			15.1%	84.9%	100.0%
	Carroll County School District	Count	143	28	171
			83.6%	16.4%	100.0%
	Columbia School District	Count	373	205	578
			64.5%	35.5%	100.0%
	Columbus Municipal School District	Count	41	33	74
			55.4%	44.6%	100.0%
	Corinth School District	Count	48	41	89
			53.9%	46.1%	100.0%
	Greenwood Public School District	Count	127	262	389
			32.6%	67.4%	100.0%
	Hinds County School District	Count	1	308	309
			0.3%	99.7%	100.0%
	McComb School District	Count	70	19	89
			78.7%	21.3%	100.0%
	Mississippi State University	Count	12	109	121
			9.9%	90.1%	100.0%
	South Panola School District	Count	765	56	821
			93.2%	6.8%	100.0%
	South Tippah School District	Count	115	144	259
			44.4%	55.6%	100.0%
	Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District	Count	193	1	194
			99.5%	0.5%	100.0%
	Tougaloo College	Count	56	0	56
			100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	2199	1529	3728
			59.0%	41.0%	100.0%

Figure 2. Demographic Comparisons between Regular and Non-regular Attendees

(Regular Attendees = 1,529; Non-regular Attendees = 2,199)

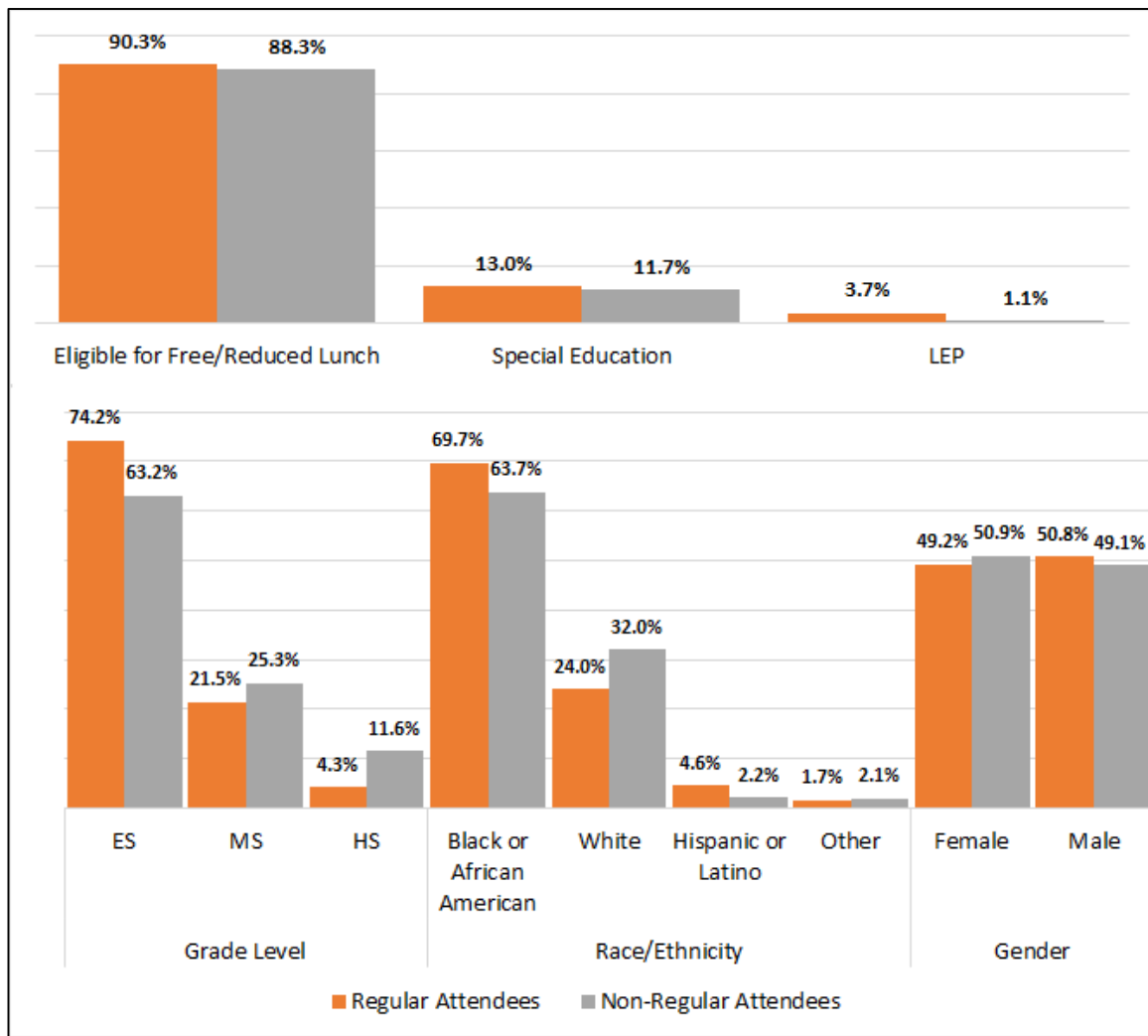


Table 2. Discrepancies in Numbers of Centers and Coordinators

Sub-grantee Name	# Sites Found in MDE Data	# of Sites*	# of Site Coordinators*	# of Coordinators in Survey
Alcorn School District	9	9	3	9
Boys & Girls Clubs of East MS	1	3	3	4
Carroll County School District	1	1	1	2
Columbia School District	5	5	5	2
Columbus Municipal School District	1	1	1	1
Corinth School District	5	4	3	0
Greenwood Public School District	3	3	3	3
Hinds County School District	2	2	2	0
McComb School District	3	4	3	1
Mississippi State University*	1	1	2	2
South Panola School District	8	8	6	6
South Tippah School District	5	5	5	0
SR1	1	1	1	1
Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated	3	3	3	3
Tougaloo College	1	2	4	1
Total	49	52	45	35
*Reported by MDE; MSU site had 2 co-directors.				

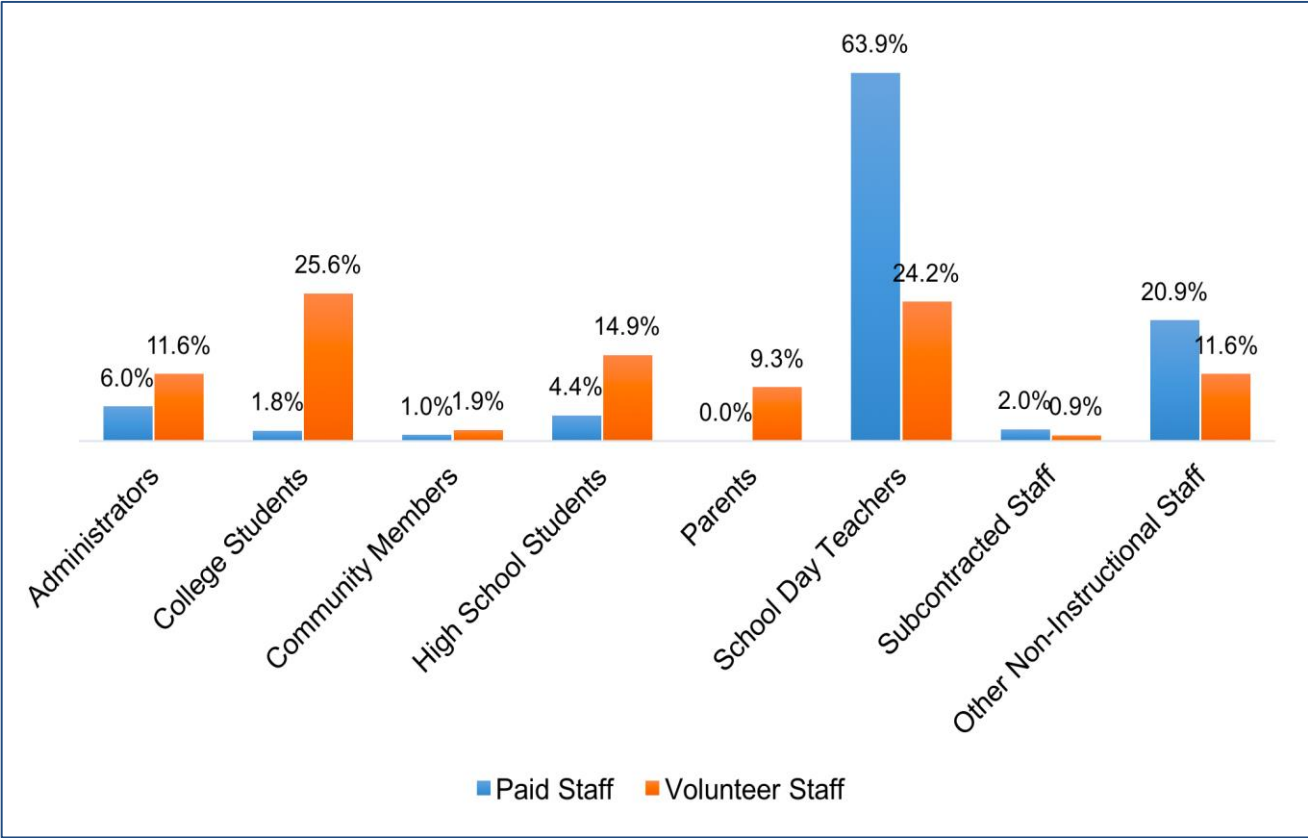
Table 3. Average Hours, Days, and Weeks in Operation by Sub-grantee

Sub-grantee	Typical Hours per Week After School	Total Hours per Week	Typical Days per Week	Total Numbers of Weeks
Alcorn	7	17	4	13
Boys & Girls Clubs	25	35	6	.
Carroll	10	10	4	15
Columbia	4	10	4	17
Columbus	9	9	3	18
Corinth	11	19	4	15
Greenwood	9	9	4	15
Hinds	10	10	4	19
McComb	5	10	3	15
MSU	3	10	4	18
South Panola	6	7	3	11
South Tippah	8	8	3	15
Starkville	6	9	4	13
Tougaloo	12	12	4	7
State Average	9	12	4	15

The total number of weeks open was recoded missing for the Boys & Girls Clubs sub-grantee due to an outlier.

