

New Jersey 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Year 3 Evaluation Report: Descriptive Data
for 2021–22

June 2023



Advancing Evidence.
Improving Lives.

Funding Statement

This project was funded in its entirety by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Title IV, Part B, 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant, through a contract with the New Jersey Department of Education. The ESEA was reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Contents

	Page
Executive Summary.....	v
Section 1. Introduction	1
Evaluation Context.....	1
Report Organization.....	1
Section 2. Evaluation Questions and Approach.....	3
Evaluation Questions	3
Data Sources	3
Methods.....	4
Limitations and Challenges	6
Section 3. Program Characteristics	7
Grantee Characteristics	7
Center Characteristics.....	9
Attendee Characteristics	15
Section 4. Youth Survey	24
Questions Relating to Youth Choice	24
Questions Relating to Relationships With Adults and Youth	26
Questions Relating to How 21st CCLC Programming Has Helped Youth	30
Year-to-Year Changes	32
Section 5. Leading Indicators	33
General Program Indicators.....	34
Activity-Related Indicators.....	37
Determining Program Improvement Priorities From the Leading Indicators	45
Section 6. Conclusions and Next Steps	47
References	49
Appendix. Youth Post-Administration Survey	50

Exhibits

	Page
Exhibit ES-1. Example of a Survey Scale Calibrated Using Rasch Techniques	vii
Exhibit 1. Example of a Survey Scale Calibrated Using Rasch Techniques	5
Exhibit 2. Number of Grantees by Year of Operation, 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22	7
Exhibit 3. Number of Grantees by Organization Type	8
Exhibit 4. Total Number of Staff by Staff Type, 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22	10
Exhibit 5. Overall Statistics on Number of Center Staff	11
Exhibit 6. Average Student–Teacher Ratio per Center, 2021–22 and 2020–21	11
Exhibit 7. Number of Centers by Grade Level Served	13
Exhibit 8. Percentage of Centers Offering Activities Linked to a Given Theme	14
Exhibit 9. Percentage of Total Activity Minutes Dedicated to Activity Themes Among Centers With Each Theme	15
Exhibit 10. Summary of Demographic Information for Students, 2020–21 and 2021–22	16
Exhibit 11. Number of Students Served in 21st CCLC by Attendance Gradation	17
Exhibit 12. Continuous Years of Student Participation, 2020–21 and 2021–22	18
Exhibit 13. Percentage of Time Each Participant Spent on Activities of a Given Type (Average) for 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22	20
Exhibit 14. Total School-Year Hours of Attendee Participation by Activity Type	21
Exhibit 15. Percentage of Attendees With 10 or More Hours in a Given Activity Type (School Year), 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22	22
Exhibit 16. Average Number of Hours in Reading and Mathematics per Student, 2019– 20, 2020–21, and 2021–22	23
Exhibit 17. Youth Responses to Questions Concerning Opportunities for Choice	25
Exhibit 18. Percentage of Youth Respondents Answering <i>Sometimes</i> or <i>Often</i> in Response to Each Question Related to Opportunities for Choice	26
Exhibit 19. Youth Responses to Questions Concerning Relationships With Adults in the Program	27

Exhibit 20. Percentage of Youth Respondents Answering <i>Mostly True</i> or <i>Completely True</i> in Response to Each Question With the Stem, “In This Program, There Is an ADULT...”	28
Exhibit 21. Youth Responses to Questions Concerning Relationships Among Participants	29
Exhibit 22. Percentage of Youth Respondents Answering <i>Mostly True</i> or <i>Completely True</i> to Each Question Related to Youth Relationships in the Program	29
Exhibit 23. Youth Responses to Questions Concerning How the Program Has Helped Them	30
Exhibit 24. Percentage of Youth Respondents Answering <i>Mostly True</i> or <i>Completely True</i> in Response to Each Question With the Stem, “This Program Has Helped Me...”	31
Exhibit 25. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on General Program Indicators	35
Exhibit 26. General Program Indicators, 2016–2022	36
Exhibit 27. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on Activity-Related Indicators Associated With Mathematics and Language Arts	38
Exhibit 28. Activity-Related Leading Indicators 5 and 7 Associated With Common Core Skills and 21st Century Skills, 2016–17 to 2021–22	39
Exhibit 29. Activity-Related Leading Indicator 6 Associated With Mathematics and Language Arts, 2016–17 to 2020–21	40
Exhibit 30. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on Activity-Related Indicators Associated With Social and Emotional Development	41
Exhibit 31. Activity-Related Indicators 8 and 9 Associated With Social and Emotional Development, 2016–17 to 2021–22	42
Exhibit 32. Activity-Related Indicator 10 Associated With Social and Emotional Development, 2016–17 to 2021–22	42
Exhibit 33. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on Activity-Related Indicators Associated With Family Involvement	44
Exhibit 34. Activity-Related Indicator 11 Associated With Staff and Family Connections, 2016–17 to 2021–22	44
Exhibit 35. Activity-Related Indicator 12 Associated With Family Involvement, 2016–17 to 2021–22	45

Executive Summary

Information summarized in this report is based on data collected and analyzed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) as part of a statewide evaluation of New Jersey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs. The data in this report are primarily from school years 2020–21 and 2021–22, with data from 2019–20 included in cases where pre-pandemic data appeared sufficiently different to make inclusion worthwhile. There were 63 subgrantees (148 centers) reporting data for 2019–20, 66 grantees (147 centers) reporting data for 2020–21, and 63 grantees (139 centers) reporting data for 2021–22. The purpose of this executive summary is to outline the applicable evaluation questions (EQs), describe the methods AIR used to address these questions, and summarize key findings. The executive summary closes with a description of conclusions and next steps.

Note that this report is strictly descriptive. Nothing in this report should be understood as an assessment of 21st CCLC program impact in New Jersey; the report should instead be interpreted as a presentation of 21st CCLC characteristics.

The information collected and analyzed in relation to the 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22 school years was intended to answer two primary evaluation questions related to implementation of the New Jersey 21st CCLC program:

- **EQ1:** What are the primary characteristics of 21st CCLC programs in New Jersey and the populations they serve?
- **EQ2:** How are New Jersey 21st CCLC subgrantees performing in terms of the leading indicators defined for the program?

These questions are in keeping with the descriptive nature of this report.

Data Sources

To address the evaluation questions, data were collected from the following sources during 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22.

- **Program Activity and Review System (PARS21).** PARS21 is a web-based data collection system developed and maintained by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). PARS21 collects data directly from grantees on a broad array of program characteristics, along with individual student information in the form of demographics and 21st CCLC program attendance (including activity session–level participation data).
- **Staff survey.** The purpose of the online staff survey was to obtain information from staff members working directly with youth in programs funded by 21st CCLC about the extent to

which they engaged in practices that afterschool research literature suggests are likely to support positive academic and youth development outcomes. The staff survey data were used primarily to create values for the program’s leading indicators.

- **New Jersey 21st CCLC Evaluation Template and Reporting System (ETRS).** The 21st CCLC ETRS is a web-based data collection application designed to obtain center-level information about the characteristics and performance of afterschool programs funded by 21st CCLC, based on information garnered from local evaluation efforts. The system is designed to collect information midyear through a given school year. ETRS data were used primarily to create values for the program’s leading indicators.
- **Youth survey.** AIR conducted a youth survey during spring 2022. This survey focused on youth experience in 21st CCLC programming. This survey is part of a pre-post survey set that AIR administers each year; however, the pre-post changes are reserved for impact analyses. The results shown in this report pertain strictly to experience-related questions found only in the post-administration version of the survey.

Methods of Analysis

The findings in this report are purely quantitative. The following methods were used to analyze the quantitative data:

- **Descriptive analyses.** Data related to grantee, center, and student characteristics obtained from PARS21 were analyzed descriptively.
- **Analyses to create scale scores.** Many questions that appeared on the staff survey and were represented in the ETRS reports were part of a series of questions designed to assess an underlying construct or concept, resulting in a single scale score summarizing performance in a given area of practice or facet of afterschool implementation (e.g., practices that support linkages to the school day). An example is shown in Exhibit ES-1, which outlines the questions that make up the *Intentionality Program Design* scale that appeared on the staff survey.

Exhibit ES-1. Example of a Survey Scale Calibrated Using Rasch Techniques

How often do you lead or participate in program activities that are...	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
a. Based on written plans for the session, assignments, and projects?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Well planned in advance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Tied to specific learning goals?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Meant to build upon skills cultivated in a prior activity or session?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Explicitly meant to promote skill building and mastery in relation to one or more state standard?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Explicitly meant to address a specific developmental domain (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional, civic, physical, etc.)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Structured to respond to youth feedback on what the content or format of the activity should be?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Informed by the expressed interests, preferences, and/or satisfaction of participating youth?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For scales like this, Rasch scale scores were created using responses to the whole series of questions to create one overall score. These scale scores ranged from 1 to 4; higher scores indicate a higher level or more frequent adoption of a specific quality practice or set of practices. Depending on the type of survey data involved, these scores could be left as individual scores or averaged to the center, grant, or state level. AIR used Rasch scale scores to calculate many of the leading indicator values.

Program Characteristic Summary

The following is a summary of key evaluation findings.

Primary Characteristics of Programs Funded by 21st CCLC and the Students Served

Grantee Characteristics

- A total of 63 grantees actively operated 139 centers during 2021–22.
- A plurality of grantees (38%) were in their third year of program operation during 2021–22. About 19% were in their second year, and an equal proportion were in their fourth year. Only 8% were in their first year, and 16% were in their last year.

- Grantees were split between the categories of school-based grantees (43% in 2021–22) and non-school-based grantees (57% in 2021–22). These percentages are similar to those in previous years.

Center Characteristics

- A total of 1,788 staff were reported by grantees for school year 2021–22 across all programs, down from 1,944 staff in 2020–21 and 2,493 staff in 2019–20. This year-to-year decrease is presumably due to challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it shows that staffing levels have not rebounded in the same way as student attendance (discussed below).
- By far the most common staff type reported by grantees was school-day teacher; 893 were reported for the 2021–22 school year, or 49.9% of all staff. The next largest category was program staff; 358 program staff were reported for 2021–22 (20.0% of all staff).¹
- Centers on average had 13 staff members (median: 11) for 2021–22, which was approximately the same as in 2020–21.
- The average student-to-staff ratio increased in 2021–22 compared with 2020–21, reaching about 13 students per teacher in 2021–22 compared with about seven students per teacher in the previous year. However, note that the student-to-teacher ratio was also about 13 in 2019–20, suggesting that the 2021–22 rate is about the same as before the pandemic.
- Centers mainly served children in elementary or middle school (86.5% of centers in 2021–22; about the same as in previous years).
- Approximately 25% of all centers chose career awareness as their theme during 2021–22 (compared with 32% in 2020–21). About 50% of centers in 2021–22 and 43% in 2020–21 chose science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Another 14% of centers in 2021–22 and 12% of centers in 2020–21 chose visual and performing arts as their central theme. Only 6% of centers in 2021–22 and 5% in 2020–21 chose civic engagement as their theme.

Student Characteristics

- A total of 15,772 students attended 21st CCLC programming for at least 1 day in 2021–22, an increase compared with 11,689 in 2020–21 and 19,129 in 2019–20. This suggests that total student attendance is rebounding from pandemic-related lows but has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels.²

¹ “Program staff” is a category of staff reported in PARS21.

² A student was counted as an attendee if (and only if) there was at least one associated activity session attendance record available for that student.

- A majority of 21st CCLC participants were Hispanic/Latino (45.3% in 2021–22) or Black (35.5% in 2021–22). Most attendees (74% in 2021–22) qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. These proportions are in line with previous years.
- About 31% of students attended fewer than 30 days of programming in 2021–22 (compared with about 36% in 2020–21 and 28% in 2019–20), while a smaller proportion attended 30 to 59 days (22% in 2021–22, compared with 27% in 2020–21 and 26% in 2019–20). A larger proportion of students attended between 60 and 89 days in 2021–22 than in 2020–21 (16%, compared with 13%), though the proportion was higher in 2019–20 (27%). A higher proportion attended 90 days or more (31%, compared with 24% in 2020–21 and 20% in 2019–20).
- In 2021–22, about 36% of students were in at least their second consecutive year of 21st CCLC programming, compared with about 39% in 2020–21 and 32% in 2019–20.
- On average, students spent about 22% of their time in tutoring or homework help during 2021–22, compared with 18% in 2020–21 and 25% in 2019–20. Students spent about 17% of their time in academic enrichment during 2021–22, compared with 23% in 2020–21 and 20% in 2019–20.
- Observing the median total student hours spent in each type of activity (instead of the average) showed that students spent a median of 8 hours in tutoring/homework help, 6 hours in academic enrichment, and about 3 hours each in youth development/learning activities and recreation in 2021–22. These are very different from the 2020–21 medians, but they are fairly close to median attendance hours evident in 2019–20 (with the exception of youth development/learning activities, which had a median of 7.5 hours in 2019–20).
- A total of 48% of students in 2021–22 participated in at least 10 hours of tutoring/homework help, while 45% of students participated in at least 10 hours of academic enrichment across the year. About 41% participated in at least 10 hours of recreation, and 39% participated in at least 10 hours of youth development/learning activities. All these percentages were much higher in 2021–22 than they were in 2020–21 (by two to three times) but are similar to levels observed in 2019–20.
- In 2021–22, the typical student attended an average of 66 hours of reading activities and 54 hours of mathematics activities (average of total hours across the reporting period). In 2020–21, the figures were 54 hours and 51 hours, respectively; in 2019–20, they were 56 hours and 51 hours, respectively.

Youth Survey Results Summary

During spring 2022, AIR collected survey data from 21st CCLC participants in New Jersey concerning youth experiences in the program. A total of 3,631 completed surveys were collected. However, centers serving more than 100 youth were asked to survey a

representative sample of 100 youth, rather than all attendees. This sampling reduced the data-reporting burden for centers serving a large number of youth. The 2022 data were considered alongside data from similar surveys collected during spring 2018 and spring 2019, as this survey was not administered during years affected by pandemic-related school closures.

Generally, survey responses showed that youth thought they *sometimes* or *often* had choices in their programs (with *often* or *sometimes* responses accounting for 57% to 85% of responses for items on this scale). Youth responded with *mostly true* or *completely true* to items about positive relationships with program adults (75% to 87% of responses), and with *mostly true* or *completely true* to items about positive youth relationships (66% to 75% of responses). Students also tended to agree that the program had benefited them in a variety of ways, with approximately 80% to 85% indicating *mostly true* or *completely true* in response to a series of items about how the program had helped them.