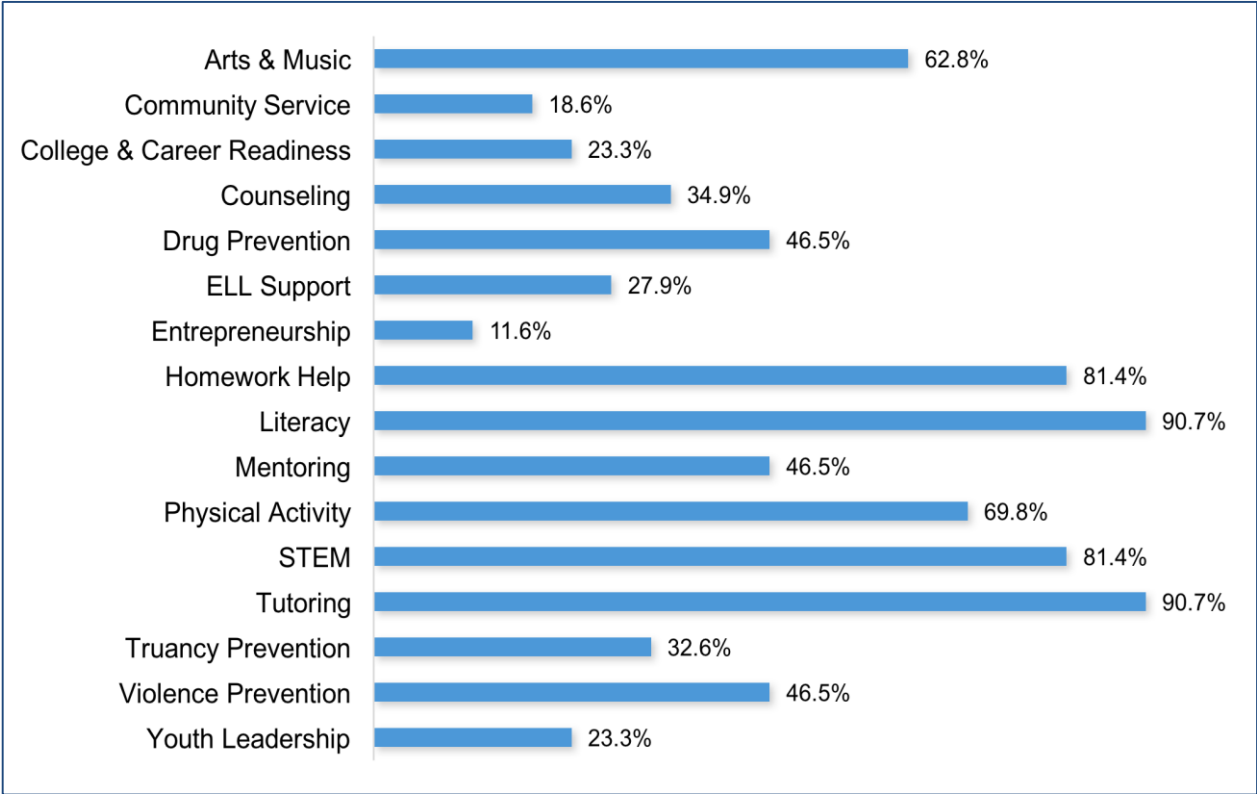
Figure 3.1. Average Percent of Center Staff by Role

Paid (N = 502), Volunteer (N = 215)



Other non-instructional staff refers to program staff that involved in services or activities such as security, custodial, clerical, athletic, or transportation as well as other staff types not listed above.

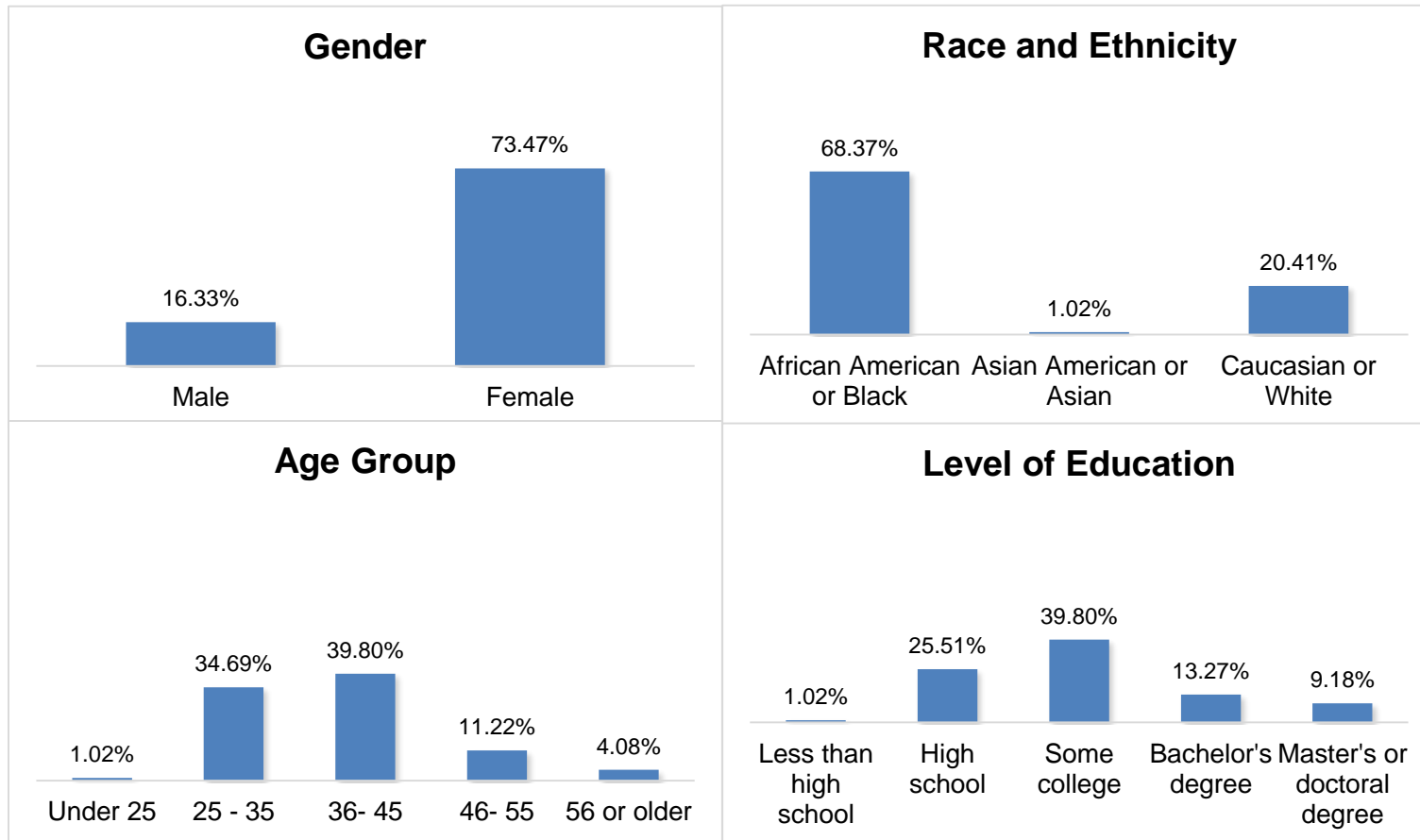
Figure 3.2. Percent of Centers Implementing Activities by Category
(N=49)



ELL Support refers to English Language Learners Support.

Figure 4. Demographic Profile of Parent Survey Participants

(N=98)



FINDINGS

Q1a. What assistance did sub-grantees receive from MDE and did it impact their performance?

Major Findings: MDE provided technical assistance and trainings to sub-grantees in at least three specific areas: grant application preparation, financial management, and program evaluation. A relatively small portion of sub-grantees actually attended these activities, however. The majority of site administrators who did attend believed that the assistance helped staff members to perform their jobs. Ratings of sub-grantee proposals point to areas of strength as well as potential needs for future training and assistance.

Table 4. Types of Technical Assistance and Training Provided to Sub-grantees

Date	Title
08/14-23/17	21st Century Community Learning Centers: Regional Technical Assistance Workshops
10/13/17	21st Century Community Learning Centers: Grants Management Training
12/6/17	Evaluation Guidance: Guidance from the Mississippi Department of Education

Source: Mississippi State Department of Education website, Summer 2018.

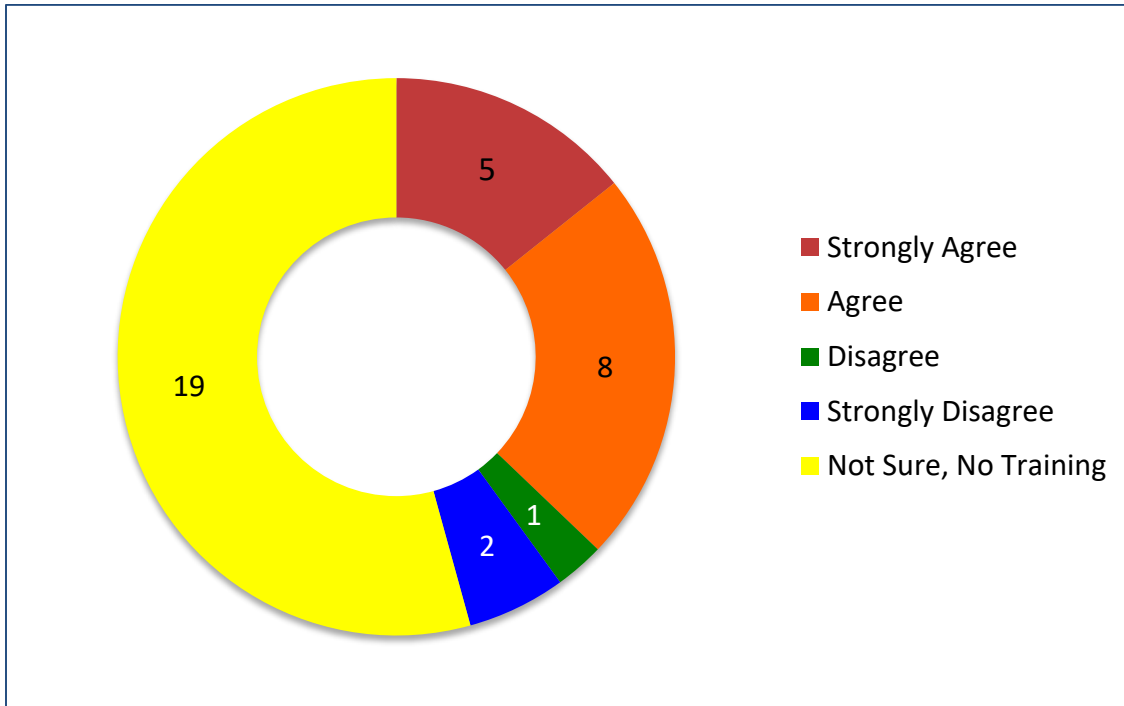
Particularly worthy of note with respect to these trainings and assistance was the level of attendance among sub-grantees. Seventeen out of thirty-five center administrators (49%) who took part in the director survey indicated that they received such trainings/assistance. Of these, nine reported that all or most of their staff members and volunteers did so. Based on this information, many sub-grantee staff members and volunteers did not received trainings and technical assistance sponsored by MDE.

Those who did engage in such activities reported rather high levels of satisfaction with the quality and quantity provided. For example, out of the seventeen that reported receiving training, twelve agreed or strongly agreed that the quality as well as quantity of assistance by MDE was sufficient.

Most importantly, as for whether the training and assistance had an impact on sub-grantee performance, thirteen out of seventeen directors that attended trainings (76%) agreed or strongly agreed that the assistance had helped staff members to become effective in their jobs.

Figure 5. Frequency of Center Director Responses to Survey Question on Training Effects

“The technical assistance/training sponsored by MDE
helped program staff members to become effective in their jobs.”
(N = 35)



The evaluation also sought to assess effects of MDE trainings from a less subjective perspective than sub-grantee survey responses. It did so by analyzing the results of ratings used to score sub-grantee proposal applications. Using sub-grantee grant applications as a source of evidence for responding to the evaluation question above is reasonable for at least three reasons:

1. First, based on descriptions of activities in the PPT slides, MDE TA/trainings were directly related to topics found in the grant applications.
2. Second, MDE obviously felt the topics addressed in TA/trainings provided important and useful information for sub-grantees.
3. Third, grant applications constitute, in essence, the blueprints that sub-grantees proposed to design and implement their afterschool programs.

We were able to calculate the strengths and weaknesses of all sub-grantees as the mean of scores assigned to each criterion by two or more independent reviewers. Table 5 displays the results. The top 3 areas of strength (shaded in green) were the needs assessment, budget overview, narrative, and summary, and advisory council and operation partnerships. The top 3 weaknesses among sub-grantees were sustainability plan, staffing and professional development, and student recruitment and retention.

Table 5. Overall Average Ratings of Sub-grantee Proposal Applications in Fall 2017

(N=15)

Proposal Application Criteria	Overall Average
Needs Assessment	92.3%
Budget Overview, Narrative, and Summary	91.9%
Advisory Council and Operation Partnerships	91.1%
Program Plan	90.4%
Student Safety and Transportation	88.7%
Quality Contact Time	85.1%
Collaboration and Communication	84.6%
Evaluation Plan	83.6%
Recruitment and Retention	83.2%
Staffing and Professional Development	81.4%
Sustainability Plan	77.0%

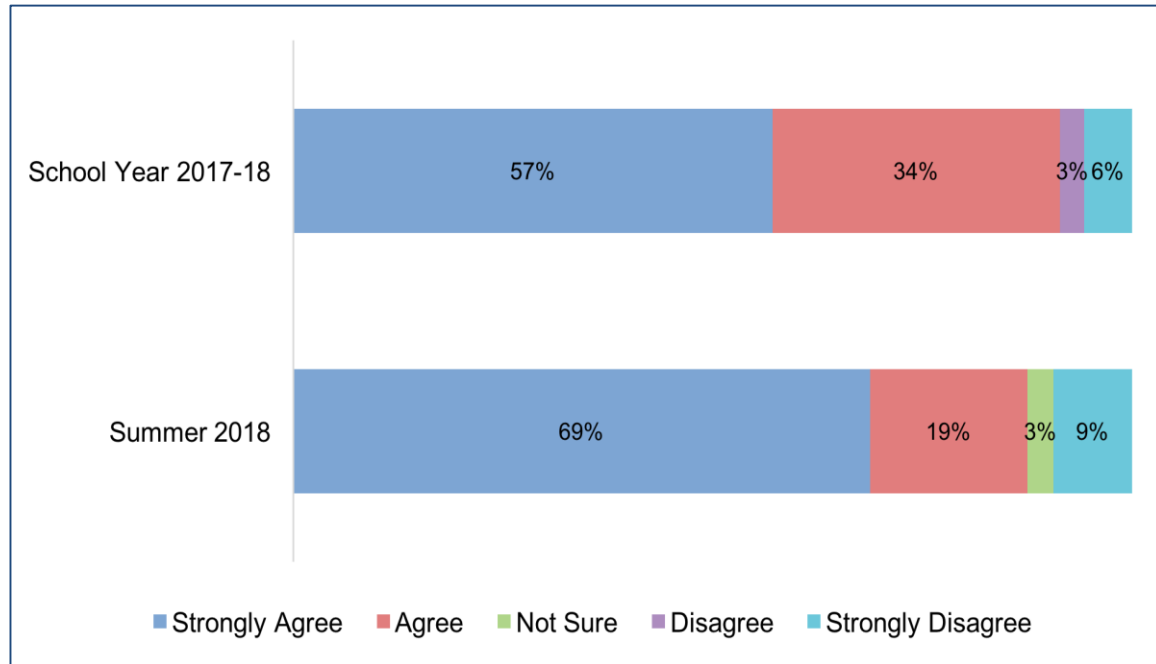
Q1b. To what extent did sub-grantees implement programs as proposed?

Major Findings: The majority of program directors concluded they had implemented programs as proposed in grant applications. However, administrative records show discrepancies in expected and completed student enrollment and operation outcomes.

When asked about perceptions of proposal completion, program officers were generally confident in having accomplished program goals set for school year 2017-18 and summer 2018 respectively. As shown in Figure 6, more than half of the administrators strongly agreed that their programs carried out services and activities they had aimed to achieve in both periods. However, a small portion indicated dissatisfaction with the program progress.

Figure 6. Distribution of Agreement among Center Directors That Programs Were Implemented As Proposed

(N=35)



When taking a closer look at whether sub-grantees achieved what they had planned for action based on administrative records, results show a slightly different picture. Table 6.1 reveals both targets and outcomes for the number of students and grade levels served by sub-grantee. Table 6.2 presents the comparisons for number of centers operated during school year and summer.

Prior to the program implementation, each sub-grantee estimated the number of students to be enrolled that varied between 100 and over 800. As seen in the center columns of Table 6.1, eight sub-grantees reached over 90 percent of expected student attendance rates. Taken together, the centers achieved 82 percent of the intended student participation. In other words, there was a gap of approximately 900 program attendees between the predicted and completed enrollment numbers.

Regarding grade levels, each sub-grantee aimed to serve different groups of students. However, most of them did not meet their goals, having failed to include a few grade levels, as revealed in the right two columns in Table 6.1.

Table 6. 1 Comparisons between Proposed and Reported Student Enrollment by Sub-grantee

Sub-grantee	Students Proposed	Students Served	Student Participation Rate	Grade Levels Proposed	Grade Levels Served
Alcorn	465	443	95%	PreK-12	K-12
Boys & Girls Clubs	260	139	53%	6-8	5-7
Carroll	120	184	153%	6-12	6-12
Columbia	825	596	72%	K-12	PreK, 1-12
Columbus	175	82	47%	6-8	6-8
Corinth	460	94	20%	PreK, 6-12	7-12
Greenwood	191	389	204%	PreK-6	K-6
Hinds	325	309	95%	2-5	2-5
McComb	230	229	100%	1-12	1-6
MSU	125	155	124%	1-4	1-4
South Panola	475	856	180%	PreK-12	K-1, 3-8
South Tippah	750	263	35%	PreK-12	PreK-12
SR1	210	29	14%	PreK-4	Not Found
Starkville	190	194	102%	PreK-2	PreK-2
Tougaloo	100	56	56%	8-12	8-10
Total	4901	4018	82%	-	-

The center in SR1 did not report student grade levels.

As Table 6.2 indicates, most sub-grantees offered services in the number of centers as outlined in applications, with only 5 sub-grantees falling short of expectations. In total, 56 centers were proposed to operate during academic year 2017-18, but only 52 centers implemented programs.

Finally, the grant applications of 6 sub-grantees communicated conflicting information as to whether they intended to operate summer programs while another 4 did not consider the operation. However, as results show in the right two columns in Table 6.2, 13 out of 15 sub-grantees delivered services in Summer 2018.

Table 6. 2 Comparisons between Proposed and Reported Center Operations

Sub-grantee	Centers Proposed	Centers Operated	Summer Program Proposed*	Summer Program Served
Alcorn	9	9	Yes	Yes
Boys & Girls Clubs	3	3	Yes	Yes
Carroll	1	1	Yes	Yes
Columbia	4	5	?	Yes
Columbus	1	1	?	Yes
Corinth	5	4	Yes	Not Found
Greenwood	5	3	No	Yes
Hinds	2	2	No	No
McComb	5	4	No	Yes
MSU	2	1	Yes	Yes
South Panola	6	8	?	Yes
South Tippah	5	5	?	Yes
SR1	1	1	Yes	Yes
Starkville	3	3	No	Yes
Tougaloo	4	2	?	Yes
Total	56	52	6	13

*? = Conflicting information

Q1c. To what degree did sub-grantees use effective practices in operating programs?

Major Findings: Based on survey responses in the director survey, sub-grantees were very satisfied in general with the level of effective practices reflected in their programs. This was so during the school year as well as in the summer.

For efficiency, the evaluation used sub-grantee satisfaction as a proxy to measure the use of effective practices. If, in their opinion, usage was relatively high, they would express satisfaction with that particular characteristic. Otherwise, they would indicate less satisfaction. Admittedly, the measure is therefore subjective. Within the constraints of time and other resources, however, the proxy provides a fair indication of the extent to which sub-grantees used effective practices.

Overall, respondents show high levels of satisfaction with the program from funding support, staff resources, institutional practices, to interactions with stakeholders such as family and community. As Figure 7 reveals, they were most happy with qualified and competent staff members, followed by funding situations and safety, health, and nutrition practices. In comparison, respondents were somewhat less satisfied with the characteristics of family involvement, community partnerships, and professional development. Similar levels of satisfaction levels were expressed in relation to summer programs. Two items, family involvement and professional development, were removed in error from the summer questionnaire item.

Figure 7. Satisfaction with Program Characteristics (Effective Practices) During School Year

(N=35)



Q2a. To what extent have expected changes in behavior or capacity occurred among participants?

Major Findings: In general, relationships between student outcomes and participation in afterschool programs were positive and statistically significant. In addition, there was a positive and statistically significant relationship between student attendance and MDE training. Specifically, students who attended 21st CCLC centers where administrators indicated most or all staff members had received MDE training were more likely to show improvement in behaviors and grades at regular school.

Student outcome data were analyzed using the pairwise deletion technique, which serves to preserve all cases in which the variables of interest are present. Academic and behavioral outcomes in order of incompleteness were: student behavior (27.7% missing), homework completion (14.5% missing), class participation (14.5% missing), teacher-reported math improvement (12.6% missing), and teacher-reported reading/language arts improvement (8.5% missing).

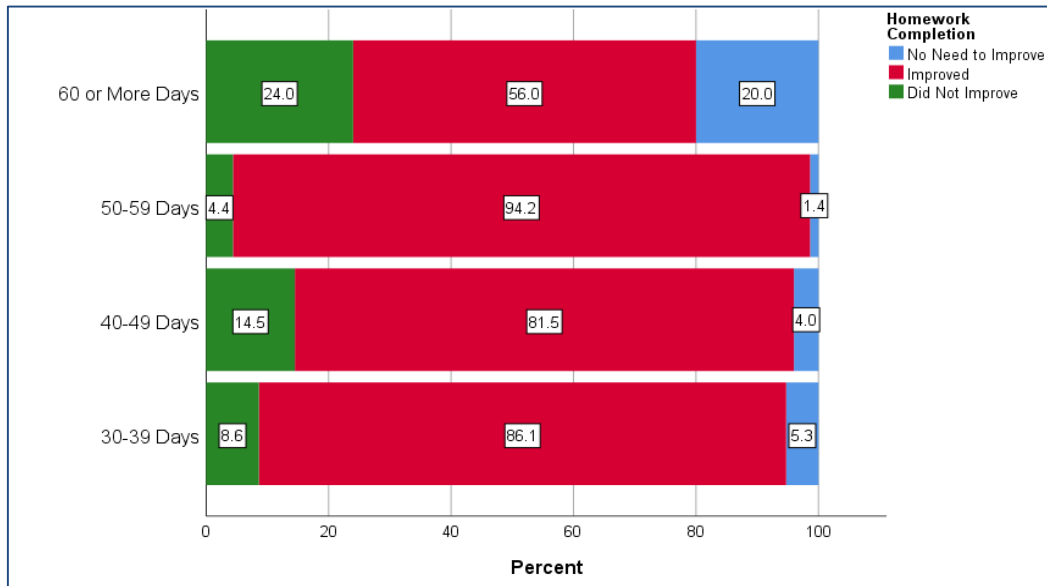
To assess effects of student attendance as well as MDE assistance received by center programs, data from participation records submitted by sub-grantees and the director survey were examined. Analyses presented in this section were conducted using data from attendees who participated in afterschool programs at least 30 days. Teachers reported student performance outcomes (behavior in school, classroom involvement, homework completion, grades in English language arts/reading, and mathematics), using three categories: “Did not improve,” “No need to improve,” and “Improved.” Three types of analysis were performed: Pearson’s correlation and chi-square, and logistic regression. In the latter, only the first and third categories were compared, and the method accounted for nested effects of center and sub-grantee programs.³ A parallel set of analyses was conducted to compare outcomes of center directors by the level of MDE training and assistance they received, as indicated in their survey.

The Relationship between Attendance and Student Outcomes

From the director survey, an important and relevant finding regarding teacher reports was revealed. Six out of 35 administrators indicated that their teacher reports from local schools only. All others said the reports came either from within their program only or from both local schools and within their own programs or they were not sure from whence they came. This finding undermines the validity of teacher reports as unbiased measures of changes at regular schools.