The survey data also showed that student responses regarding opportunities for choice, relationships with other youth, and relationships with adults were more positive in spring 2022 than they were in spring 2018 or spring 2019. Examination of individual item responses in their original formats (i.e., looking at the percentage of students selecting each of four possible response options) revealed that the year-to-year differences were driven largely by responses of *often* or *true*—i.e., by students selecting the highest (and generally most positive) response options provided. The difference between spring 2022 and earlier years was greatest with respect to the opportunities for choice questions and the relationships with youth questions; for nearly all items in these two sets, anywhere from 5% to 11% more youth respondents in 2022 selected *often* (opportunities for choice) or *very true* (relationships with youth) than was the case in previous years. However, response patterns concerning youth perceptions of how the program had helped them were very similar to previous years.

Leading Indicators Summary

A primary goal of the statewide evaluation was to provide 21st CCLC grantees with data to inform program improvement efforts regarding their implementation of research-supported best practices. Building from the quality framework, AIR and NJDOE worked collaboratively to define a series of leading indicators predicated on data collected as part of the statewide evaluation. The leading indicators were meant to enhance existing information and data available to 21st CCLC grantees about how they fared in adopting program strategies and approaches associated with high-quality afterschool programming.

Specifically, the leading indicator system was designed to do the following:

- Summarize data collected as part of the statewide evaluation in terms of how well the grantee and its respective centers³ were adopting research-supported best practices.
- Enable grantees to compare their level of performance on leading indicators with similar programs and statewide averages.
- Facilitate internal discussions about areas of program design and delivery that may warrant additional attention from a program improvement perspective.

General Program Indicators

General program indicators relate to program practices at the general or program level, but they may have a strong effect on participant experience. Programs characterized by a supportive and collaborative climate enable staff to engage in self-reflective practice to improve overall program quality. As reported by Smith (2007), Glisson (2007), and Birmingham and colleagues (2005), an organizational climate that supports staff to reflect on and continually improve program quality is a key aspect of effective youth development programs. Furthermore, research suggests that youth achievement outcomes can be improved simply by paying attention to *how* programming is delivered (Birmingham et al., 2005; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). These indicators therefore provide information on program internal communication, links to the school day, collaboration with school partners, and staff commitment to quality at the point of service.

- The average statewide scale score for internal communication fell within the once-a-month response category for 2021–22 (scale response options included *never*, *a couple of times per year*, *about once a month*, and *nearly every week*). This suggests that the assessed collaborative efforts were frequently implemented during both programming periods (Leading Indicator 1).
- Centers tended to have at least some access to school-based data on youth academic functioning and needs (Leading Indicator 2).
- In terms of program staff collaborating with school personnel to adopt practices that are supportive of academic skill building, including linkages to the school day and using data on youth academic achievement to inform programming, the statewide average was 2.91 in 2021–22 (about the same as in previous years). This indicates that staff agreed that linkages exist (Leading Indicator 3).

³ Throughout this report, the term “center” is used to refer to the physical location where 21st CCLC programming is delivered. Each grantee operates at least one center, although it is more common for a given grantee to operate multiple centers. Most centers, but not all, are located in public schools. The terms “program” and “site” are also commonly used to refer to an individual center.

- In terms of activities provided at the point of service to support youth development, statewide averages on the *Staff Capacity to Create Interactive and Engaging Environment* scale (the source for Leading Indicator 4) suggest that staff adoption of such practices is more common than not. This was also the case in previous years.

Activity-Related Indicators

Activity-related indicators provide data on both activity provision and activity participation, with indicators addressing mathematics and language arts, social and emotional development, and parent or guardian involvement. Overall, these indicators showed the following:

- A statewide average of about 28.2% of activity sessions in 2021–22 and 33.3% of activity sessions in 2020–21 had either a mathematics or a language arts focus (Leading Indicator 5).
- Statewide, slightly over two thirds of regular attendees participated in mathematics or language arts activities for at least half their activity time in 2021–22 (Leading Indicator 7). Note that the proportion of students meeting this criterion was higher in 2019–20 (77.1%) but lower in 2020–21 (65.1%).
- The design of activity sessions frequently targeted the skills and knowledge staff were trying to impart to participating youth (Leading Indicator 6). This was also the case in previous years.
- Statewide, an average of approximately 90.7% of activity sessions offered in 2021–22 infused components that were meant to support youth development–related behaviors and social and emotional learning (SEL) (Leading Indicator 8).
- An average of about 92.6% of regular attendees in 2021–22 (up from 85.2% in 2020–21 but down from 94.7% in 2019–20) participated for at least 20% of their time in activities meant to support youth development–related behaviors and SEL (Leading Indicator 9).
- The *Practices Supportive of Positive Youth Development* and *Opportunities for Youth Ownership* scales of the staff survey (the sources for Leading Indicator 10) suggest, as in previous years, that staff adoption of such practices is more common than not.
- In terms of engaging in practices to support and cultivate parent involvement and engagement (Leading Indicator 11), most centers were found to do so sometimes or frequently, with a statewide mean scale score of 2.66 in 2021–22.
- Only a very small percentage of program participants (3.5% in 2021–22, 4.4% in 2020–21, and 4.1% in 2019–20) had parents or other adult family members attend activities during the school year. However, a slightly higher proportion of centers (36 centers, or 25.0%) reported activities of this sort in 2021–22 (compared with 29 centers, or 20.1%, in 2020–21; and 25 centers, or 17.2%, in 2019–20).

Similar to previous years, two indicators showed room for growth:

- **Leading Indicator 5, “Offering activities meant to support student growth in either mathematics or language arts that are led by a certified teacher.”** Statewide, 28.2% of activity sessions offered in 2021–22 targeted mathematics or English language arts (ELA), compared with 33.3% in 2020–21, 34.2% in 2019–20, and 34.9% in 2018–19. As in previous years, most centers did offer at least *some* activities of this sort: 108 centers in 2021–22 (77.1% of centers with indicator data) had at least some activities that intentionally targeted mathematics or language arts, compared with 119 centers in 2020–21 (82.6%) and 116 centers in 2019–20 (79.6%).
- **Leading Indicator 12, “Parent or family member involvement in activities.”** This indicator value dropped from a high of 6.2% (of youth program participants having a parent or family member participate in an activity) in 2018–19 to 3.5% in 2021–22. However, a modestly higher proportion of centers reported offering activities of this sort during 2021–22 (36 centers, or 25.0%), compared with previous years (20.1% in 2020–21 and 17.2% in 2019–20).

Conclusions and Next Steps

As in previous years, the 21st CCLC program in New Jersey appears to be serving the intended population and is offering activities in keeping with New Jersey’s 21st CCLC goals. Further, 2021–22 attendance levels appeared to rebound from the 2020–21 lows, presumably driven by a return to in-person programming. However, 2021–22 attendance levels were still well below pre-pandemic attendance levels. It will be important to watch 2022–23 attendance levels to see whether the upward trend continues.

In contrast to student attendance, total staff levels continue to decline year to year. There have now been 2 successive years of total staff declines, even as student attendance rebounds. While the student-to-staff ratio is now about what it was in 2019–20, this bears watching; if total student attendance continues to increase, total staff will need to reverse its downward trend in order for the ratio to remain the same. If total student attendance increases and programs are unable to rebuild their staffing, program offerings and attendance will presumably be negatively affected, as will the staff themselves.

In terms of youth-reported program experience during the pandemic, youth indicated positive experiences with respect to opportunities for choice, relationships with other youth, and relationships with adults in the program. In fact, the proportion of *often* and *very true* responses (i.e., highest possible agreement) to items associated with these scales was higher than was the case pre-pandemic. Youth did not respond more positively with respect to how the program had helped them, however, with response options roughly in line with pre-pandemic survey administrations.

In terms of leading indicator values, most indicator values for 2021–22 were similar to the values observed in previous years. Leading Indicators 5 and 12 showed room for improvement, however. Leading Indicator 5 (“Offering activities meant to support student growth in either mathematics or language arts that are led by a certified teacher”) declined compared with the previous year, continuing a multiyear downward trend. Leading Indicator 12 (“Parent or family member involvement in activities”) also dropped (from already low levels), continuing a similar multiyear decline. However, both of these indicator values are likely affected to some extent by the pandemic (given program priority shifts). Leading indicator values observed for summer 2023 will likely clarify whether these are persistent trends or primarily pandemic-related.

AIR’s recommendations for NJDOE follow from these observations. First, attendance trends should be watched closely in the coming 1 to 2 years, largely to ensure a return to pre-pandemic levels. Second, NJDOE should explore staffing-related challenges that programs are facing, notably with respect to finding and retaining staff for activity provision. Third, youth survey response data for spring 2023 should be reviewed by NJDOE earlier than usual in order to assess how youth responses are changing year to year. The results should be discussed with the grantees themselves to gain insight into any observed shifts in response patterns.

Section 1. Introduction

For more than 2 decades, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program operating across New Jersey has provided youth in high-poverty communities the opportunity to participate in academic enrichment programs and other development and support activities designed to enhance their academic well-being. The primary purpose of this report—one in a series of evaluation reports—is to provide a descriptive picture of the 21st CCLC program across New Jersey.

The information presented in this report is the result of data collected and analyzed as part of a statewide evaluation of New Jersey’s 21st CCLC program that the American Institutes for Research (AIR) is currently conducting. The results outlined in this report are associated with 21st CCLC-funded activities and services delivered during the 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22 school years.

Evaluation Context

This report is entirely descriptive, providing only an overview of programming during the school years in question. The data shown in this report do not show program impact. While AIR will be conducting impact analyses and presenting those findings in future reports, this report does not make use of analytic methods robust enough to attribute cause.

Further note that two of the school years considered for this report—the 2019–20 school year and the 2020–21 school year—were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated school closures (with 2020–21 affected in its entirety). Schools in New Jersey closed and shifted to virtual formats in March 2020 (early to mid-March) and continued with virtual programming through 2020–21, which undoubtedly affected 21st CCLC programs serving youth at those schools. Because of this, comparisons across the program years shown in this report are not “apples to apples” comparisons but presumably highlight shifts associated with the pandemic. Again, however, this report does not attempt to uncover causal connections; the disruption to programming caused by the COVID-19 pandemic should merely be kept in mind while comparing numbers from the 3 years.

Report Organization

This report is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the evaluation questions (EQs) we set out to answer in this report, along with descriptions of all data sources and methods. It concludes

with a description of known limitations. Section 3 provides an overview of grantee, center,⁴ and youth participant characteristics. Section 4 presents the results of AIR’s youth survey. Section 5 presents the leading indicator values for 2021–22 and concludes with a short description of common program strengths and weaknesses, as conveyed through the leading indicators. Section 6 concludes the report, providing a high-level summary of important findings and briefly discussing next steps.

⁴ In this report, the terms “center” and “program” are used to refer to the physical location where 21st CCLC–funded services and activities take place. Centers are characterized by defined hours of operation, have dedicated staffs, and usually have a dedicated center coordinator. Each 21st CCLC grantee in New Jersey has at least one center; many grantees have more than one center.

Section 2. Evaluation Questions and Approach

This section presents the evaluation questions addressed in this report. Additionally, we present all data sources and analytic methods used to address the evaluation questions, along with a discussion of important limitations.

Evaluation Questions

Using data from 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22, this descriptive report seeks to address two of the seven evaluation questions:

- **EQ1:** What are the primary characteristics of 21st CCLC programs in New Jersey and the populations they serve?
- **EQ2:** How are New Jersey 21st CCLC subgrantees performing in terms of the leading indicators defined for the program?

Sections 3 and 4 address EQ1, while Section 5 addresses EQ2.

Data Sources

To address the evaluation questions, data were collected from the following sources during 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22.

- **Program Activity and Review System (PARS21).** PARS21 is a web-based data collection system developed and maintained by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). PARS21 collects data directly from grantees on a broad array of program characteristics, along with individual student information in the form of demographics and 21st CCLC program attendance (including activity session–level participation data).
- **Staff survey.** The purpose of the online staff survey was to obtain information from staff members working directly with youth in programs funded by 21st CCLC about the extent to which they engaged in practices that afterschool research literature suggests are likely to be supportive of positive academic and youth development outcomes. Scales appearing on the survey included the following:
 - Collective staff efficacy in creating interactive and engaging settings for youth
 - Intentionality in activity and session design
 - Practices supportive of academic skill building, including linkages to the school day and using data about student academic achievement to inform programming
 - Practices supportive of positive youth development
 - Opportunities for youth ownership

- Staff collaboration and communication to support continuous program improvement
- Practices supportive of parent involvement and engagement

Staff members were selected as part of the survey sample if they were actively providing services at the center that directly served students participating in the program. The 21st CCLC project directors were instructed to select staff members who worked in their program most frequently and delivered activities that were most aligned with their centers' objectives for student growth and development. The goal was to have project directors identify a minimum of 12 staff members per center to take the survey. In cases where centers had fewer than 12 active staff members, all staff members working with students at the center were directed to take the survey. This data collection took place during the first 3 months of each school year. Completed surveys were obtained from 136 centers that were active during the 2021–22 school year (averaging approximately 7.4 completed surveys per center). In this report, note that these data are presented as part of the leading indicators (many leading indicator values are based on staff survey data).

- **New Jersey 21st CCLC Evaluation Template and Reporting System (ETRS).** The 21st CCLC ETRS is a web-based data collection application designed to obtain center-level information about the characteristics and performance of afterschool programs funded by 21st CCLC, based on information garnered from local evaluation efforts. The system is designed to collect information midyear through a given school year. ETRS data were primarily used to create values for the program leading indicators.
- **Youth survey.** AIR collected a youth survey during spring 2022. This survey focused on youth experience in 21st CCLC programming. This survey is part of a pre-post survey set that AIR administers each year; however, the pre-post changes are reserved for impact analyses. The results shown in this report pertain strictly to experience-related questions found only on the post-administration version of the survey.

Methods

The findings in this report are purely quantitative. The following methods were used to analyze the quantitative data:

- **Descriptive analyses.** Data related to grantee, center, and student characteristics obtained from PARS21 were analyzed descriptively. This includes basic statistics such as overall totals, averages, median values, percentages, and so on.
- **Analyses to create scale scores.** Many questions that appeared on the staff survey and were represented in the ETRS reports were part of a series of questions designed to assess an underlying construct or concept, resulting in a single scale score summarizing

performance in a given area of practice or facet of afterschool implementation (e.g., practices that support linkages to the school day). An example is shown in Exhibit 1, which outlines the questions that make up the *Intentionality Program Design* scale that appeared on the staff survey.

Exhibit 1. Example of a Survey Scale Calibrated Using Rasch Techniques

How often do you lead or participate in program activities that are...	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
a. Based on written plans for the session, assignments, and projects?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Well planned in advance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Tied to specific learning goals?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Meant to build upon skills cultivated in a prior activity or session?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Explicitly meant to promote skill building and mastery in relation to one or more state standard?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Explicitly meant to address a specific developmental domain (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional, civic, physical, etc.)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Structured to respond to youth feedback on what the content or format of the activity should be?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Informed by the expressed interests, preferences, and/or satisfaction of participating youth?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For scales like this, Rasch scale scores were created using responses to the whole series of questions to create one overall score. These scale scores ranged from 1 to 4, where higher scores indicated a higher level or more frequent adoption of a specific quality practice or set of practices. Depending on the type of survey data involved, these scores could be left as individual scores (e.g., for use in analyzing youth survey data) or averaged at the center, grant, or state level (e.g., staff survey data). AIR used Rasch scale scores to calculate many of the leading indicator values.

Limitations and Challenges

There are limitations associated with the types of data collected by AIR during the 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22 school years. Without attempting to be exhaustive, the primary limitations are as follows.

- As was the case with the 2020–21 report, the most important consideration for all results presented in this report is the **effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on 21st CCLC programming and participation**. The 2021–22 school year data show what appears to be a rebound in terms of overall attendance, but overall staffing continued to decline relative to 2019–20 and 2020–21.
- **Attendance and participation data are self-reported by grantees.** In New Jersey, 21st CCLC grantees are responsible for collecting and tracking youth attendance and participation data using New Jersey’s PARS21 system. How well grantees do this likely varies. Some grantees may have provided more accurate data than others. Further, in the context of the pandemic, where programming was often virtual and programs were frequently combined into a single virtual “center,” the reporting of program activity and participation data likely varied even more than usual.
- **Surveys can be subject to bias.** Survey data are subject to a number of limitations, including bias (such as recency bias) and social desirability response (i.e., providing socially acceptable but untrue responses in cases where the true responses are perceived as socially undesirable). The staff survey results (as included in the leading indicators) and youth survey results presented in this report should therefore be interpreted with some caution.
- **Fewer youth surveys and staff surveys were collected than in previous, non-pandemic years.** This is unsurprising but suggests that the results may not be representative of all programming across New Jersey.

Finally, and as stated previously, no findings in this report should be interpreted as findings of program effect. The results are all descriptive; that is, no inferences concerning cause and effect are warranted by the data shown.

Section 3. Program Characteristics

Programs funded by 21st CCLC grants are often characterized by a wide diversity of approaches, student populations, and types of organization involved in providing 21st CCLC programming. This section summarizes the characteristics of grantees, centers, and students associated with 21st CCLC programs active during the 2021–22 school year. Overall, 63 grantees in 2021–22 operated 139 centers. In all, the 139 centers in 2021–22 served 15,772 youth (compared with 11,689 youth in 2020–21), likely showing the effect of the pandemic on overall participation rates (recognizing that closures related to the pandemic began in late 2019–20).

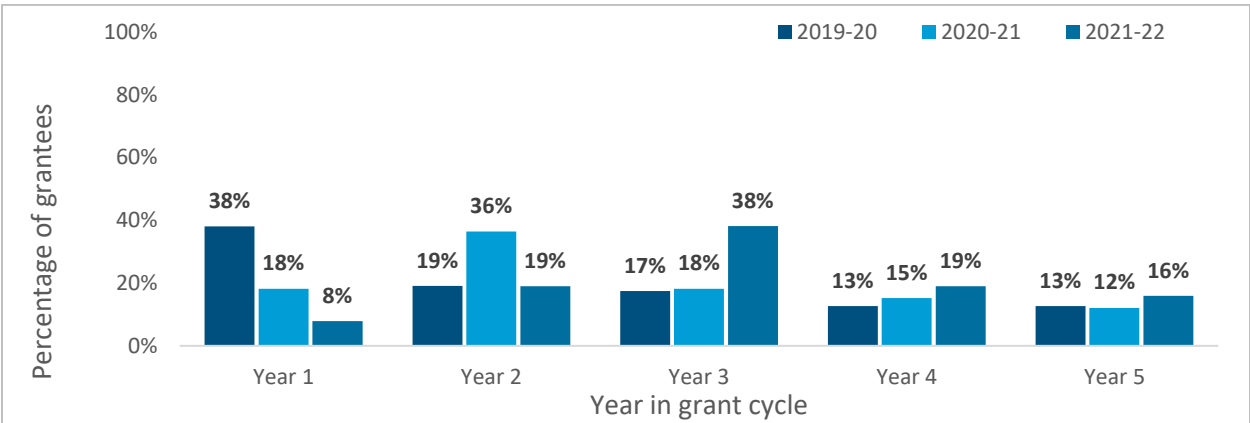
Grantee Characteristics

This section contains information on key grantee characteristics. In this report, the term “grantee” refers to the organization that serves as the fiduciary agent on the grant in question, regardless of whether it is a school district, community-based organization, or other entity, or whether it is ultimately responsible for administering grant funds at the program level.

Grantee Maturity

Programs evolve across the grant period. For example, grantees may find themselves needing to emphasize some elements of their programs and reduce or eliminate others in response to changes in the students served. In addition, it would be optimal for grantees, over time, to learn how to (a) provide more effective and engaging programming for youth, and (b) more meaningfully embed academic content in their program offerings in ways that address the needs of the students they are serving. As Exhibit 2 shows, the plurality of grants active during the 2021–22 school year were in Year 3 of funding. This is not surprising, given the 5-year grant cycle and the fact that a plurality of grants for the 2020–21 school year were in Year 2 of funding.

Exhibit 2. Number of Grantees by Year of Operation, 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22

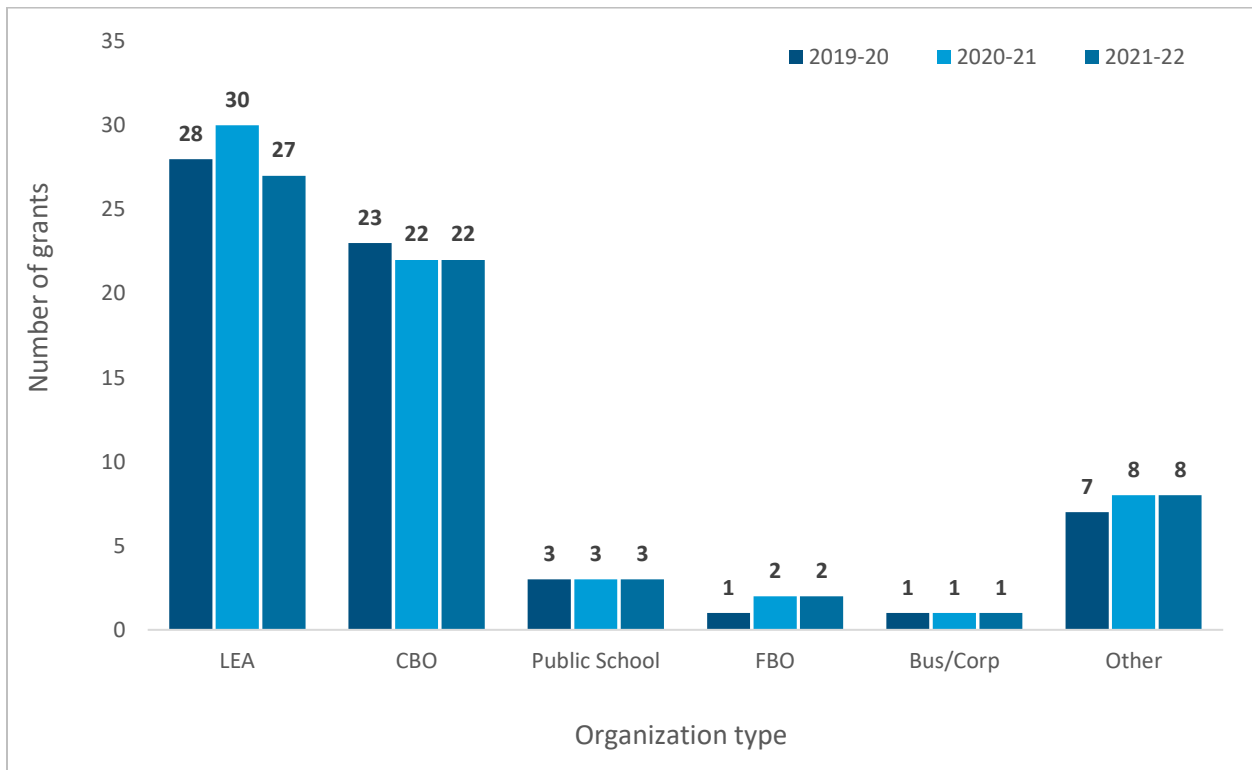


Source. PARS21.

Grantee Organization Type

An important element of the 21st CCLC program is that all types of organization are eligible to apply for and receive 21st CCLC grants. As Exhibit 3 shows, 43% of grants active during the 2021–22 school year were held by school districts (a slight decrease from 46% in the previous year), whereas community-based organizations accounted for 35% of the grants active during this period (up from 33% in the previous year). Public schools and faith-based organizations in 2021–22 accounted for about 5% and 3% of grants, respectively—approximately the same as in 2020–21. All other categories accounted for roughly 12% of grants in 2021–22, similar to the roughly 13% in 2020–21.⁵ Grant types remained about the same between 2020–21 and 2021–22, with minor changes year to year.

Exhibit 3. Number of Grantees by Organization Type



Note. LEA = local education agency; CBO = community-based organization; FBO = faith-based organization; Bus/Corp = business/corporate. LEA and public school are separate categories within the PARS21 data reporting system.

Source. PARS21.

⁵ School districts and public schools are separate categories for grant entities as recorded in PARS21.

Center Characteristics

This section presents key center characteristic data. In this report, the term “center” refers to the physical location where 21st CCLC–funded services and activities take place. Each center has defined hours of operation, dedicated staff members, and a center coordinator to manage operations. Each 21st CCLC grantee in New Jersey has at least one center; many grantees have more than one center.

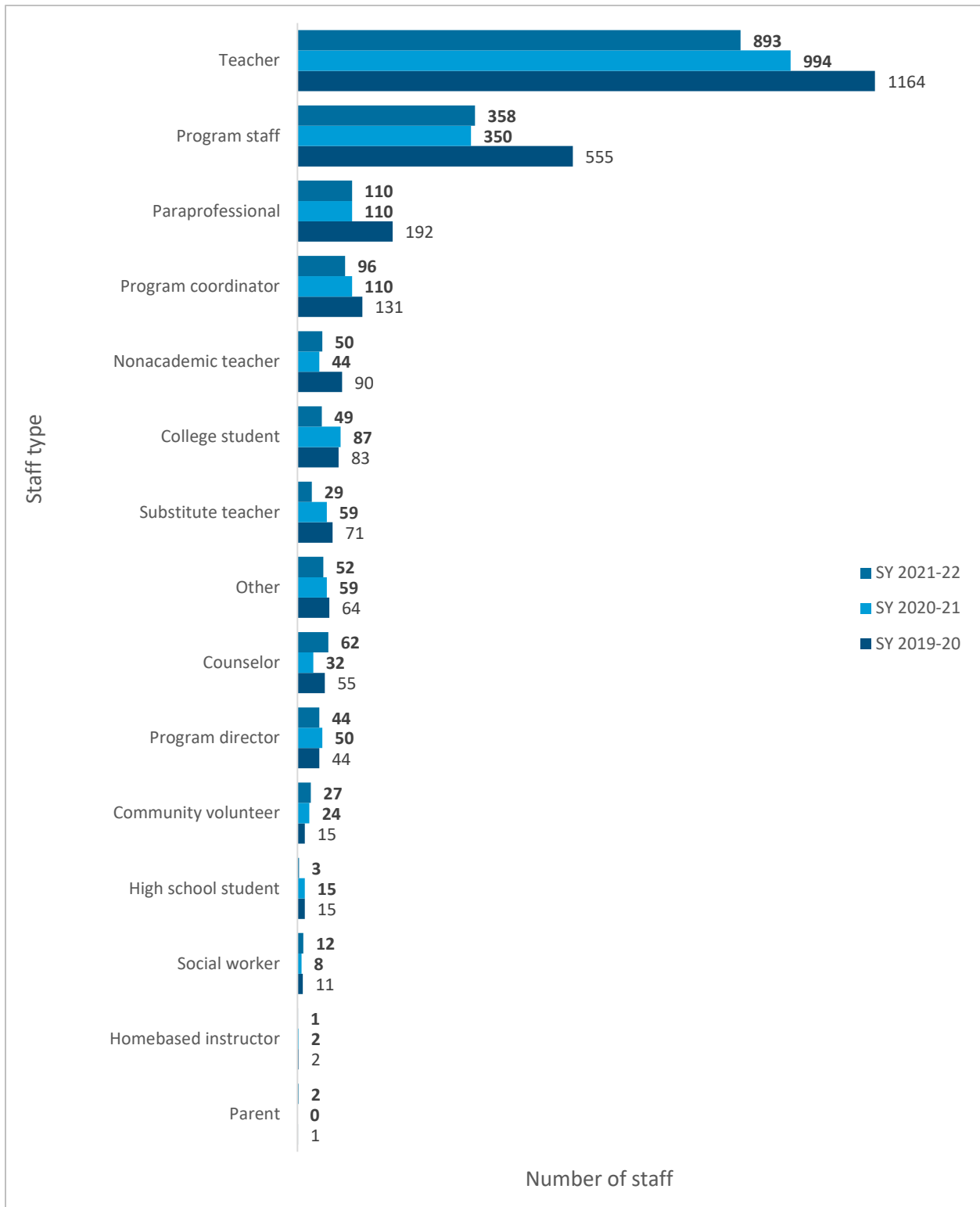
Center characteristics can be described as indicative of research-supported best practices or as innate attributes of the center in question, without a strong connection to the afterschool quality practice literature. The latter category of center characteristics might include the grade level served, program maturity, and organizational type. For example, identifying a program as one that serves only elementary students says nothing about the quality of that program.

Other characteristics of a center, such as the staffing model, are somewhat ambiguous when viewed from a quality practice standpoint; the literature is unclear on the superiority of certain staffing approaches. From a policy standpoint, NJDOE considers certain approaches to staffing for certain types of activities to be appropriate—namely, that certified teachers should staff academic programming provided in an afterschool program.

Staffing

Grantees in New Jersey report staff information in PARS21, linking each staff member to activities provided during 21st CCLC programming. Staff can be categorized in a number of different ways, such as “parent” and “college student.” Counting only those staff who were in some way associated with the provision of actual activities, a total of 1,788 staff were reported by grantees for school year 2021–22 across all programs, down from 1,944 staff in school year 2020–21 and 2,493 staff in school year 2019–20. In terms of classification of these staff, by far the most commonly reported staff types were “teacher” (49.9% of all staff) and “program staff” (20.0% of all staff), with “paraprofessional” a distant third (6.2%). Exhibit 4 shows the total number of staff across New Jersey by staff type.

Exhibit 4. Total Number of Staff by Staff Type, 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22



Note. Based on activity staff data for 147 centers in 2020–21 and 139 centers in 2021–22.