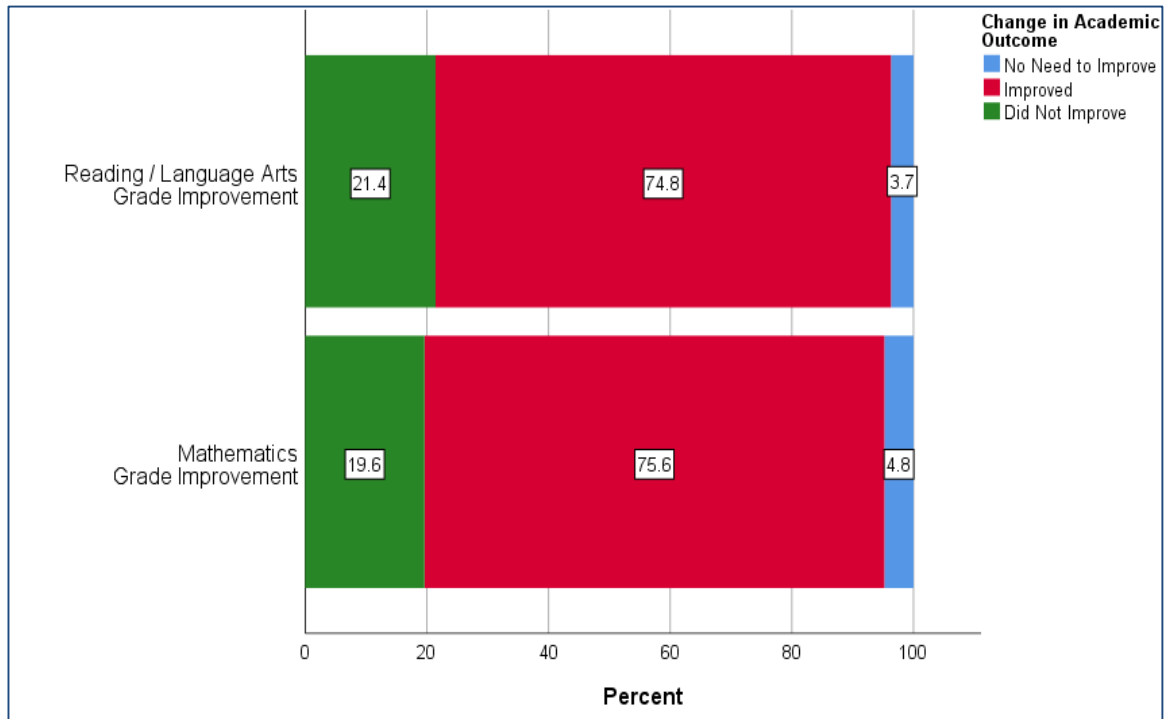
When attendance days were broken down into four groups, a Pearson’s chi-squared test revealed a statistical significant relationship between afterschool participation and student behavior improvement ($\chi^2 = 93.82$; p-value < .001). Similar outcomes resulted when conducting the same analysis with classroom involvement and homework completion. As an example of the three analyses, see Figure 8.1. Moreover, behavior and classroom participation yielded positive but slight correlations with attendance. Results from the logistic regressions, however, were not statistically significant.

Figure 8.1. Distribution of Teacher-reported Improvement in Homework Completion by Regular Attendance Category



These analyses were then applied to academic outcomes, and similar results emerged. In English language arts ($\chi^2 = 137.84$; p -value $< .001$) as well as in mathematics ($\chi^2 = 123.75$; p -value $< .001$), a positive and the statistically significant relationship was found. In both subjects, greater days of participation in afterschool were associated with higher percentages of students being rated as “Improved” by teachers. In addition, both subjects showed positive but modest correlations with attendance. Results from logistic regressions were not significant. For an illustration of the distribution of improvement categories by subject area, see Figure 8.2.

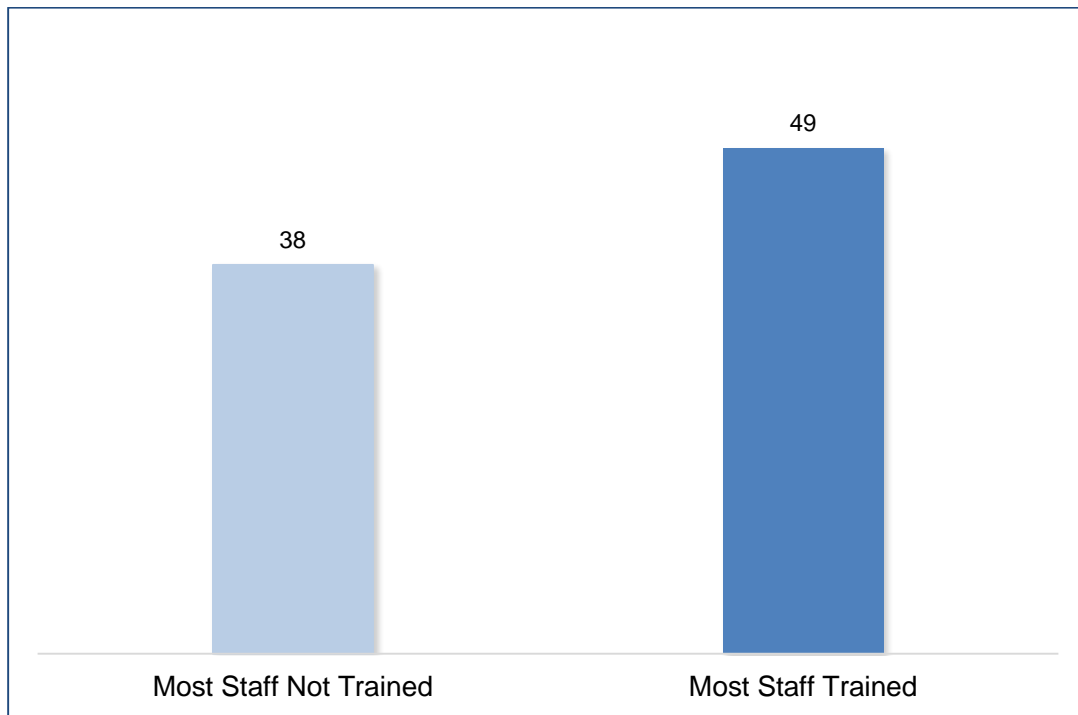
Figure 8.2. Distribution of Teacher-reported Improvement in Academic Outcomes by Subject Area



To explore these findings further, additional analyses were conducted to determine whether the training that staff members received might have impacted student behavioral and achievement outcomes. In the director survey, thirty-five program administrators from twenty-seven different centers indicated the level of assistance and training their center programs received from MDE in the past year. The responses were collapsed into two categories and relabeled as “Most Staff Trained” and “Most Staff Not Trained.” The first category, “Most Staff Trained,” represented eight centers where the director reported “all or most” of their staff members and volunteers received technical assistance or training. The other category, “Most Staff Not Trained,” included the remaining centers with less or no assistance and training at all.

Remarkably, at centers where most or all staff members received MDE training, students demonstrated 11 more days of attendance, on average, than their counterparts at other centers (49 versus 38 days, respectively). This result was statistically significant ($t = 13.34$; standard deviation = 11.24; p -value < .0001, two-tailed test). See Figure 8.3 on the next page for an illustration.

Figure 8.3. Average Days of Student Attendance by Level of MDE Training at Centers
(n=784)

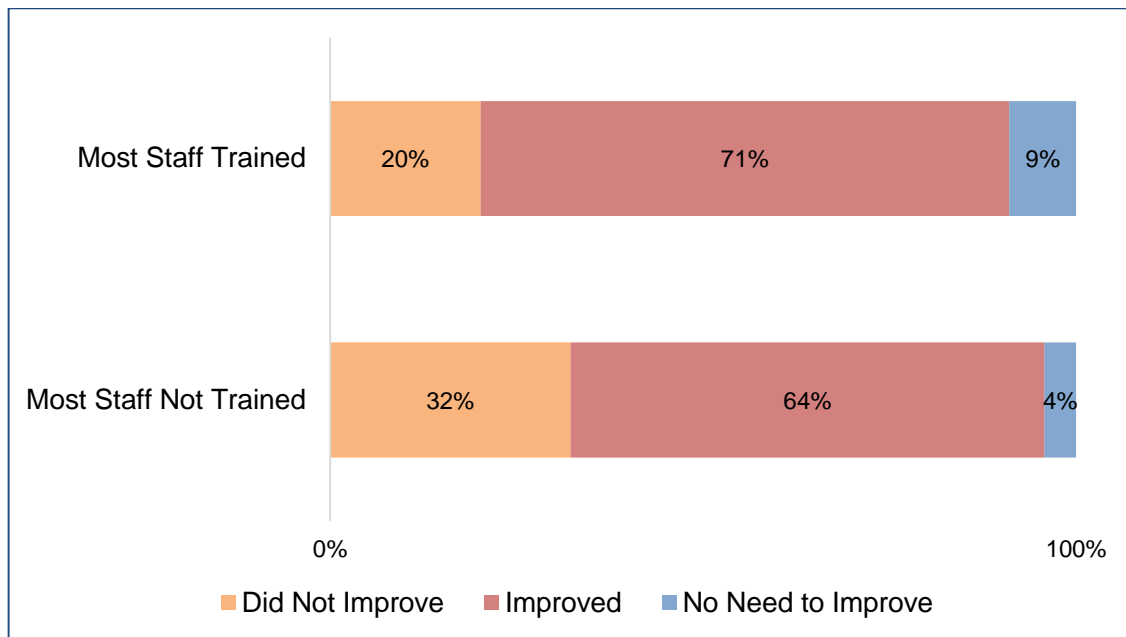


($t = 13.34$, $p\text{-value} < .0001$, two-tailed test).

Next, the evaluator repeated analyses as above but this time on the relationships between MDE training and the five outcomes of interest. Again, the results were remarkable. All five produced positive and statistically significant associations. Moreover, the logistic regression for one outcome, mathematics improvement, was positive and statistically significant (Odds ratio = 3.37, $p < .001$). In light of the study's limitations, however, this positive finding is downplayed in favor of a more conservative and qualitative interpretation. All considered, compared to students at centers where most staff members did not receive MDE training, students at centers that did were more likely to show improvement in English language arts and/or mathematics grades. For illustrations of the distribution of improvement categories by training levels, see Figures 8.4 and 8.5 below.

Figure 8.4. Distribution of Teacher-reported Improvement in Reading/ELA by Level of MDE Training at Centers

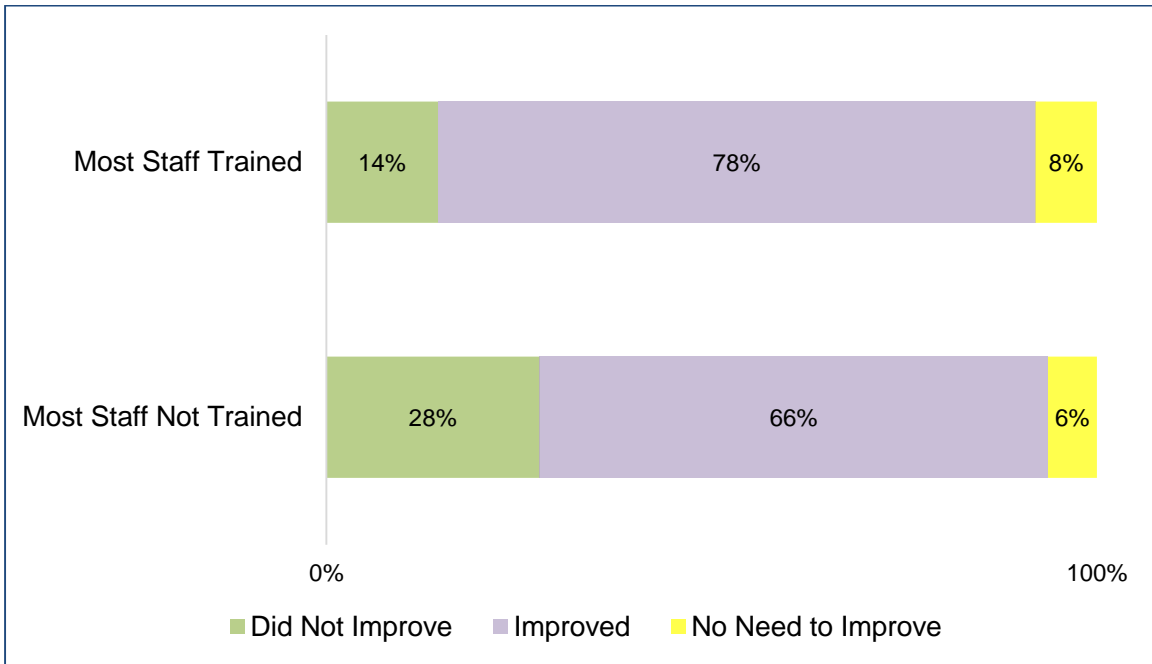
(n=701)