Overall, centers had an average of 12.9 total staff in 2021–22, down from an average of 13.2 total staff for the 2020–21 school year and an average of 16.8 for the 2019–20 school year (only counting staff who actually participated in activity offerings). However, as Exhibit 5 shows, there was some variation in total staff, with a standard deviation of 8.8 staff members in 2021–22.⁶

Exhibit 5. Overall Statistics on Number of Center Staff

Total staff	<i>N</i>	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard deviation
2021–22	139	12.9	11	1	52	8.8
2020–21	147	13.2	11	1	51	8.9
2019–20	148	16.8	14	1	61	10.2

In addition to exploring the number of staff employed by centers during the 2021–22 school year, researchers calculated the average student-to-staff ratio associated with activity sessions provided during the span of the school year in question. As Exhibit 6 shows, the average student-to-staff ratio was approximately one staff member for every 13 or so youth participating in activities in 2021–22 (compared with approximately seven in 2020–21, but around 13 for 2019–20). The mean ratio for 2021–22 was therefore higher than in 2020–21 but about the same as in 2019–20, though note that the 2021–22 ratio is based on a lower number of total staff and a lower number of total students than was the case in 2019–20. Also, the standard deviation for 2021–22 was just under 10, which was higher than in the previous 2 years.

Exhibit 6. Average Student–Teacher Ratio per Center, 2021–22 and 2020–21

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
2021–22 student-to-staff ratio	139	2.42	66.88	13.22	9.73
2020–21 student-to-staff ratio	147	0.42	41.09	7.08	6.68
2019–20 student-to-staff ratio	148	0.65	70.32	13.26	7.91

Source. PARS21.

⁶ In a normal distribution, this would mean that approximately 68% of centers would have between four and 22 total staff.

Grade Levels Served

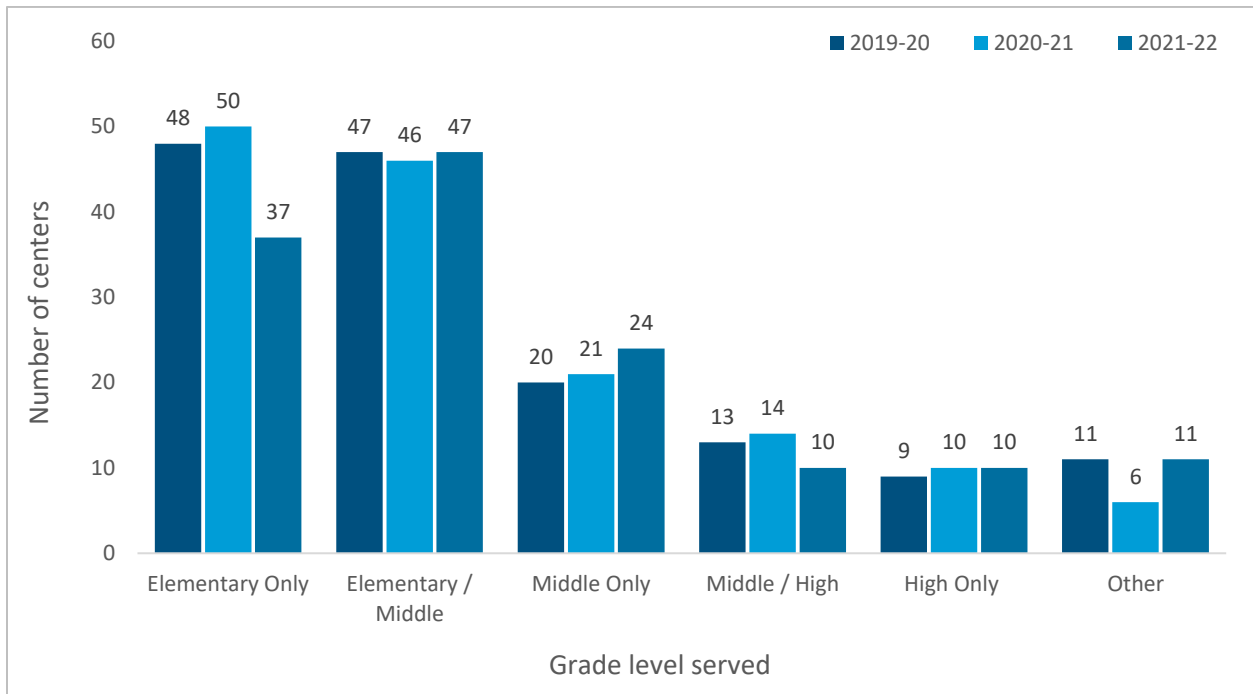
The grade levels served by a program play a role in determining (a) how 21st CCLC programs should structure their operations and program offerings, and (b) the domain of outcomes they should be accountable for through performance indicator systems. Using student-level data on the grade levels of students attending centers, those active during the 2021–22 school year were classified as follows:

- Elementary only, serving students up to Grade 6
- Elementary/middle, serving students up to Grade 8
- Middle only, serving students in Grades 5–8
- Middle/high, serving students in Grades 5–12
- High only, serving students in Grades 9–12

This is the same classification scheme as was used in previous years. Note that a sixth category (“Other”) includes centers that do not fit into one of the five categories above, such as centers that serve students across all grade levels or some other combination of grade levels.

The bulk of the centers active during the 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22 school years served elementary or middle school students in some capacity (86.5% of all centers in 2019–20, 89.1% in 2020–21, and 92.8% in 2021–22). Not quite three fifths of all centers served elementary students in at least some capacity (64.2% of all centers in 2019–20, 65.3% in 2020–21, and 60.5% in 2021–22). However, the overall proportion of centers serving only elementary students dropped in 2021–22 (to 26.6%, from 34.0% in 2020–21 and 32.4% in 2019–20), with increases in centers serving middle school students in some capacity (33.8% elementary/middle and 17.3% middle only in 2021–22, compared with 31.3% and 14.3% respectively for 2020–21, and 31.8% and 13.5% respectively for 2019–20). See Exhibit 7.

Exhibit 7. Number of Centers by Grade Level Served



Note. Based on 139 centers for 2021–22, 147 centers for 2020–21, and 148 centers for 2019–20. Two centers for 2021–22 were missing grade-level data.

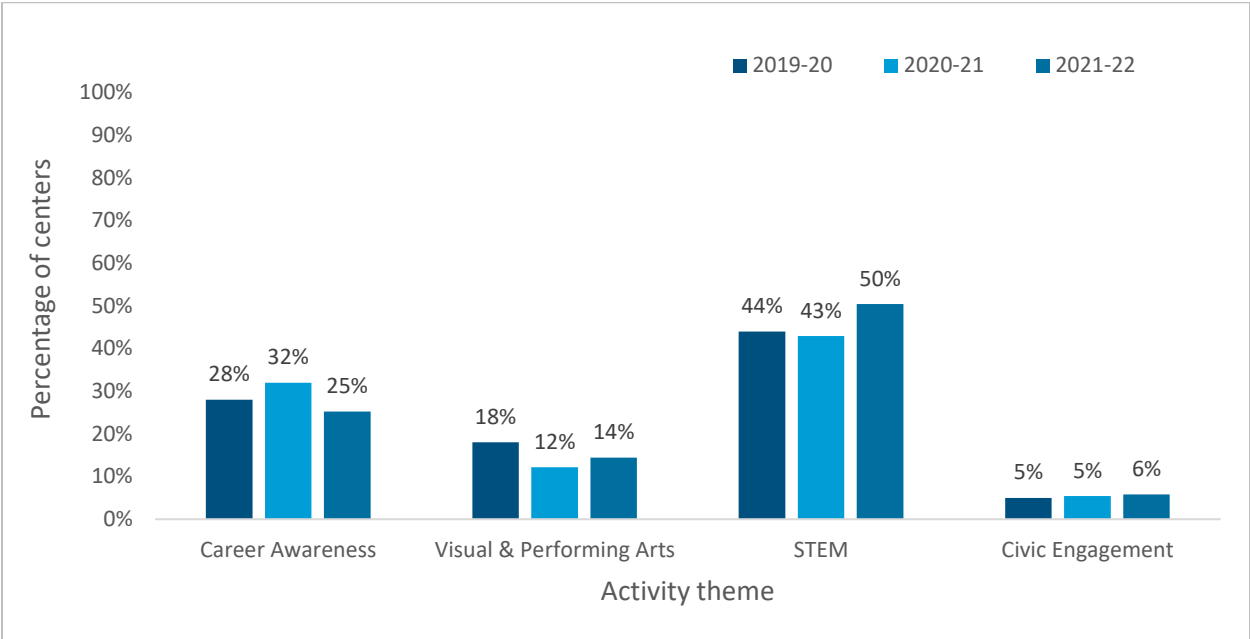
Activity Themes

For the 2021–22 school year, grantees were required to adopt one or more themes when providing activities. The grantees were to select a theme based on students’ needs, interests, and developmental age; and were meant to further support targeted skill building and development through the provision of activities youth would find especially engaging. Themes included the following:

- Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)
- Career awareness and exploration
- Civic engagement
- Visual and performing arts

As Exhibit 8 shows, in school year 2021–22, 25% of centers reported a career awareness theme, 14% reported a visual and performing arts theme, 50% reported a STEM theme, and 6% reported a civic engagement theme. Compared with 2019–20 and 2020–21, there was an increase in centers reporting a STEM theme (from 44% and 43%, respectively, to 50% in 2021–22). There was a decrease in centers reporting a career awareness theme, however, from 28% in 2019–20 and 32% in 2020–21 to 25% in 2021–22. Note that themes were derived for centers based on (a) whether they offered any activities associated with a given theme, and (b) how many total activity minutes were associated with each theme the center reported (with the theme designation going to the theme with the highest number of minutes).

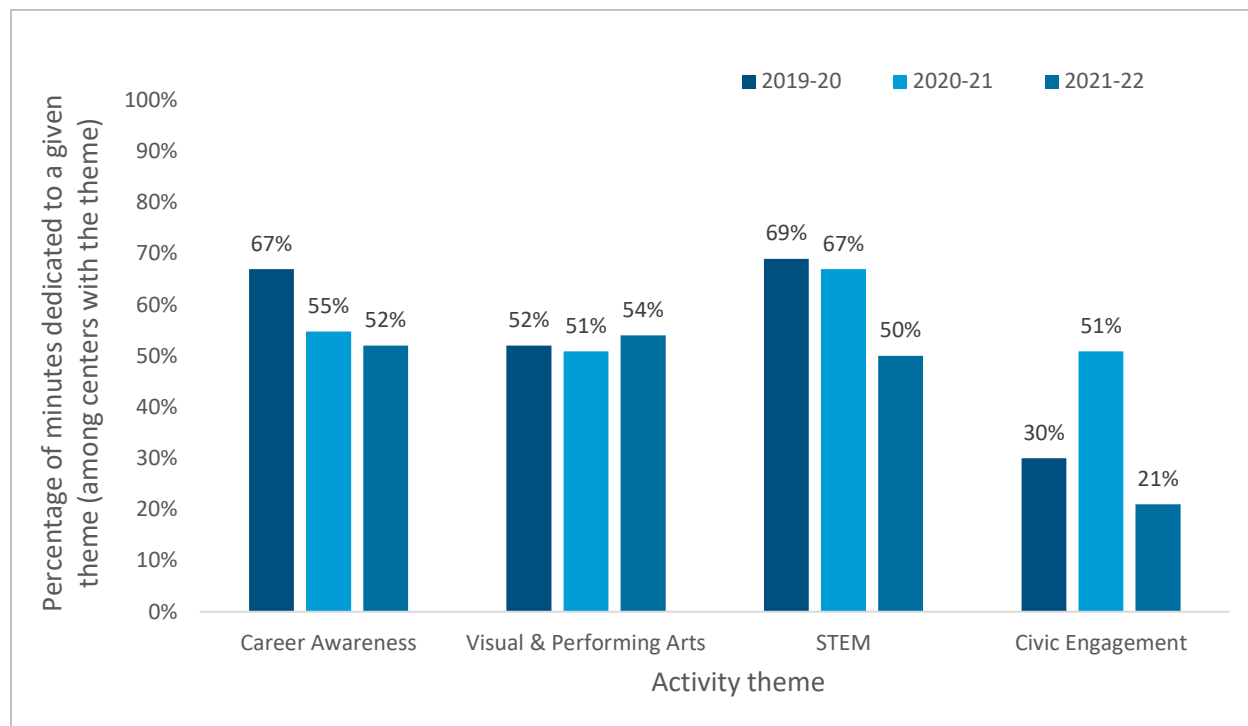
Exhibit 8. Percentage of Centers Offering Activities Linked to a Given Theme



Source. PARS21.

As Exhibit 9 shows, in school year 2021–22, centers with a career awareness theme spent, on average, about 52% of their total activity minutes on career awareness, down slightly from 55% in 2020–21 and down from 67% in 2019–20. Centers with a visual and performing arts theme spent 54% of their time on such activities, up slightly from 51% in 2020–21 and 52% in 2019–20. Centers focusing on STEM spent about 50% of their time on such activities, down from 67% in 2020–21 and 69% in 2019–20; and centers with a civic engagement theme spent about 21% of their time on that theme, down from 51% in 2020–21 and 30% in 2019–20. The extent to which these changes (year to year) are related to the pandemic is somewhat unclear, but it seems likely that the pandemic had at least some impact on total minutes dedicated to specific types of activities. Future data may help to clarify this issue.

Exhibit 9. Percentage of Total Activity Minutes Dedicated to Activity Themes Among Centers With Each Theme



Source. PARS21.

Attendee Characteristics

There were a total of 15,772 attendees served during the 2021–22 school year (counting only students with activity participation data in PARS21). During the 2020–21 school year and 2019–20 school year, there were 11,689 and 19,129 total student attendees, respectively.⁷ This suggests that overall attendance slumped during 2020–21 (during the pandemic) but is now rebounding back toward 2019–20 levels (though attendance has not yet achieved 2019–20 levels). The attendee population was diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, grade level, and economic level, as Exhibit 10 shows. Generally, students served during the 2021–22 school year were Black and Hispanic/Latino; enrolled in elementary or middle school, especially in Grades 3–7; and eligible for free or reduced-price lunch programs. This is similar to overall proportions during previous years (with modest variations observed, as shown in Exhibit 10; note that only 2 years of data are presented because of space limitations).

⁷ During the 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22 school years, 148, 147, and 139 active centers, respectively, had student-level attendance records in PARS21.

Exhibit 10. Summary of Demographic Information for Students, 2020–21 and 2021–22

	Demographic category	2020–21		2021–22	
		Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
Race/ Ethnicity	White	1,642	14.0%	1,990	12.6%
	Black	3,848	32.9%	5,596	35.5%
	Hispanic/Latino	5,432	46.5%	7,137	45.3%
	Asian	430	3.7%	530	3.4%
	Native American	42	0.4%	37	0.2%
	Pacific Islander	20	0.2%	28	0.2%
	Unknown	273	2.3%	452	2.9%
Gender	Male	5,615	48.0%	7,512	7,733
	Female	6,072	52.0%	7,745	8,037
Grade Level	2	2	0.0%	7	0.0%
	3	1,434	13.0%	2,013	12.8%
	4	2,066	18.7%	2,611	16.6%
	5	1,492	13.5%	2,066	13.1%
	6	2,056	18.6%	2,474	15.7%
	7	1,378	12.4%	1,684	10.7%
	8	944	8.5%	1,208	7.7%
	9	794	7.2%	1,197	7.6%
	10	415	3.7%	632	4.0%
	11	288	2.6%	335	2.1%
	12	203	1.8%	157	1.0%
	Free or Reduced- Price Lunch	Reduced price	795	6.8%	1,030
Free		7,898	67.6%	10,616	67.3%
Not available		2,994	25.6%	4,124	26.2%

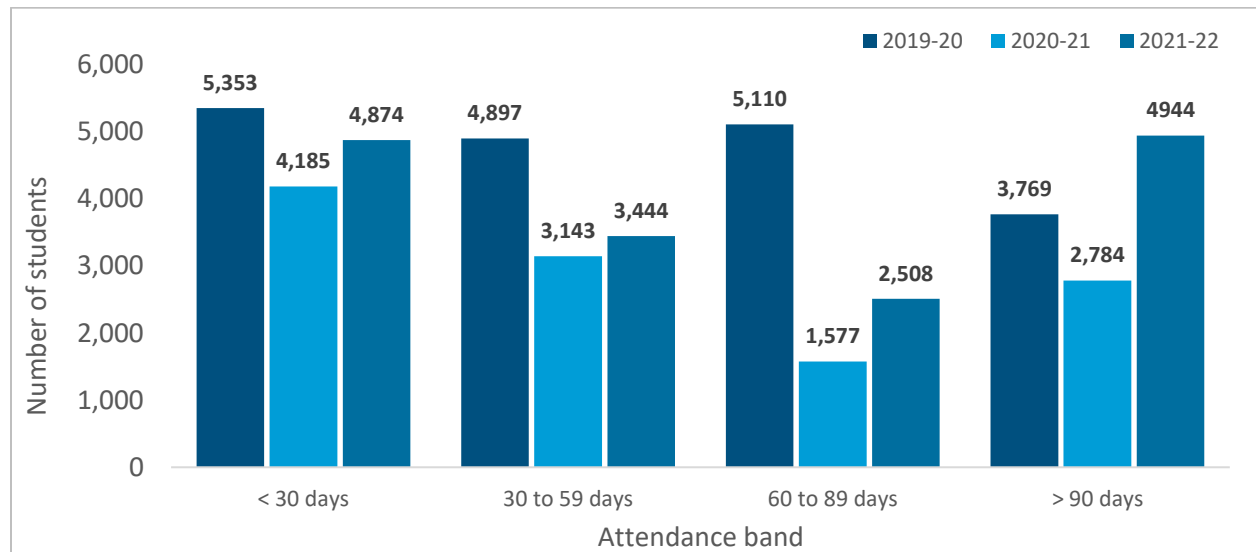
Source. PARS21.

Student Attendance Levels

Attendance is an intermediate outcome indicator that reflects the potential breadth and depth of exposure to afterschool programming. Attendance can be considered in terms of (a) the total number of students who participated in the center’s programming throughout the course of the year, and (b) the frequency and intensity with which students attended programming when it was offered. The former number can be used as a measure of the breadth of a center’s reach, while the latter can be construed as a measure of how successful the center was in retaining students in center-provided services and activities. As a result of the pandemic, of course, it is expected that both numbers will be low compared with previous years.

Among students participating in activities during the 2021–22 school year, the average number of days students attended 21st CCLC programming was 62.8 days, up from 54.4 days in 2020–21 and 55.2 days in 2019–20. Exhibit 11 shows the student population served during the 2021–22 school year, broken into four attendance gradations: students attending fewer than 30 days, students attending 30 to 59 days, students attending 60 to 89 days, and students attending 90 or more days. As Exhibit 11 shows, almost two fifths of the students (30.9%, compared with 35.8% in 2020–21 and 28.0% in 2019–20) attended fewer than 30 days. A smaller proportion of students attended between 30 and 59 days (21.8%, compared with 26.9% in 2020–21 and 25.6% in 2019–20). A plurality of students attended for 90 or more days (31.4%), which was an increase from 23.8% in 2020–21 and 19.7% in 2019–20. This year-to-year shift toward higher levels of attendance (90 days or more) bears watching; if the trend continues while total students served also increases, it will be worth exploring this trend further.

Exhibit 11. Number of Students Served in 21st CCLC by Attendance Gradation



Source. PARS21.

In addition to levels of program attendance during the 2021–22 school year, the research team explored the extent to which students participating during this period had been attending the program previously (in continuous years). As Exhibit 12 shows, slightly fewer than two thirds of students were in their first year of participation during the 2021–22 school year. Approximately 28% were in their second year of participation, and only 5% were in their third year of participation. Four or more years of continuous participation was found to be relatively rare. These patterns are similar to those observed in previous years. Note that a small percentage of students, approximately 2.5%, attended in 2019–20, skipped the 2020–21 school year, and returned for the 2021–22 school year. These students are included in the 1-year group.

Exhibit 12. Continuous Years of Student Participation, 2020–21 and 2021–22

Years of participation	2020–21		2021–22	
	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
1 year	7,128	61.0%	10,128	64.2%
2 years	3,143	26.9%	4,333	27.5%
3 years	916	7.8%	812	5.1%
4 years	366	3.1%	378	2.4%
5 years	100	0.9%	74	0.5%
6 years	20	0.2%	43	0.3%
7 years	9	0.1%	2	0.0
8 years	4	0.1%	1	0.0
9 years	2	0.0%	0	0.0
10 years	0	0.0%	1	0.0
11 years	1	0.0	0	0.0%

Note. Prior-year records were matched to current-year records using participant identifiers. One year of continuous participation, for example, indicates that a given student was either in their first year of programming during the 2021–22 school year or that there was an interruption in participation prior to the 2021–22 school year. *Source.* PARS21.

Student Attendance by Activity Type

The evaluation team calculated how much time 21st CCLC participants spent in activities of different types. Within PARS21, activities in which attendees participate can be classified as follows:

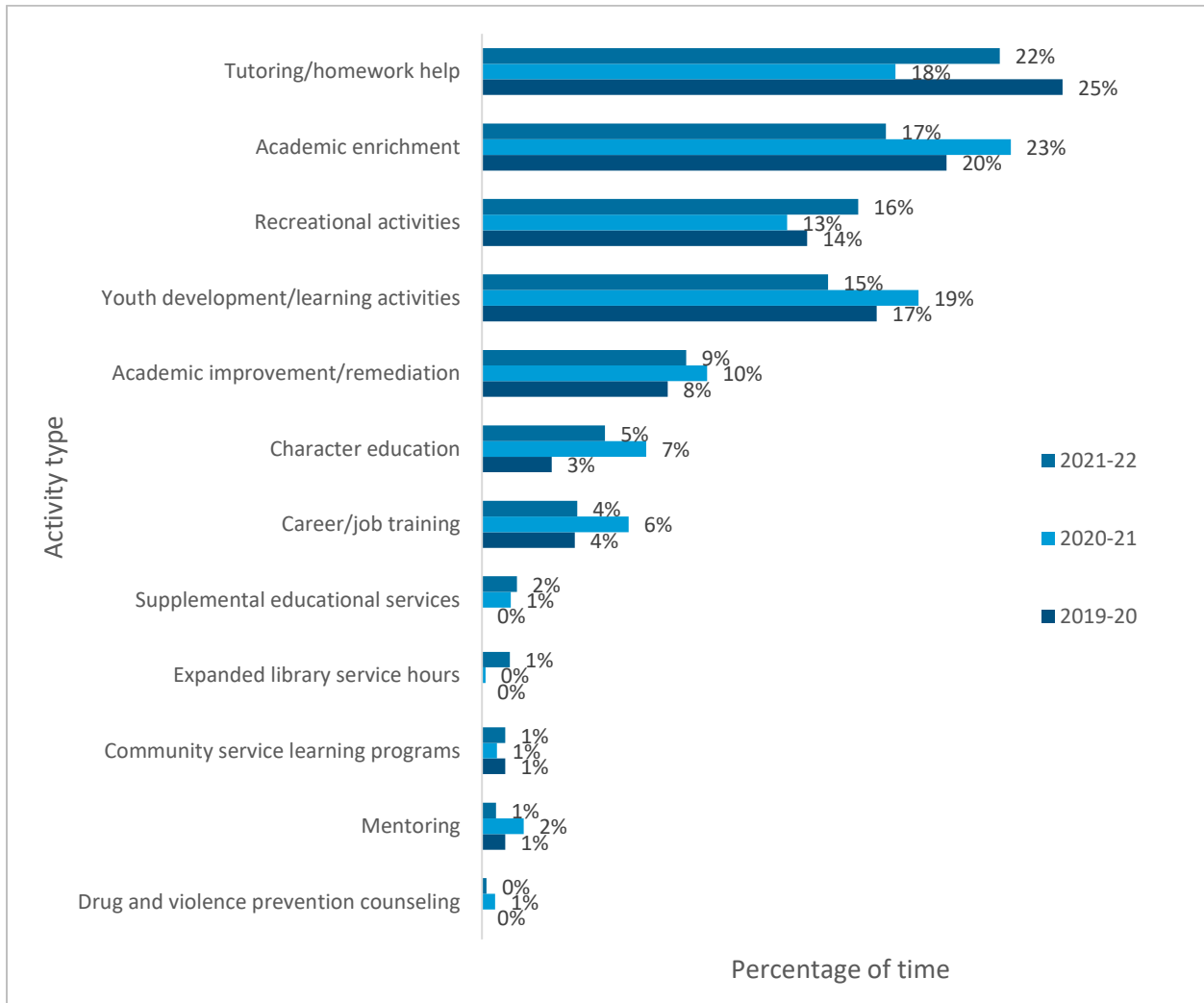
- Academic improvement/remediation
- Academic enrichment

- Tutoring/homework help
- Mentoring
- Drug and violence prevention counseling
- Expanded library service hours
- Recreational activities
- Career/job training
- Supplemental educational services
- Community service learning programs
- Character education
- Youth development/learning activities

Using these activity categories, participant attendance records, and activity session duration data, a total number of minutes for each activity type was calculated for each participant. This information was then used in conjunction with total participation minutes to derive student-level percentage statistics concerning each attendee's time spent in each type of activity. Averages of these percentages were then taken to determine what proportion of time participants spent in each activity category (again, on average). Exhibit 13 shows the results.

The clearest result is that students spent a smaller proportion of their time in academic enrichment compared with the previous 2 years, and a larger proportion of their time in recreational activities. Participants in 2021–22 also spent a larger proportion of their time in tutoring/homework help activities than participants in 2020–21 (though the proportion was slightly lower than in 2019–20). Overall, differences between 2021–22 and 2020–21 were greater than differences between 2021–22 and 2019–20, presumably related to attendance changes associated with the pandemic.

Exhibit 13. Percentage of Time Each Participant Spent on Activities of a Given Type (Average) for 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22



Source: PARS21.

General statistics were also run for total participant hours (school year) by activity type, calculating the average and median number of total hours for each type of activity (see Exhibit 14). In the 2021–22 school year, tutoring or homework help had the highest average number of total hours, with 35.37 school-year hours; followed by academic enrichment and then recreational activities, with 27.95 and 27.50 mean school-year hours, respectively. In terms of median values, the low number of hours meant that only tutoring/homework help, academic enrichment, recreational activities, and youth development/learning activities had median hours above 0.

Compared with previous year values, 2021–22 average hours were similar to 2019–20 averages but were generally higher than 2020–21 averages. As an exception to this general trend, however, average hours of recreation were notably higher in 2021–22 (27.5 hours) than in 2019–20 (16.73), while academic enrichment hours were notably lower in 2021–22 (27.95) than in 2020–21 (36.09).

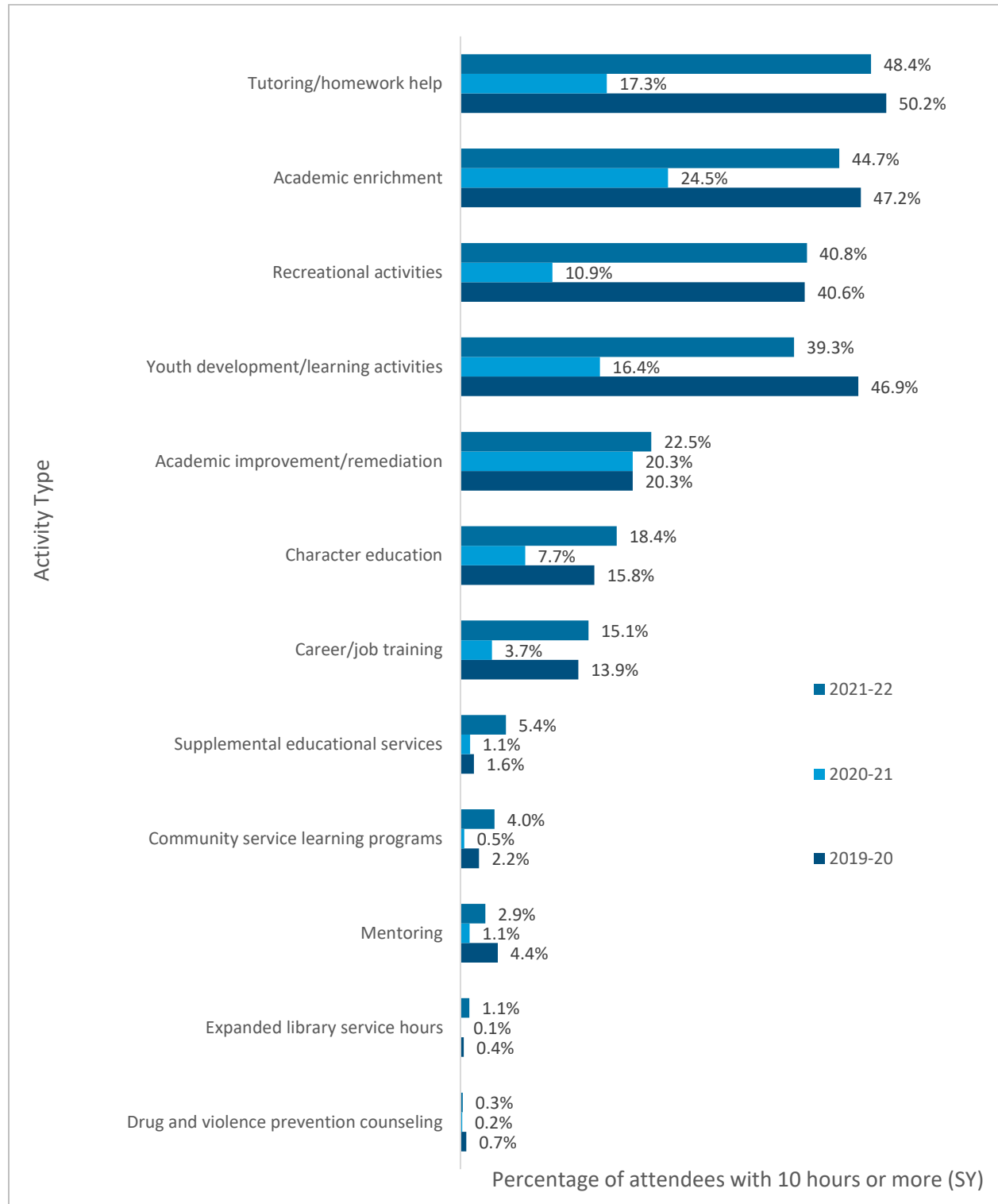
Exhibit 14. Total School-Year Hours of Attendee Participation by Activity Type