Pearson's chi-squared test ($\chi^2 = 10.77$; $p\text{-value} = .005$)

Figure 8.5. Distribution of Teacher-reported Improvement in Mathematics by Level of MDE Training at Centers

(n=638)

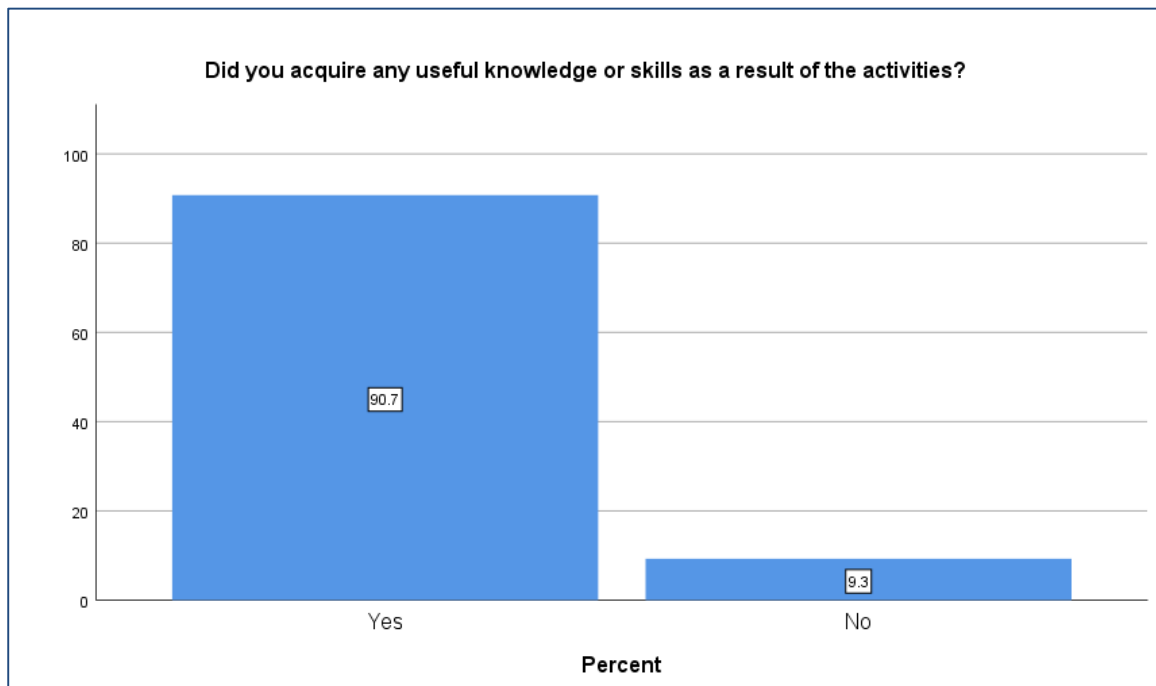


Pearson's chi-squared test ($\chi^2 = 10.00$; p-value = .007)

Last, in assessing evaluation question #2a, the analysis examined outcomes for parents. Of those parents who completed the survey (N=98), roughly half indicated that they attended one or more center activities during the school year and summer. When asked, “Did you acquire any useful knowledge or skills as a result of the activities?”, the vast majority said, “Yes.” See Figure 9 below.

Figure 9. Acquisition of Useful Knowledge or Skills Reported by Parents

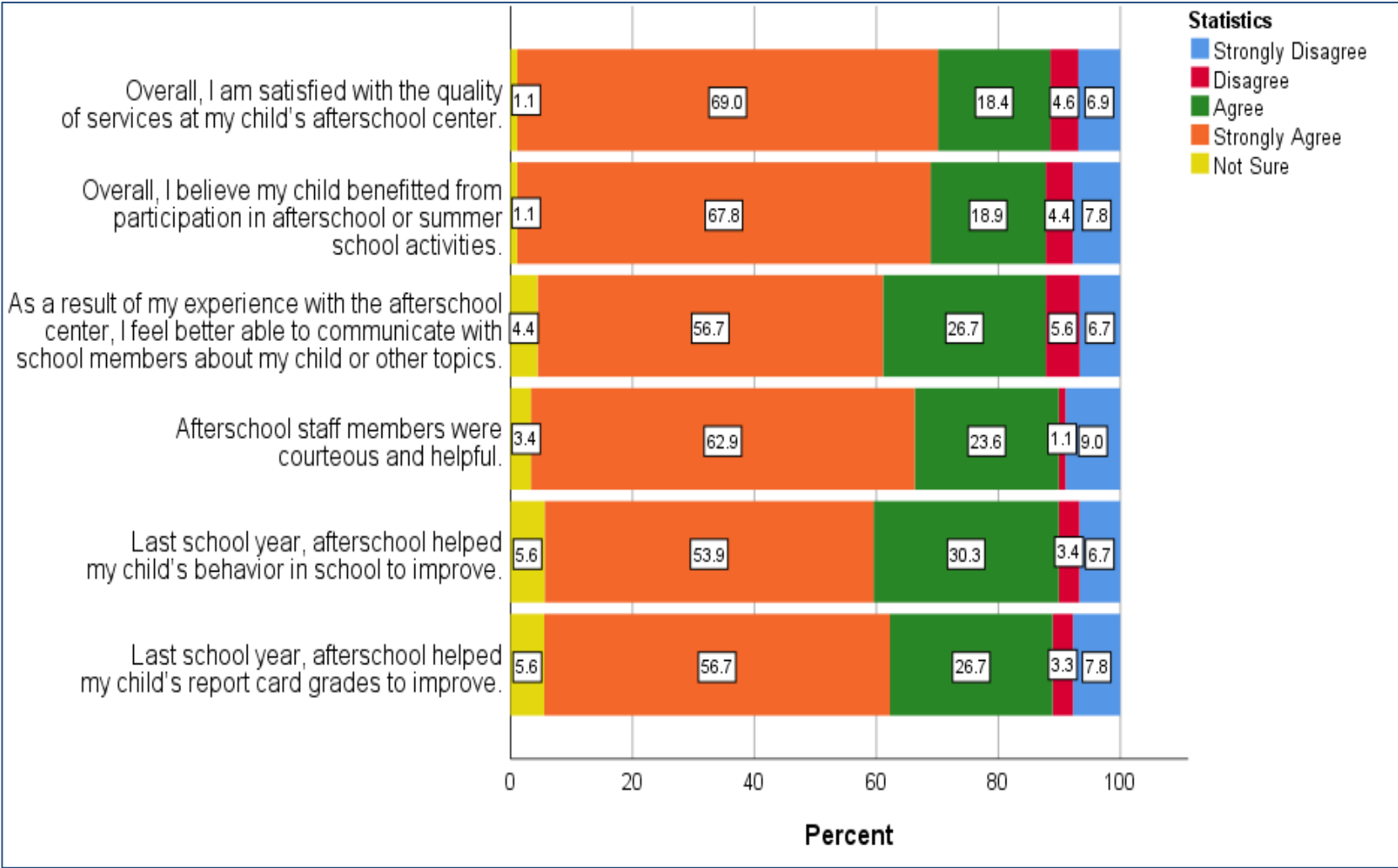
(N=98)



*40.0% of respondents did not attend any activities.

Parents expressed positive perceptions and high levels of satisfaction regarding afterschool centers in general. Several results are worthy of note. First, about three out of four parents agreed or strongly agreed that afterschool helped their child’s behavior as well as academic performance at school. This finding is particularly important, given the potential for bias, discussed previously, surrounding teacher reports of students’ progress. Moreover, most parents (75%) also agreed or strongly agreed that they felt better able to communicate with school members about their child or other topics. Finally, nearly 60% strongly agreed both that their child benefitted from afterschool participation and that, overall, they were satisfied with the quality of services at their child’s afterschool center. See Figure 10 for an illustration of these and other positive outcomes of the parent survey.

Figure 10. Distribution of Parent Agreement on Program Outcomes
(N=98)



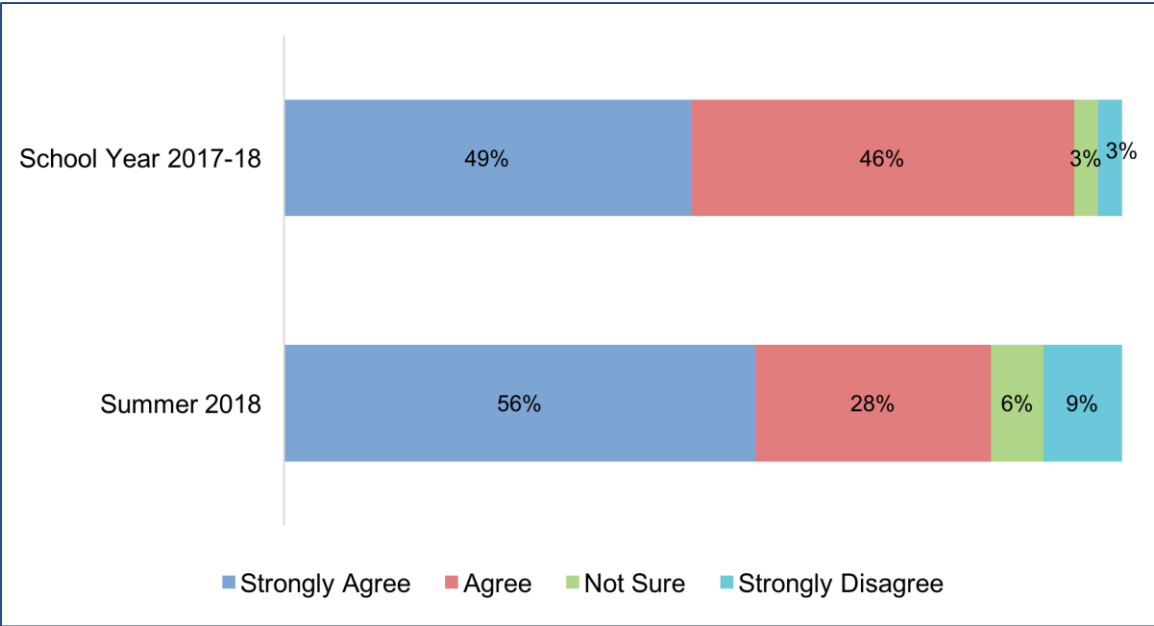
Q2b. What level of progress have sub-grantees made towards their proposed objectives?

Major Findings: In general, sub-grantees achieved proposed objectives to a large extent, based on director survey responses. Program administrators acknowledged their progress and sub-grantees offered a wide range of services through staff members and volunteers.

As Figure 11 presents, the majority of program administrators recognized that they had achieved goals set for school year and summer operations. Only a small portion of the administrators was uncertain or not satisfied with their progress. In comparison, the level of perceived completion of program objectives appeared to be lower for Summer 2018 than for school year 2017-18.

Figure 11. Distribution of Director Agreement on Program Objectives Accomplished As Proposed

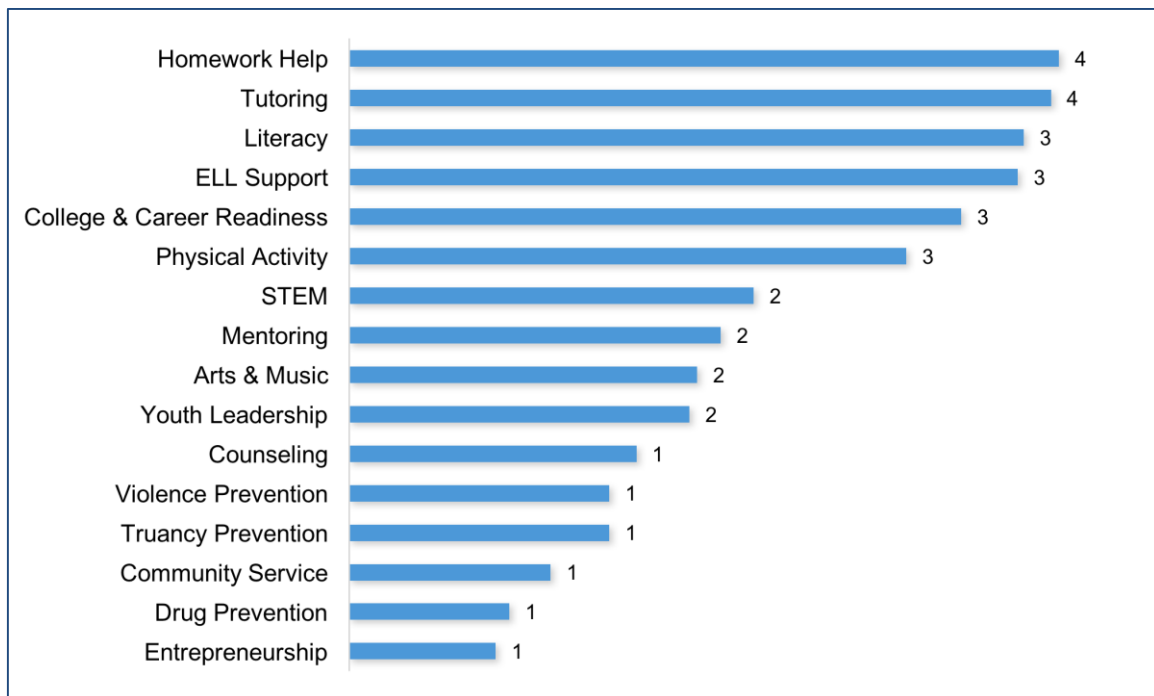
(N=35)



Frequency. Centers participating in the 21st CCLC program responded how often they carried out the service or activity under the given category in Spring 2018. They could administer a particular session once per term, monthly, or several times a week. The following analysis was conducted based on frequency responses indicating more than once per term.

Figure 12 reveals a gap in the frequency of activities provided by the program. Services or activities that more directly supported students’ academic performance were constantly implemented while sessions promoting behavioral-oriented interventions took place less frequently. For example, a typical center implemented both Homework Help and Tutoring activities 4 times a week. Conversely, entrepreneurship sessions were conducted about once a week. In addition, information collected from the centers shows that they appeared to be more likely to administer intervention activities once per term than other types of service or activity.

Figure 12. Average Number of Activity Sessions per Week



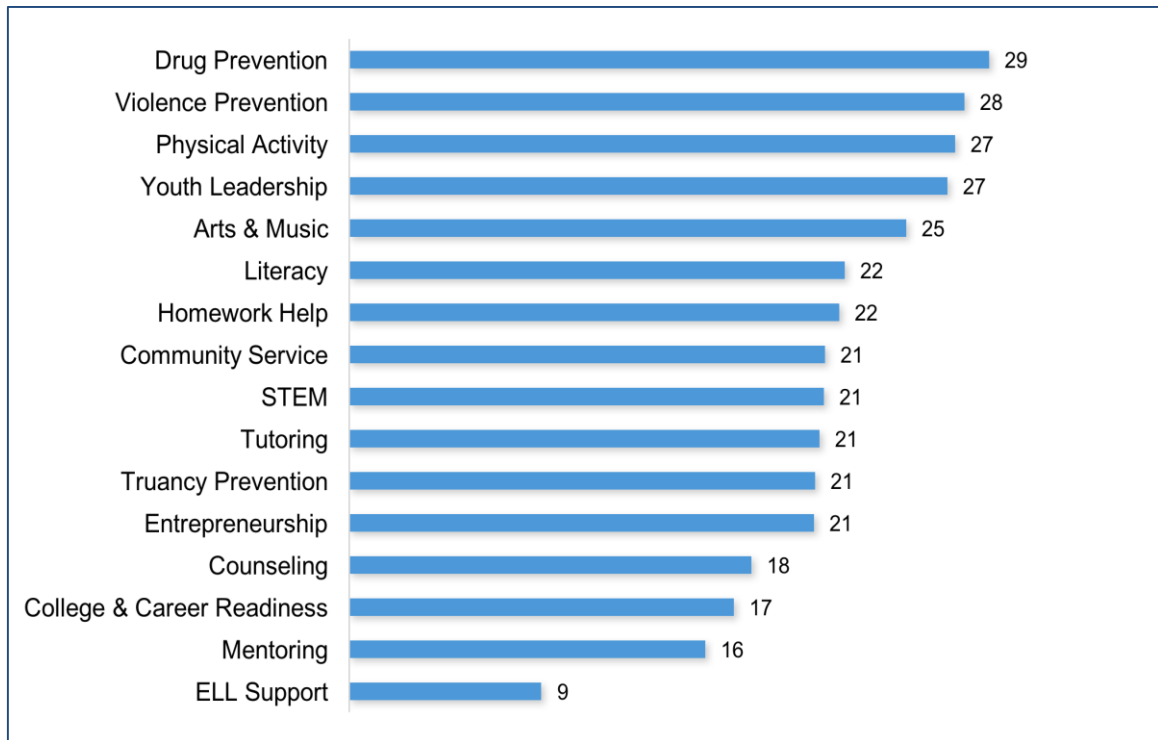
ELL Support refers to English Language Learners Support.

Participation. Depending on the service or activity, the centers reported to have hosted students from less than 5 to more than 30 in a session. For consistency purposes, a response of less than 5 participants was recoded as 3 and other responses were treated as the minimum value of the interval in analysis.

As Figure 13 displays, the number of participants in a session varied between 9 and 29. A few behavioral intervention activities, such as Drug Prevention and Violence

Prevention, saw higher numbers of students participating. The English Language Learners Support (ELL Support) sessions had fewer participants possibly due to a smaller proportion of the student populations who were learning English in addition to his or her native language.

Figure 13. Average Number of Participants per Activity Session



ELL Support refers to English Language Learners Support.

Q3a. What challenges did sub-grantees experience in implementing their programs?

Major Findings: The main challenges that sub-grantees experienced during the school year and summer were family involvement, student engagement, and concerns about time or timing of grant activities at the state and sub-grantee levels.

School Year

Based on the results from the online survey, enriched learning opportunities for children (43%), and qualified and competent staff (41%) were reported by sub-grantees when asked to highlight an area of greatest program success, Figure 14. Family involvement was highlighted by 51% of sub-grantees as their program's main challenge, Figure 15. When asked to explain the greatest challenge that their program experienced, 32% of sub-grantees reported parent/ family engagement. For example:

"... We had monthly invitations for parental involvement, but very few would participate."

“It is extremely difficult to get parents involved in the afterschool program. Sometimes it takes incentives to get parents to come to activities and we weren’t able to provide those incentives...”

“Working parents in a rural area finding time to dedicate to the program.”

Eleven percent of sub-grantees reported that student engagement and time were program challenges. They expressed:

“By the end of the school day, children were tired and exhausted. It was a challenge to keep students engaged and on-task in the afterschool program.”

“Convincing students of the need.”

“Reaching and engaging the non-English speaking population.”

“The late start of the program hampered one of our largest partnerships. We were unable to get contracts executed because of how late we received the go ahead to start the program.”

“... Our program began with only seven weeks remaining in the spring. While our students were provided a wealth of enrichment I know that they would show greater improvement over a longer course of time.”

“Due to funding being delayed, the program did not begin until after Christmas. This shortened the time frame that the program was in operation.”

To a lesser extent, sub-grantees also mentioned staff member participation and retention, communication, technical assistance, lack of volunteers, and food sufficiency for students as challenges in their programs.

Summer

Twenty percent of sub-grantees reported that enriched learning opportunities for children was the area in which their summer program experienced the greatest success, Figure 16. Family involvement was the area in which 41% of sub-grantees experienced their greatest challenge. Figure 17. When asked to explain the greatest challenge their summer program experience, 22% of sub-grantees indicated student engagement. They stated, for example:

“One of the challenges was to keep the children attending for the summer. There were other activities offered in our area that they were not as attentive as I had hoped.”

“Regular attendance was a challenge for our program. Students routinely skipped days, opting to sleep in.”

“We had to motivate and encourage our children to attend each day.”

A few sub-grantees mentioned recruitment and retention and professional development, and transportation as challenges during their summer program experience.

Figure14. Program Successes During The School Year
(N=35)

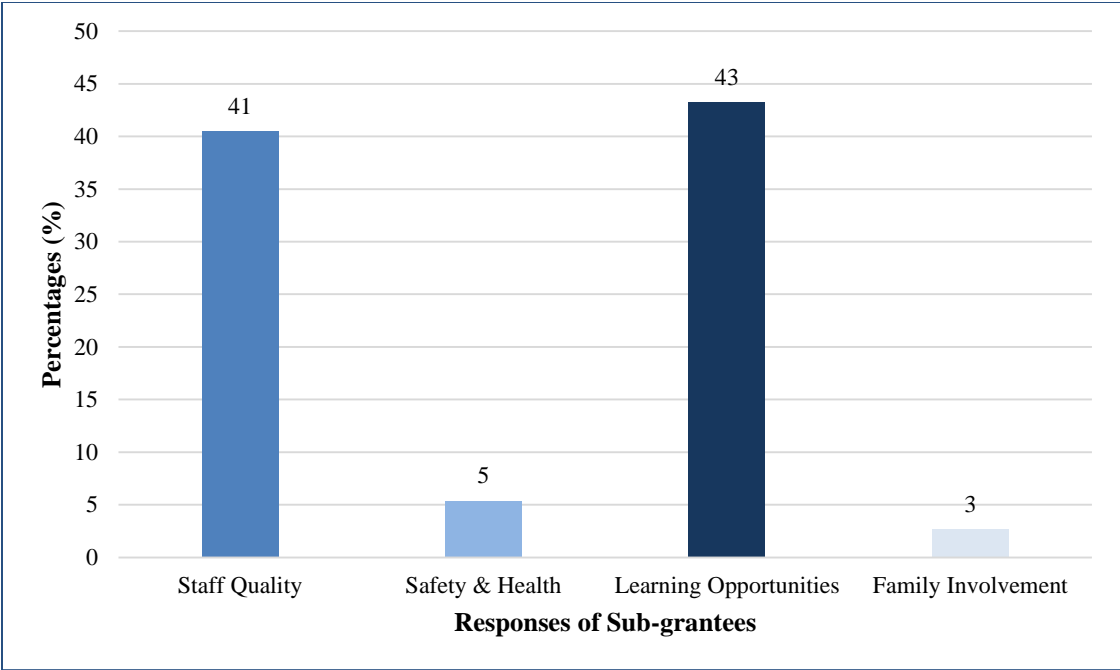


Figure 15. Program Challenges During The School Year
(N=35)