School year	2021–22		2020–21		2019–20	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Academic improvement/remediation	14.0	0.0	8.8	0.0	9.0	0.0
Academic enrichment	28.0	6.0	36.1	2.0	24.3	8.0
Tutoring/homework help	35.4	8.0	22.1	0.0	32.2	10.0
Mentoring	1.3	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.2	0.0
Drug and violence prevention counseling	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.2	0.0
Expanded library service hours	0.6	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.0
Recreational activities	27.5	3.0	12.3	0.0	16.7	4.0
Career/job training	7.4	0.0	5.7	0.0	4.4	0.0
Supplemental educational services	2.7	0.0	.9	0.0	0.7	0.0
Community service learning programs	1.1	0.0	.4	0.0	0.7	0.0
Character education	8.0	0.0	5.2	0.0	4.8	0.0
Youth development/learning activities	24.9	3.0	22.8	0.0	21.9	7.5

Source. PARS21.

To explore the intensity of youth participation in each activity category type, a simple calculation was made to identify youth participating for at least 10 hours in each activity type (again, counting total hours for the entire school year). Exhibit 15 shows the percentage of youth participating for at least 10 hours. As indicated, in 2021–22, tutoring/homework help had the highest participation, with about 48% of all youth participating for 10 hours or more during the year, followed by academic enrichment (45%) and recreational activities (about 41%). Overall, the proportion of youth reaching the 10-hours-or-more benchmark was much higher for each activity type in 2021–22 than in 2019–20 (with the exception of academic improvement/remediation) but was similar to 2019–20 proportions. This presumably shows an effect of the pandemic on 2019–20 participation.

Exhibit 15. Percentage of Attendees With 10 or More Hours in a Given Activity Type (School Year), 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22



Source. PARS21.

Participation in Reading and Mathematics Activities

Another approach to examining students' participation in 21st CCLC programming offered during the 2021–22 reporting period is to explore the extent to which they participated in activities meant to support skill building in mathematics and reading, regardless of activity type (e.g., enrichment, tutoring, or academic remediation). As mentioned, a central goal of the 21st CCLC program is to support student growth and development in reading and mathematics. As Exhibit 16 outlines, students on average participated in approximately 66 hours of reading/literacy programming during the 2021–22 reporting period and 54 hours of mathematics programming. In comparison with 2020–21, these hour averages are higher, with increases from 54 hours in reading/literacy programming and 52 hours in mathematics programming. The 2021–22 hours are also higher than averages in 2019–20. These higher mean levels of participation in reading and mathematics are in keeping with the higher proportion of students attending 90 days or more of programming.

Exhibit 16. Average Number of Hours in Reading and Mathematics per Student, 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021–22

	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
2021–22 ELA education activities	15,752	0	771 ^a	66.1	87.9
2021–22 mathematics education activities	15,752	0	465	53.6	68.5
2020–21 ELA education activities	11,660	0	1,058 ^a	54.3	104.68
2020–21 mathematics education activities	11,660	0	917 ^a	51.7	105.75
2019–20 ELA education activities	18,978	0	479.5 ^a	56.3	63.2
2019–20 mathematics education activities	18,978	0	401.5 ^a	51.5	57.8

Note. ELA = English language arts. The method of activity data reporting changed in 2015–16 to allow activity records to target multiple subjects.

^a These values are fairly extreme outliers.

Source. PARS21.

Section 4. Youth Survey

During spring 2022, AIR collected survey data from 21st CCLC participants in New Jersey concerning youth experiences in the program. This section presents the results of those experience questions. This section is divided into three parts. First, youth responses concerning youth choice are presented. Second, youth responses concerning their relationships with staff and other youth in the program are presented. Third, youth responses about how the 21st CCLC program has helped them are presented. Note that none of the material in this section speaks to program outcomes, at least in a causal manner; the data in this section merely present youth responses to experience-related questions on the post-administration youth survey.

Also note that the results presented in this section are based on 3,631 total completed surveys. However, centers serving more than 100 youth were asked to survey a representative sample of 100 youth, rather than all attendees. This sampling reduced the data-reporting burden for centers serving a large number of youth.

Questions Relating to Youth Choice

Especially with older youth, allowing opportunities to make real, meaningful choices is an important part of program quality. Giving youth a sense of control and real choice in activities can help them become more engaged and experience a sense of agency (Beymer et al., 2018; Larson & Angus, 2011; Naftzger & Sniegowski, 2018; Nagaoka, 2016). Youth perceptions concerning their opportunities for real choice provide a window into one aspect of program quality, in addition to conveying youth perceptions of their own experience in 21st CCLC programs.

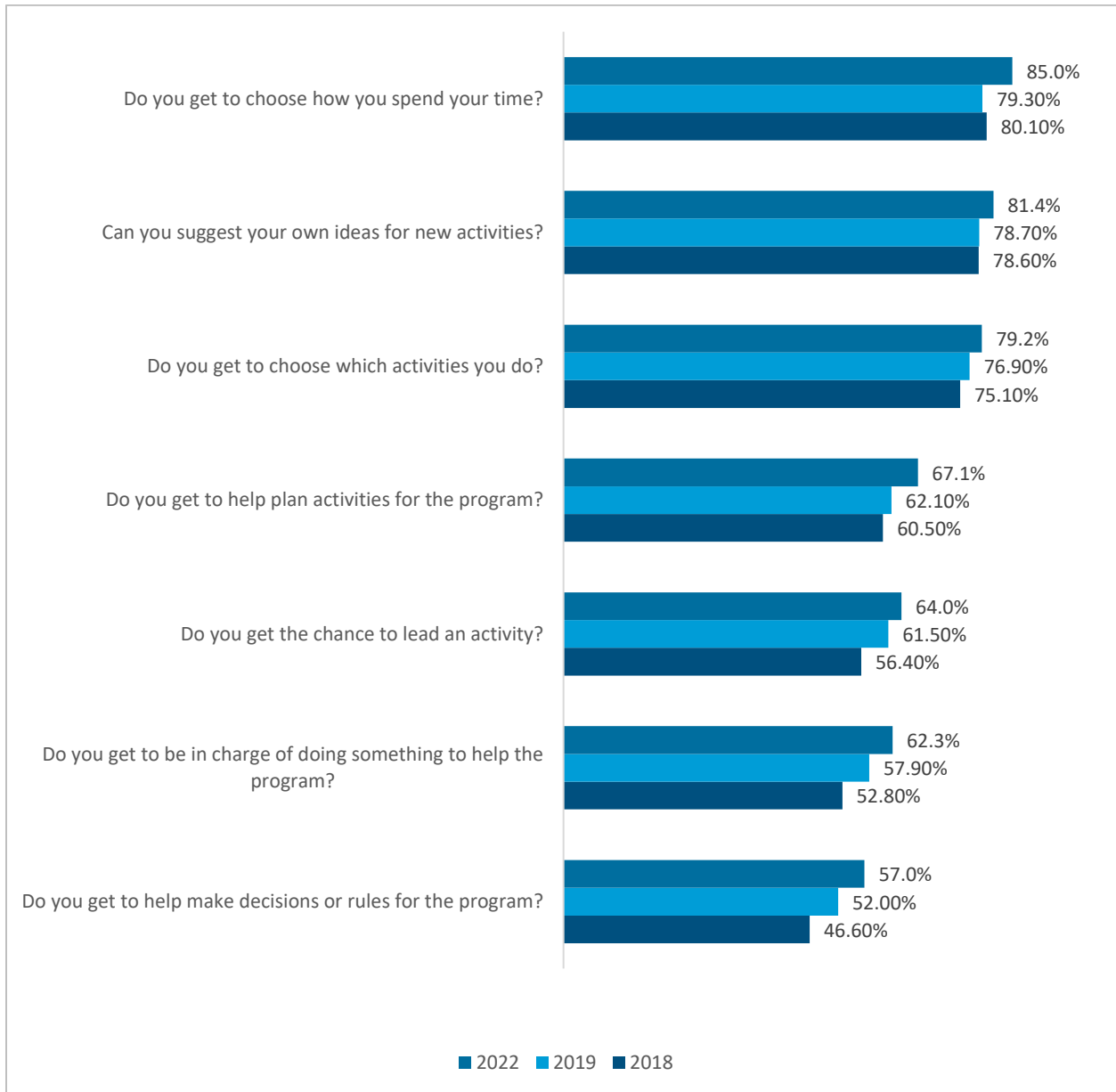
For this reason, the survey included questions concerning youths' perceptions of their opportunities to make choices in the 21st CCLC program. The exact wording of the prompt was as follows: **“Now think about this program in particular. When you are at this program, how often...”** This stem was followed by seven items that youth could answer by selecting *never*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, or *often*. The full domain of questions, along with responses (by percentage of all responses received for each item), is presented in Exhibit 17.

Exhibit 17. Youth Responses to Questions Concerning Opportunities for Choice

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	<i>n</i>
Do you get to choose how you spend your time?	3.9%	10.4%	44.3%	40.7%	3141
Can you suggest your own ideas for new activities?	4.8%	13.1%	37.7%	43.7%	3125
Do you get to choose which activities you do?	6.0%	14.0%	40.6%	38.6%	3110
Do you get to help plan activities for the program?	16.1%	16.1%	34.0%	33.1%	3113
Do you get the chance to lead an activity?	18.0%	17.3%	35.3%	28.7%	3109
Do you get to be in charge of doing something to help the program?	19.8%	17.1%	32.7%	29.6%	3122
Do you get to help make decisions or rules for the program?	26.4%	15.8%	29.8%	27.2%	3129

To help visualize these responses, Exhibit 18 shows the combined percentage of respondents indicating *sometimes* or *often* for each item. Data from 2018 and 2019 are also presented for comparison purposes (the youth post-administration survey was not administered during 2020 or 2021). Generally, youth felt they either *sometimes* or *often* were able to choose how they spent their time, could suggest ideas for new activities, and could choose what activities to do. Conversely, youth were less likely to indicate that they *sometimes* or *often* were able to make decisions or rules for the program, were in charge of something to help the program, or had a chance to lead an activity, though these were expected to be somewhat lower as they pertain more to older youth. Interestingly, positive responses for all items were higher (as a proportion of all responses) than they were in 2018 or 2019.

Exhibit 18. Percentage of Youth Respondents Answering *Sometimes* or *Often* in Response to Each Question Related to Opportunities for Choice



Questions Relating to Relationships With Adults and Youth

For youth to have a positive experience in 21st CCLC programming, centers need to foster positive relationships between youth and adults (Auger et al., 2013; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Kauh, 2011; Miller, 2007; Naftzger & Sniegowski, 2018; Traill et al., 2013), as well as relationships among the participants themselves (Akiva et al., 2013; Larson & Dawes, 2015). Creating these positive relationships is an essential aspect of program quality and can facilitate important youth outcomes.

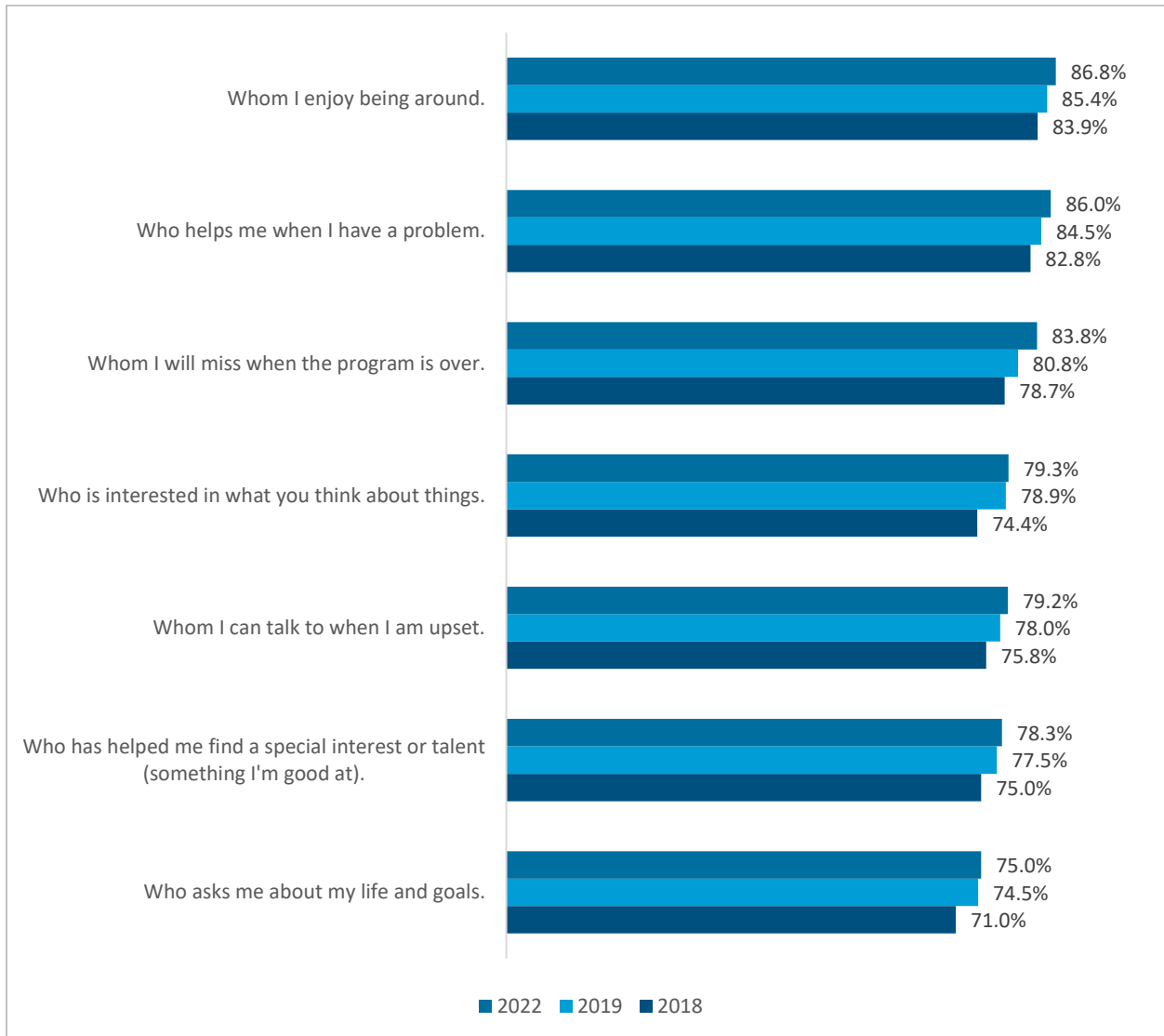
For this reason, we asked youth about their perceptions of their relationships with adults, along with questions about their relationships with their peers. Concerning adults, we asked the following: **“In this program, there is an ADULT...”** Seven items followed this stem, with response options of *not at all true*, *somewhat true*, *mostly true*, and *completely true*. See Exhibit 19 for a presentation of all questions and response rates, by response category. Note that only a small percentage of respondents indicated *not at all true* for any item, although the statement “who asks me about my life and goals” received the most *not at all true* responses (about 10% of responses).