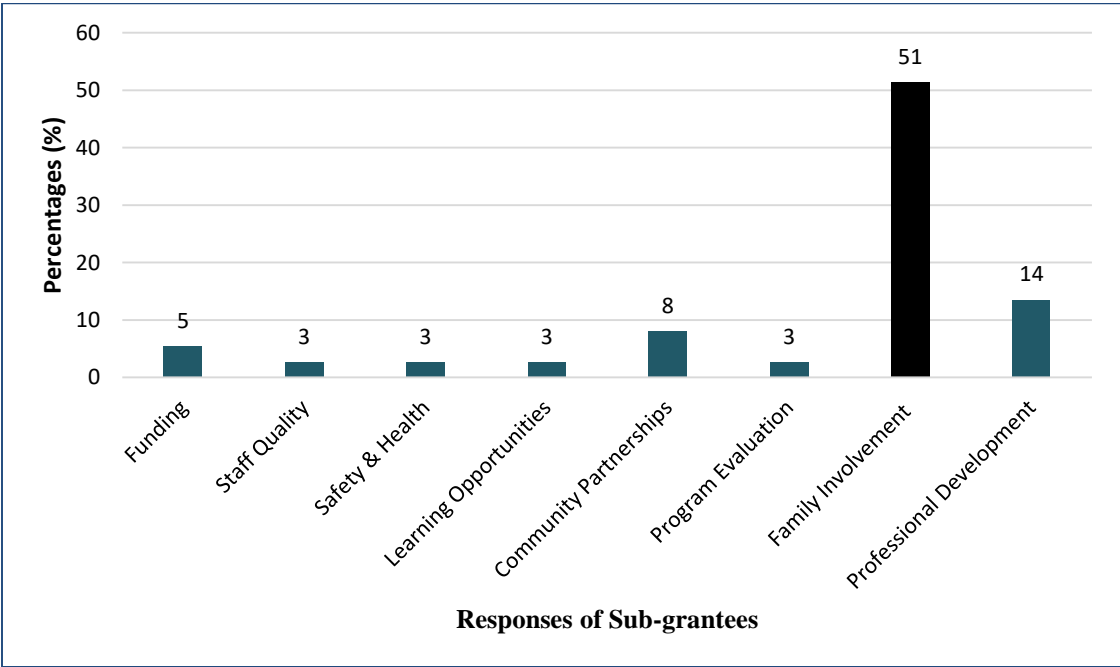


Figure 16. Successes of Summer Programs, According to Sub-grantees
(N=35)

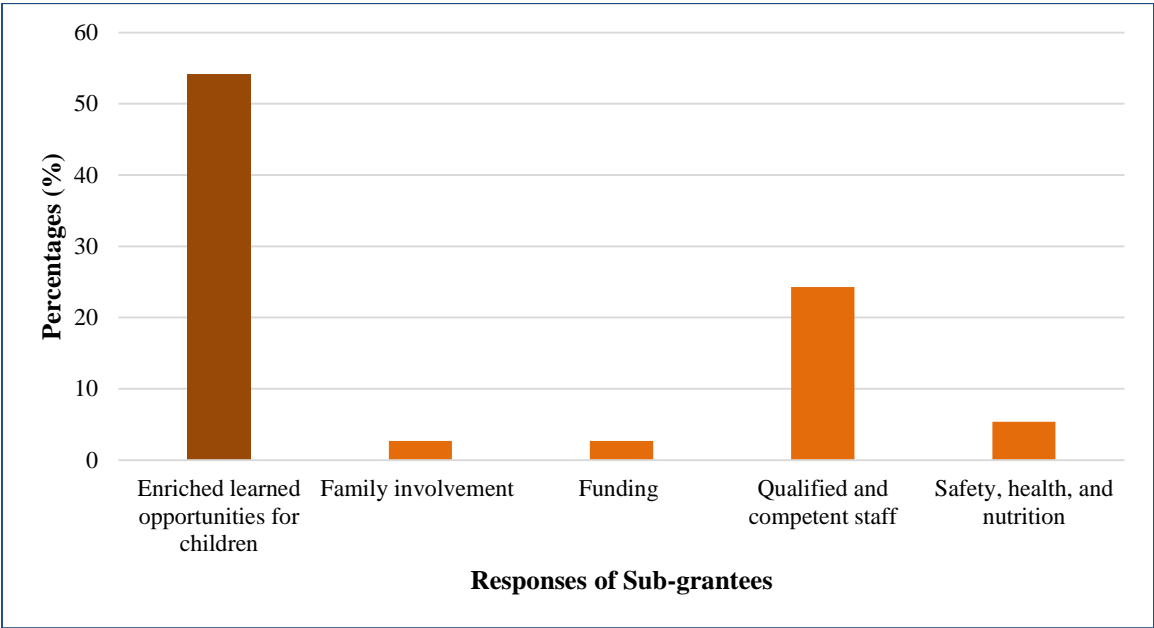
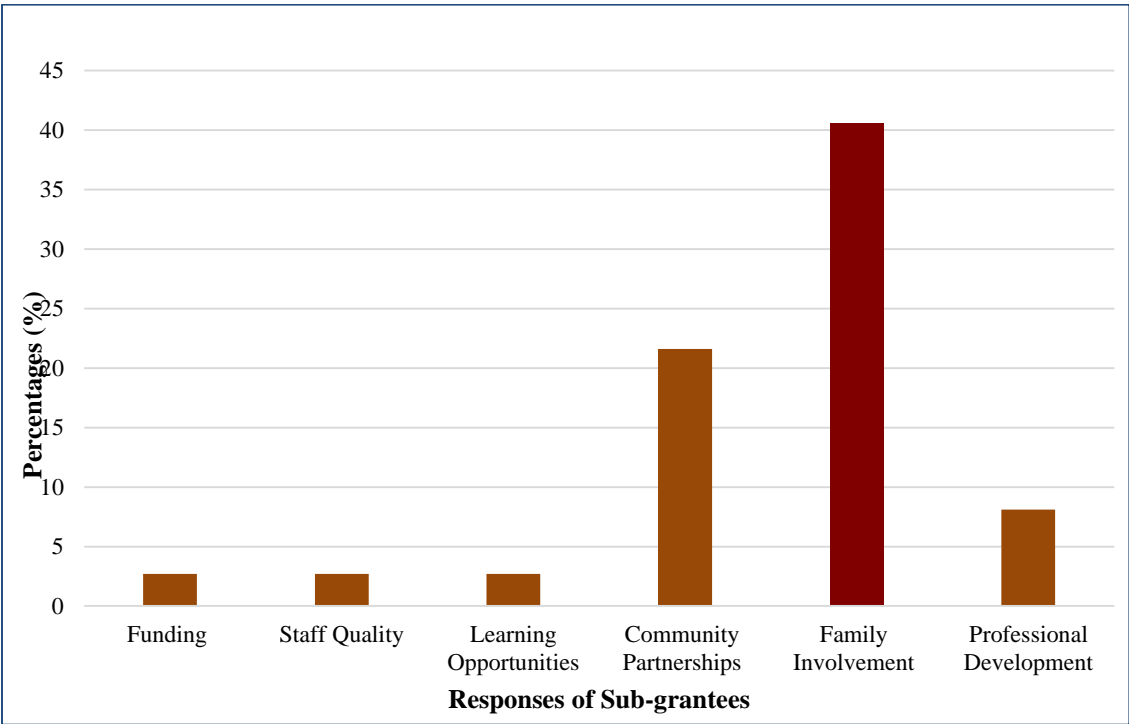


Figure 17. Challenges of Summer Programs, According to Sub-grantees
(N=35)



Q3b. What types of assistance do sub-grantees need in order to promote their progress?

Major Findings: Aside from help with family involvement, the results from the analysis indicate that the types of assistance sub-grantees need in order to promote their programs are improvements to the grant application and process, funding, professional development, and potential programs for student engagement during the school year and summer. From the perspective of parents, communication should be enhanced in order to improve the quality of afterschool programs.

School year

The improvement of grant applications and processes are a necessity during the school year, as shown in Figure 18, 16% of sub-grantees frequently asked for adjustments pertaining to the grant application and process. They expressed:

“Perhaps an adjustment of the application schedule. It was very difficult to implement all of the programs in the first year when the award was made halfway in the school year.”

“I would prefer more training from MDE on what is expected from the grant in the communities.”

“Earlier release of continuation application and funding so districts can start the program within the first month of school.”

Funding and professional development was also highlighted by 11% of respondents. For example:

“There could be more flexibility in program funding to ensure that centers enabling centers to begin operation earlier in the school year.”

“More funds available to enhance materials/supplies used for the program.”

“I think that more professional development opportunities would be great. Last year was the first year that we actually implemented STEM and enrichment. The students loved this.”

“Providing Districts with professional development regarding the program.”

Other recommendations that of sub-grantees made to improve performance involved technical assistance in using technology, student engagement, and family involvement.

Summer

During the summer, the major recommendation from sub-grantees to the Mississippi Department of Education for improving performance of 21st CCLC programs was potential

programs for student engagement, shown in Figure 19. Potential programs for student engagement was the major recommendation expressed by 11% by sub-grantees. Their suggestions included: “*advanced planning*,” “*sponsoring online credit recovery for high school students*,” “*providing transportation to students*,” and having someone stay with the students from lunch until their parents get off work. Other recommendations included professional development opportunities and strategies or technical assistance to improve family and community involvement.

Figure 18. Frequency of Sub-grantee Recommendations for School Year

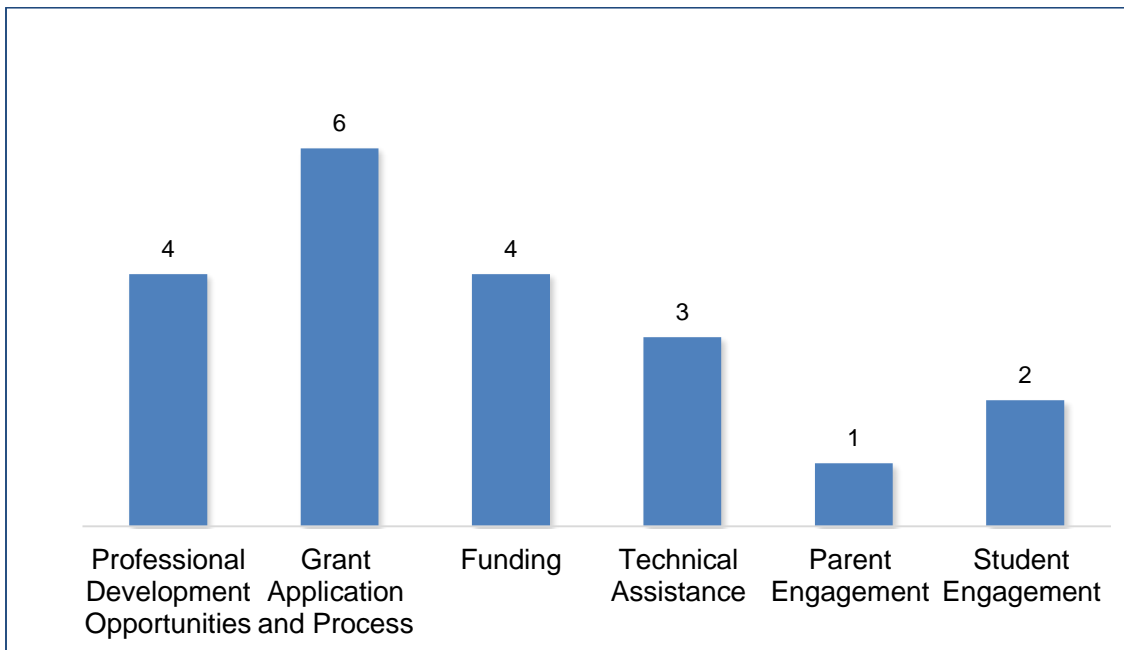
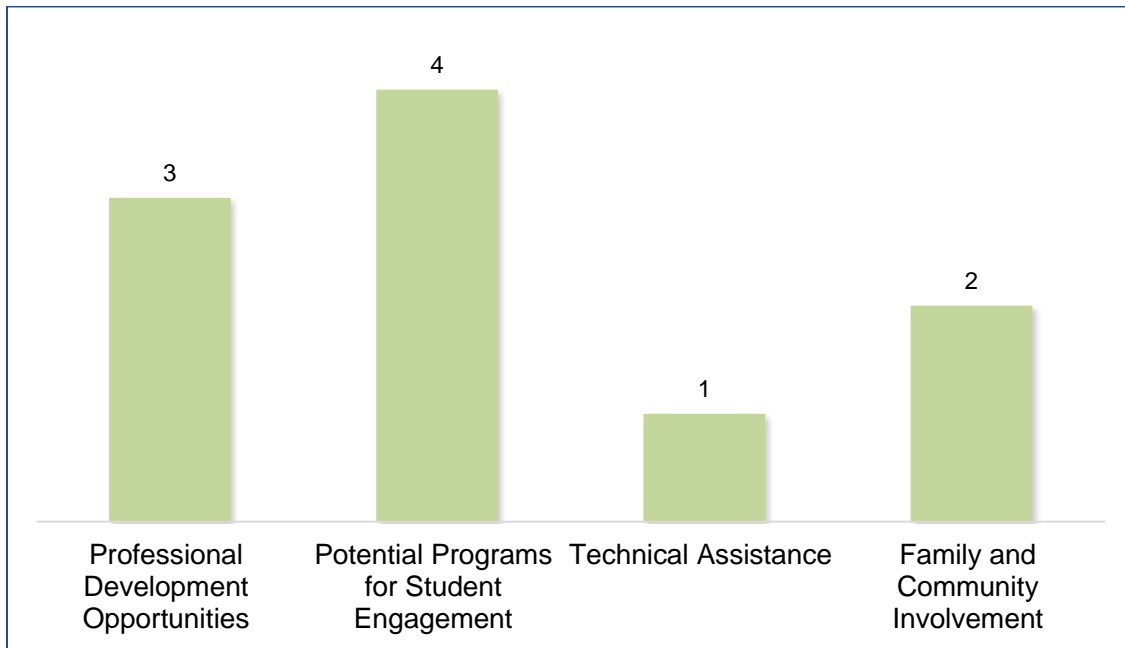


Figure 19. Frequency of Sub-grantee Recommendations for Summer Programs



School Year/ Summer - Parents

Communication was the main recommendation 14% of parents made to afterschool administrators to improve the quality of the program. They expressed:

“Communication is key between parents and teachers I would like to have more knowledge of what my child is doing in class and how is grades and behavior is weekly if he is struggling I don’t know until I get graded papers and then it’s too late to try and get him help in that subject by they have moved in to something else this is with both of my children.”

“Please utilize the parent emails or falcon phone calls to communicate along with the flyers.”

“... The only thing to possibly include would be parental progress updates by letter or call for the students participating.”

CONCLUSIONS

Taking into account all findings, this section of the report weighs the evidence in effort to reach conclusions regarding the three major evaluation questions: (1) How successful were sub-grantees in implementing 21st CCLC programs? (2) Did sub-grantees achieve the short-term and intermediate outcomes set by MDE? and (3) What modifications should MDE and its sub-grantees make in order to accomplish the long-term goals of Mississippi Board of Education? By synthesizing the results, the evaluation assessed the extent to which sub-grantees achieved the short-term and intermediate goals of the grant program. Particularly noteworthy was that the results validated the study's conceptual framework as depicted in the logic model (see Figure 1 page 15). Specifically, key program activities produced expected outputs, which in turn, yielded outcomes as proposed.

Regarding evaluation question #1, this study concludes that, overall, sub-grantees were rather successful in implementing 21st CCLC programs. First of all, almost all center directors indicated that their programs had been implemented as proposed. This was true of programs operated during the school year as well as the summer. Directors also expressed high levels of satisfaction with their programs in terms of characteristics known as effective practices. Perhaps most important of all, analyses of multiple indicators of program operation, including student participation, revealed relatively high levels of consistency between what sub-grantees proposed in their grant applications and what they actually accomplished after receiving awards.

Did sub-grantees achieve the short-term and intermediate outcomes set by MDE? Analyses of data from sub-grantee teacher reports, parents, and center directors offer substantial and consistent evidence that the grant program's intended outcomes, for the most part, were accomplished. Specifically, results of analyses regarding the use of effective practices undergird the conclusion that sub-grantees not only acquired knowledge of programmatic and fiscal operations but also used best practices, which enabled them to deliver quality 21st CCLC programs to students and their families. Evidence from their proposal ratings added support as well for this conclusion.

Most notably, analyses found statistically significant and positive relationships between MDE training/assistance and all student outcomes. The 21st CCLC federal program typically aims to determine whether higher levels of student attendance improve behavioral and academic outcomes. The study took this challenge yet a step further by exploring potential effects of training and assistance provided by MDE to sub-grantees. Results were not entirely consistent. On the whole, however, a general pattern of positive and statistically significant relationships was observed. These findings are arguably the most important results revealed by the investigation.

Further, parent survey responses were strongly positive. Nearly all who attended center activities reported that they acquired useful knowledge or skills. Four out of every five parents expressed satisfaction with the quality of services at their child's afterschool center. Three out of four parents indicated that interactions with center staff members were positive and made them feel better able to communicate with school members. Noteworthy as well was the fact that parents' perceptions were consistent with teacher reports regarding student

outcomes. Thus, the positive experiences that parents had with 21st CCLC centers may be the second most salient finding of this investigation.

As for the last major evaluation question, results of analyses across the study suggest that MDE and sub-grantees should give attention to modifications in the following areas: professional development, especially on the topic of how to improve parent involvement, and in data management for program evaluation. Despite the positive perceptions reported by parents toward afterschool programs, parent and family involvement stood out as challenges to afterschool programs, as reported by center directors in the survey. The low-level of parent survey participation underscored this concern.

As mentioned previously in the Limitations section of this report, data quality was an issue of concern. Without quality data there can be no quality in evaluation results, no matter how sophisticated a study's methodology. Thus, the quantity of data found missing in the study threatens the validity of its findings. Note as well that program evaluation ranked fourth from the bottom, among criteria scored in sub-grantee proposals. Therefore, to enhance the ability of future evaluations to assess program outcomes accurately, MDE and its sub-grantees clearly must make a concerted effort to improve data quality. Still, in spite of these concerns, sub-grantees appear to have made substantial progress towards the short-term and intermediate goals of the state's 21st CCLC program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Results of the evaluation were rather positive overall. Still, the study found numerous concerns, which if addressed sufficiently, could strengthen the quality of MDE's 21st CCLC programs. Doing so also would help to counter the limitations that stand to undermine the validity of findings and the effectiveness of programs. To this end, the report concludes with several recommendations organized under three headings: Professional Development, Data Management/Program Evaluation, and Technical Assistance.

Professional Development

1. To improve the quality of sub-grantee programs, MDE should provide additional training and assistance in key areas identified in this study, namely: parent involvement, student engagement, and data management. Of course, these training should disseminate research-based strategies as well as pertinent findings from this report.
2. MDE should take the following steps to accomplish the above: Review the content of trainings and technical assistance provided in 2017, "Regional Technical Assistance Workshops" and "Evaluation Guidance." Use the content from these as a basis for repeating the workshops and designing new ones. The latter should build upon the former by addressing concerns identified in this study more specifically.
3. Provide opportunities for sub-grantees to learn from each other's successes. Accordingly, MDE is encouraged to incorporate sub-grantees as presenters or instructors in its professional development activities, allowing them to showcase their successes and share insights with other sub-grantees. To promote efficiency, some trainings might be conducted

online as webinars. To promote effectiveness, some might be done in person at local or regional meetings.

4. Maintain ongoing communication and evaluation of professional development activities to determine levels of satisfaction and effectiveness as well as to inform the development of new training topics and needs. As a jumpstart in this direction, plan to hold the first in a series of professional development trainings by February 2019. Make it a point to conduct evaluations of all such activities to capture written feedback for easy reference in future planning.
5. To promote family involvement, particularly in summer programs, consider sub-grantee suggestions found in this study, such as making more home visits and host parental engagement events where they provide families with transportation to facilitate participation. Suggestions on this topic and others should be both an aim and a by-product of professional development activities. Therefore, encourage interaction and sharing of ideas at these events.
6. Thinking ahead, MDE trainings might also encompass the topic of developing sustainability plans to help prepare sub-grantees to eventually replace 21st CCLC funding. This topic received the lowest average score among sub-grantee applications, yet it is vital to their long-term success.

Data Management/ Program Evaluation

7. The evaluation found 68 duplicate student records. In the future, MDE staff could require sub-grantees to upload their data into an online data validation tool that automatically checks the data for similar inconsistencies.
8. To enable more accurate estimates of student participation and outcomes, assign unique identification numbers to all students.
9. Based on the analysis of the student data templates, sub-grantees experienced confusion about the periods for reporting attendance. Specifically, it appears that attendance in fall 2017 was actually attendance in summer 2018. MDE should resolve this discrepancy immediately and inform sub-grantees accordingly.
10. Over a quarter of the outcome data on student behavior was missing for regular attendees. MDE, therefore, might consult with center directors who reported high response rates on this and other data elements in order to identify steps or guidance for improving data collection at all centers.
11. To improve data quality, encourage sub-grantees to review data internally on a monthly basis. Doing so also will enable internal and external evaluations to accurately identify program strengths and weaknesses.
12. While providing teacher reports on student characteristics and outcomes to the evaluator was efficient, doing so was associated with substantial quantities of missing data and may also have invited biased self-reports by some teachers. In future evaluations, therefore,

consider the feasibility of enabling the evaluator to collect such information directly from school systems and sub-grantees.

13. To the extent possible, identify and involve MDE evaluation stakeholders at the onset of, if not prior to, implementation of the evaluation process. Doing so, will help to ensure that MDE's evaluation needs are sufficiently addressed.

Technical Assistance

14. Beginning this fall, monitor sub-grantee data collection activity on a quarterly basis. To do so, require quarterly submissions of attendance data for MDE review and then provide feedback within thirty days.
15. To improve data quality, consider another wave of technical assistance training that revises and reviews current data collection forms.
16. To resolve discrepancies reported in the numbers of centers and site directors/coordinators, MDE should conduct site visits to all centers this fall.
17. To improve efficiency in online survey administration and accuracy in reporting results, enable the evaluator to administer the survey directly by providing an up-to-date list of the intended participants and their emails.
18. In so far as some sub-grantees did not take part in the director survey and apparently did not submit other data to MDE for this evaluation, remind all sub-grantees to comply with general assurances indicated in their grant applications. In particular, emphasize item #10 (Public Law 107-110), which states: "The grantee will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation of each such programs conducted by or for the State educational agency, the Secretary or other Federal officials..."
19. To resolve conflicting information in grant applications regarding summer program operation, when monitoring sites during the fall and/or spring, confirm summer operation intentions. This action step may be performed along with other site visit activities or conducted independently as a simple survey via email or an online survey with other items being monitored.
20. In future trainings, instruct sub-grantees to collect teacher reports on student behaviors and achievement from teachers outside of their own programs, to the extent feasible. This step should help to reduce the potential for biased responses from teachers within the program.

END NOTES

¹ Other sources used in developing the evaluation’s conceptual framework and methodology included:

- *American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles, Update 2018*
- *Designing Evaluations*, U.S. Government Accountability Office (2012)
- *Evaluation Framework for 21st CCLC Programs*, Berkeley Policy Associates (2011)
- *Moving Towards Success: Framework For Evaluating After-School Programs*, C. S. Mott Foundation (2005).

² Initially, there were 37 respondents in the director survey. One did not complete any questionnaire items, and another completed the survey twice. That respondent’s second questionnaire was removed from the analysis.

³ See: Rogers, W. H. 1993. Regression Standard Errors in Clustered Samples. *Stata Technical Bulletin* 13: 19–23. Reprinted in *Stata Technical Bulletin Reprints*, vol. 3, 88–94.