Exhibit 19. Youth Responses to Questions Concerning Relationships With Adults in the Program

Thinking about the adults present for this program, how true are these statements for you? In this program, there is an adult here...	Not at all true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Completely true	n
Who is interested in what you think about things	5.4%	14.5%	35.8%	43.5%	3,107
Whom I can talk to when I am upset	7.5%	12.5%	27.1%	52.1%	3,086
Who helps me when I have a problem	4.1%	9.1%	29.4%	56.6%	3,054
Whom I enjoy being around	3.5%	8.9%	27.3%	59.5%	3,086
Who has helped me find a special interest or talent (something I’m good at)	8.1%	12.9%	29.2%	49.1%	3,093
Who asks me about my life and goals	9.6%	14.6%	31.3%	43.7%	3,079
Whom I will miss when the program is over	6.5%	8.9%	25.1%	58.7%	3,075

To help visualize these responses and clarify areas of greatest strength and relative weakness, Exhibit 20 presents combined response percentage rates for *mostly true* and *completely true*. Generally, youth responded to all items positively, with the lowest *mostly true* and *completely true* response rate calculated at 75.0% (“Who asks me about my life and goals”). About 87% responded that the statement “Whom I enjoy being around” was *mostly true* or *completely true*; and 86% responded *mostly true* or *completely true* to the statement, “Who helps me when I have a problem.” Overall, a higher proportion of youth indicated *mostly true* or *completely true* for all items concerning relationships with adults than was the case in 2019 or 2018.

Exhibit 20. Percentage of Youth Respondents Answering *Mostly True* or *Completely True* in Response to Each Question With the Stem, “In This Program, There Is an ADULT...”



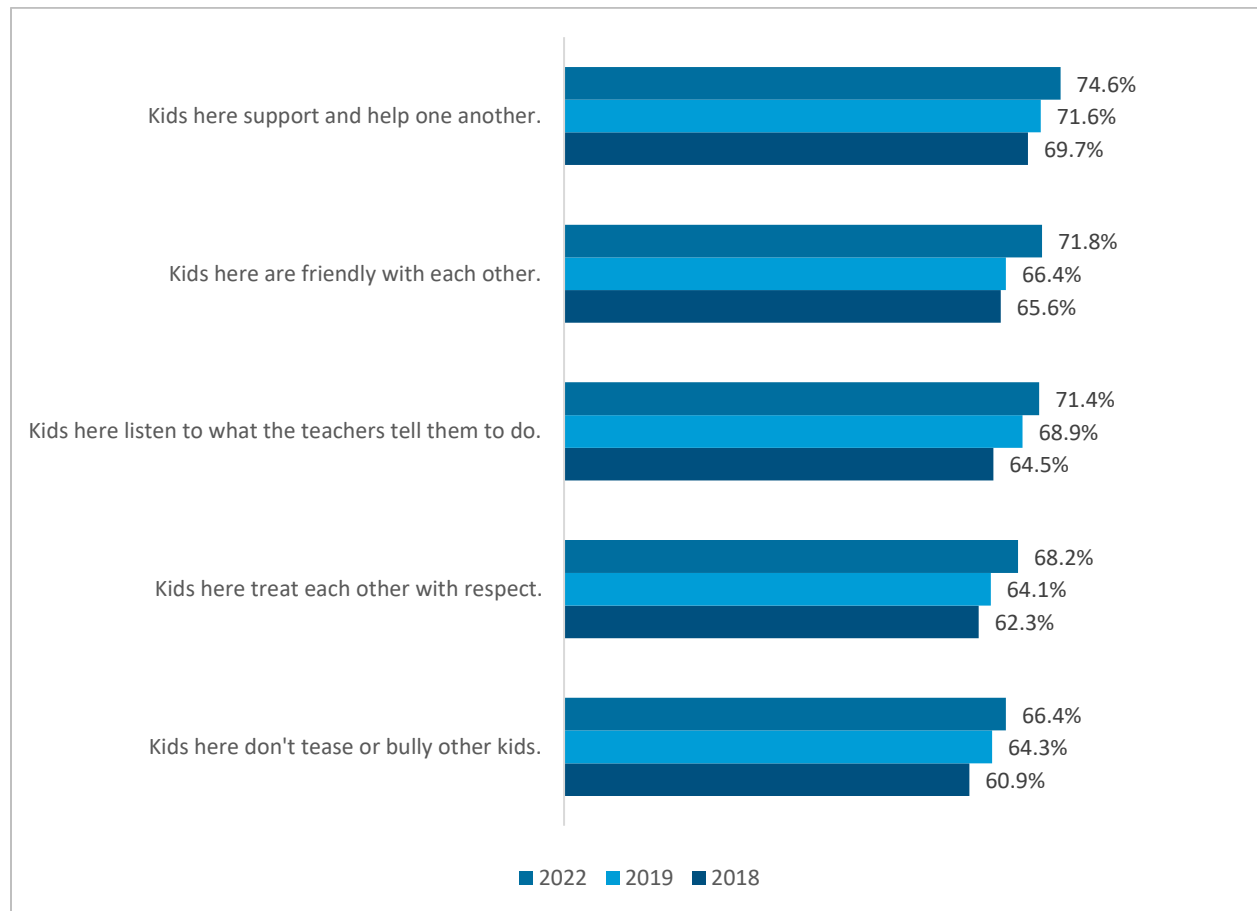
Concerning relationships among the youth themselves, we used the same response categories for five separate items. Youth were prompted with the following: **“At this program, how do kids get along? Indicate how true each statement is based on your own experience in this program.”** All five questions, along with responses by percentage responding in each category, are presented in Exhibit 21. Note that the item “Kids here don’t tease or bully other kids” received the highest *not at all true* response rate, at 13.3%, but it was negatively worded (which can sometimes cause respondent confusion). Overall, response patterns were similar item to item, with lower proportions of answers falling in the *mostly true* or *completely true* range than was the case for questions about relationships with adults.

Exhibit 21. Youth Responses to Questions Concerning Relationships Among Participants

At this program, how do kids get along? Indicate how true each statement is based on your own experience in this program.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Completely true	<i>n</i>
Kids here are friendly with each other.	7.5%	20.0%	35.7%	36.1%	3,114
Kids here treat each other with respect.	8.8%	22.3%	34.8%	33.4%	3,094
Kids here listen to what the teachers tell them to do.	6.2%	21.6%	36.3%	35.1%	3,099
Kids here don't tease or bully other kids.	13.3%	19.5%	29.8%	36.6%	3,105
Kids here support and help one another.	6.6%	18.1%	34.9%	39.7%	3,108

As with the other two item sets, Exhibit 22 presents response rates for *mostly true* and *completely true* together as a way to visualize the data. Again, the overall responses in 2022 were more positive than they were in 2019 or 2018.

Exhibit 22. Percentage of Youth Respondents Answering *Mostly True* or *Completely True* to Each Question Related to Youth Relationships in the Program



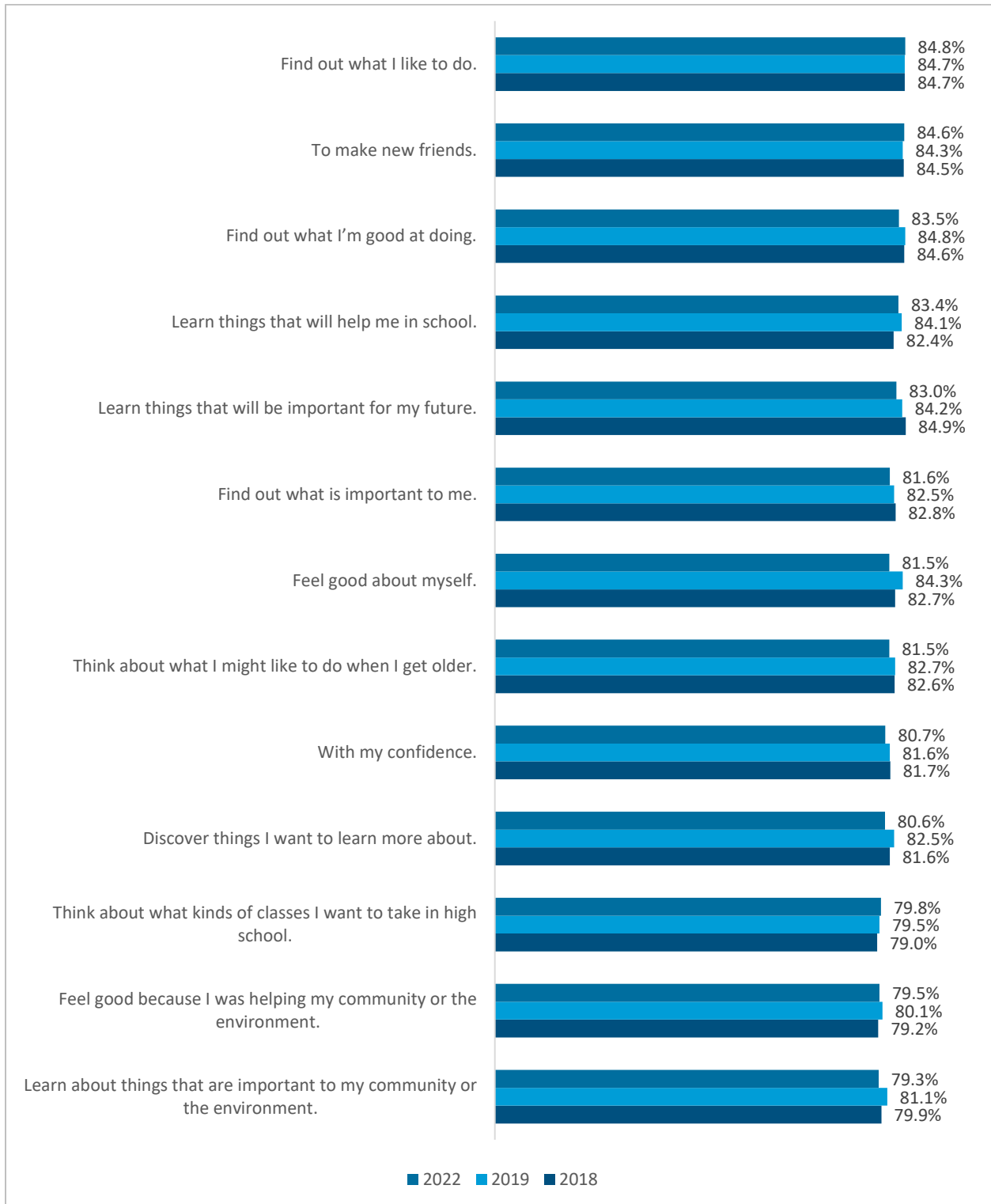
Questions Relating to How 21st CCLC Programming Has Helped Youth

Finally, we asked youth a set of questions about how they think the 21st CCLC program has helped them. We again asked respondents to indicate how true each item was for them personally. In total, we asked youth to respond to 13 different items using the stem, “This program has helped me...” Overall, youth responded positively to these items; more than three fourths of all respondents answered *mostly true* or *completely true* to all items. Items that received the highest proportion of *mostly true* or *completely true* responses were “find out what I like to do” and “find out what I’m good at doing.” Interestingly, however, the items that received the highest percentages of *completely true* responses (i.e., looking only at *completely true*, rather than combining *completely true* and *mostly true*) were “to make new friends” and “feel good about myself.” See Exhibits 23 and 24. Overall, response patterns were similar to those observed in 2018 and 2019.

Exhibit 23. Youth Responses to Questions Concerning How the Program Has Helped Them

How has this program helped you specifically? For each line, indicate how true each statement is for you. This program has helped me...	Not at all true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Completely true	<i>n</i>
Feel good about myself	5.7%	12.1%	27.9%	53.6%	3,102
With my confidence	6.6%	11.9%	30.7%	50.0%	3,086
To make new friends	4.5%	10.3%	26.7%	57.9%	3,080
Find out what is important to me	5.8%	11.8%	31.1%	50.5%	3,077
Find out what I’m good at doing	5.2%	10.4%	30.2%	53.3%	3,078
Find out what I like to do	4.6%	9.8%	31.0%	53.8%	3,068
Discover things I want to learn more about	6.2%	12.5%	30.7%	49.9%	3,071
Learn things that will help me in school	5.0%	10.8%	32.8%	50.6%	3,075
Learn things that will be important for my future	4.9%	11.2%	29.4%	53.6%	3,078
Think about what kinds of classes I want to take in high school	7.9%	11.5%	30.9%	48.9%	3,060
Think about what I might like to do when I get older	6.1%	11.6%	29.8%	51.7%	3,065
Learn about things that are important to my community or the environment	6.1%	13.8%	31.2%	48.1%	3,082
Feel good because I was helping my community or the environment	6.7%	13.1%	29.1%	50.4%	3,076

Exhibit 24. Percentage of Youth Respondents Answering *Mostly True* or *Completely True* in Response to Each Question With the Stem, “This Program Has Helped Me...”



Year-to-Year Changes

The preceding data show that student responses concerning opportunities for choice, relationships with other youth, and relationships with adults were more positive in spring 2022 than they were in spring 2018 or spring 2019. Examination of the individual item responses in their original formats (that is, analyzing all four response options rather than combining the top two response categories, as was done in the preceding exhibits) revealed that the year-to-year difference was driven largely by the *often* or *very true* options (that is, the highest response options). The difference between spring 2022 and earlier years was greatest with respect to the opportunities for choice questions and the relationships with youth questions; for nearly all items in these two sets, anywhere from 5% to 11% more youth respondents in 2022 selected *often* (opportunities for choice) or *very true* (relationships with youth) than in earlier years.

Why this should be the case is an important question. Theoretically, it could be that these shifts are related to programming changes following the pandemic. If program staff intentionally created more opportunities for youth choice and intentionally worked on building welcoming environments during or following the pandemic, that could potentially explain the year-to-year differences. Another possibility is that the differences merely reflect a selection effect; that is, the more positive results from 2022 may reveal characteristics of the youth who chose to attend during spring 2022, and could therefore have little or nothing to do with program effects. For example, youth taking the survey during spring 2022 may have been the youth most eager to return to in-person programming following pandemic-related closures and may therefore have been predisposed to answer experience-related questions positively. It could also be the case that this difference in response patterns is an effect of the return to in-person programming itself, rather than program changes *per se*; after a year or more of virtual programming, youth returning to in-person activities may be more inclined to treat one another with respect, be friendly toward one another, and so on. However, these explanations do not clarify why the set of items related to relationships with adults exhibited lower levels of difference year to year, or why the set of items related to youth perceptions of program impact exhibited little or no difference year to year. These possible explanations, then, are merely conjectural. Whatever the case, it is worth noting that preliminary spring 2023 youth survey results indicate that the 2022 results are not part of a permanent shift, with the spring 2023 data showing lower proportions of *often* and *very true* responses than the 2022 data.

Section 5. Leading Indicators

A primary goal of the statewide evaluation was to provide 21st CCLC grantees with data to inform program improvement efforts regarding their implementation of research-supported best practices. Building from the quality framework, AIR and NJDOE worked collaboratively to define a series of leading indicators predicated on data collected as part of the statewide evaluation. The leading indicators were meant to enhance existing information and data available to 21st CCLC grantees about how they fared in adopting program strategies and approaches associated with high-quality afterschool programming. Specifically, the leading indicator system was designed to do the following:

- Summarize data collected as part of the statewide evaluation in terms of how well the grantee and its respective centers were adopting research-supported best practices.
- Allow grantees to compare their level of performance on leading indicators with similar programs and statewide averages.
- Facilitate internal discussions about areas of program design and delivery that might warrant additional attention from a program improvement perspective.

Predicated on the data collected from the staff survey, ETRS midyear reports, and PARS21, the leading indicator system is focused on *quality program implementation* as opposed to youth or program outcomes. The midyear report is designed to consolidate and report on data collected as part of the basic operation of the program (e.g., PARS21 data). The report also provides information on program evaluation efforts regarding the adoption of research-supported best practices. More consistent implementation of research-supported best practices will theoretically support the attainment of desired youth and program outcomes.

In the following sections, statewide levels of leading indicator performance are summarized. The indicators are divided into two general domains: general program operation and specific activity offerings at each center. The indicator values shown in each section are based on center-level indicator values, aggregated to the state level. The hope is that these aggregate values will provide useful information concerning areas of common strength or weakness. Indicator values across the past 5 years are also presented as a way of showing indicator change or stability over time, notably between pre-pandemic and pandemic years.

General Program Indicators

General program indicators relate to program practices at the general or program level, but they may have a strong effect on participant experience. Programs characterized by a supportive and collaborative climate permit staff to engage in self-reflective practice to improve overall program quality. As noted by Smith (2007), Glisson (2007), and Birmingham and colleagues (2005), an organizational climate that supports staff to reflect on and continually improve program quality is a key aspect of effective youth development programs. Furthermore, research suggests that youth achievement outcomes can be improved by simply paying attention to *how* programming is delivered (Birmingham et al., 2005; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). These indicators therefore provide information on program internal communication, links to the school day, collaboration with school partners, and staff commitment to quality at the point of service. The indicator values are presented in Exhibit 25.

Overall, the results presented in Exhibit 25 show the following:

- The average statewide scale score for internal communication fell within the once-a-month response category for 2021–22 (scale response options included *never, a couple of times per year, about once a month, and nearly every week*). This suggests that the assessed collaborative efforts were frequently implemented during both programming periods (Leading Indicator 1).
- Centers tended to have at least some access to school-based data on youth academic functioning and needs (Leading Indicator 2).
- In terms of program staff collaborating with school personnel to adopt practices that are supportive of academic skill building, including linkages to the school day and using data on youth academic achievement to inform programming, the statewide average was 2.91 in 2021–22 (about the same as in previous years). This indicates that staff agreed that linkages exist (Leading Indicator 3).
- In terms of activities provided at the point of service to support youth development, statewide averages on the *Staff Capacity to Create Interactive and Engaging Environment* scale (the source for Leading Indicator 4) suggest that staff adoption of such practices is more common than not. This was also the case in previous years.

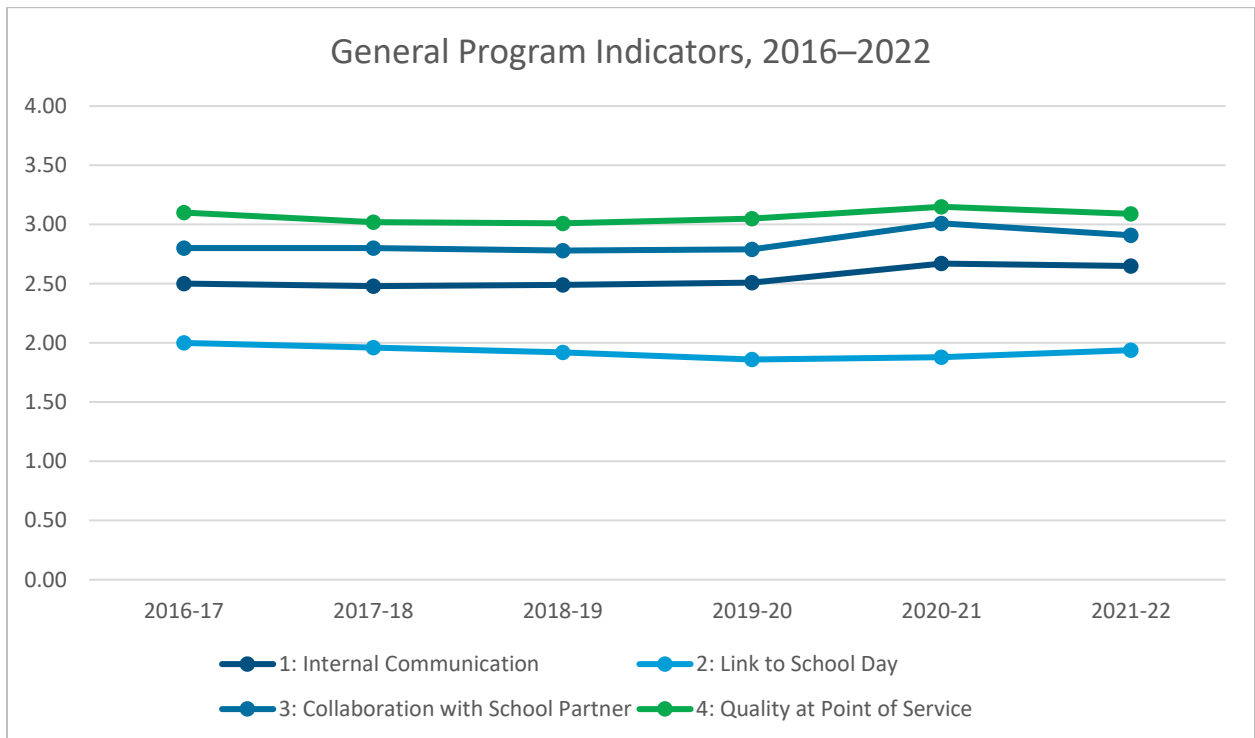
Exhibit 25. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on General Program Indicators

Leading indicator	Description and calculation	Source	Indicator value, 2021–22
Leading Indicator 1: Internal Communication—Staff communicate with other program staff to enhance internal collaboration toward continuous program improvement.	Each center received a score on a 1 to 4 scale, based on mean responses to questions in the staff survey about the degree of communication and collaboration.	Responses to questions that appear in the <i>Internal Communication and Collaboration</i> scale of the staff survey	The statewide mean scale score was 2.65 for 2021–22, which is within the <i>once-a-month</i> portion of the scale.
Leading Indicator 2: Link to School Day—Program staff take steps to establish effective linkages to the school day that inform the design and delivery of program activities meant to support student academic growth and development.	Each center received a score on a 1 to 4 scale, based on responses to questions about the degree to which strategies (that appeared on the midyear version of the evaluation template) were adopted to support the academic development of participating youth.	Responses to the following questions, which appeared in the <i>Improve Student Academic Achievement</i> section of the ETRS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the program obtain student information? How accessible was this information, and how often was it used? What strategies did you use to link the program to the regular school day? What strategies were your staff members using to communicate with classroom teachers, and how frequently were they being used? 	The statewide mean scale score was 1.94 in 2021–22, which meant the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on student academic performance was rarely or occasionally used. Linking with the school day was somewhat of a strategy to a major strategy. Communication with school-day teachers occurred once per grading period to monthly.
Leading Indicator 3: Collaboration With School Partners—Program staff collaborate with school personnel to adopt practices that are supportive of academic skill building, including linkages to the school day and using data on student academic achievement to inform programming.	Each center received a score on a 1 to 4 scale, based on mean responses to questions in the staff survey about linkages to the school day to inform programming.	Responses to questions that appeared in the <i>Linkages to the School Day</i> scale of the staff survey, to inform programming scales of the staff survey	The statewide mean scale score was 2.91 for 2021–22, which meant the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff <i>agreed</i> that linkages to the school day exist.

Leading indicator	Description and calculation	Source	Indicator value, 2021–22
Leading Indicator 4: Quality at Point of Service—Staff are committed to creating interactive and engaging settings for youth.	Each center received a score on a 1 to 4 scale, based on responses to questions about the degree of staff capacity to create interactive and engaging settings for youth.	Responses to questions that appear in the <i>Staff Capacity to Create Interactive and Engaging Environment</i> scale of the staff survey	The statewide mean scale score was 3.09 for 2021–22, which was within the <i>agree</i> portion of the scale, indicating that staff believe their peers largely provide these opportunities to participating youth.

In terms of indicator changes across time, the results presented in Exhibit 26 show that the general program indicators have varied only slightly over the last 6 years. This was true even during the years most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (2019–20 and 2020–21).

Exhibit 26. General Program Indicators, 2016–2022



Activity-Related Indicators

Activity-related indicators relate to actual activity provision and therefore relate directly to participant experience in 21st CCLC programming. These indicators are subdivided into three groups:

- Indicators related to mathematics and language arts
- Indicators related to social and emotional development
- Indicators related to parent or guardian involvement

The state-level indicator results are presented in this section in these categories, with an exhibit and summary points provided for each subset.

With respect to mathematics and language arts activity provision, each program funded by a 21st CCLC grant has the express goal of improving youth achievement outcomes. As already noted, general program practices are important to achieving this goal, but programs will be more likely to accomplish this goal if the 21st CCLC staff working directly with youth provide activities intentionally meant to support academic learning in some way, and if youth actually attend such activities on a consistent and ongoing basis. The indicators in this section, therefore, focus on the provision of and participation in these activities.

- A statewide average of about 28.2% of activity sessions in 2021–22 and 33.3% of activity sessions in 2020–21 had either a mathematics or a language arts focus (Leading Indicator 5).
- Statewide, slightly over two thirds of regular attendees participated in mathematics or language arts activities for at least half of their activity time in 2021–22 (Leading Indicator 7). Note that the proportion of students meeting this criterion was higher in 2019–20 (77.1%) but lower in 2020–21 (65.1%).
- The design of activity sessions frequently targeted the skills and knowledge staff were trying to impart to participating youth (Leading Indicator 6). This was also the case in previous years.

See Exhibit 27 for complete indicator results relating to mathematics and ELA activities.

Exhibit 27. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on Activity-Related Indicators Associated With Mathematics and Language Arts

Leading indicator	Description and calculation	Source	Indicator value, 2021–22
<i>Mathematics and ELA</i>			
<p>Leading Indicator 5: 21st Century Skills—A meaningful level of activity sessions delivered during the first semester of the school year are intentionally meant to support youth growth and development in either mathematics or reading/language arts and are led by a certified teacher.</p>	<p>PARS21 student attendance data were used to determine the proportion of activity sessions delivered during the school year that were intentionally meant to support student growth and development in either mathematics or ELA and were led by a certified teacher.</p>	<p>Activity detail and attendance pages in PARS21</p>	<p>Statewide, 28.2% of activity sessions offered during 2021–22 met these criteria, compared with 33.3% in 2020–21. A total of 108 centers in 2021–22 (77.1% of centers with indicator data, compared with 119 centers in 2020–21 and 116 centers in 2019–20, 82.6% and 79.6% respectively) with indicator data had at least some activities that intentionally targeted mathematics or language arts.</p>
<p>Leading Indicator 6: Common Core—Staff design and deliver intentional and relevant activities designed to support student growth and development in mathematics and reading/language arts.</p>	<p>Each center received a score on a 1 to 4 scale, based on mean responses to questions in the staff survey about the degree of intentionality in activity and session design.</p>	<p>Responses to questions that appeared in the <i>Intentionality in Activity and Session Design</i> scale of the staff survey</p>	<p>The statewide mean scale score was 2.99 for 2021–22, which was in the <i>frequently</i> portion of the scale, indicating that the adoption of these practices by staff is common.</p>
<p>Leading Indicator 7: Common Core Skills—Youth enrolled in the program participate in a meaningful level of activities designed to support youth growth in reading and mathematics achievement.</p>	<p>PARS21 student attendance data were used to determine the proportion of students—among those who participated in programming for more than 30 days—who spent at least 50% of their time in the program participating in activities that were intentionally meant to support student growth and development in mathematics and ELA.</p>	<p>Activity detail and attendance pages in PARS21</p>	<p>Statewide, 68.3% of students participating in programming during the 2021–22 school year and 65.07% of students participating in programming during the 2020–21 school year for more than 30 days met these criteria.</p>

In terms of indicator values across years, the results presented in Exhibit 28 show that the activity-related indicators associated with Common Core skills and 21st century skills have varied somewhat over the last 6 years, with a slight decline in the 21st century skills indicator and a noticeable decrease in the Common Core skills indicator during 2020–21. Exhibit 29 shows an increase in 2020–21 relative to Leading Indicator 6 (“Staff design and deliver intentional and relevant activities meant to support student growth and development in mathematics and reading/language arts”), but the indicator value dropped somewhat in 2021–22.

Exhibit 28. Activity-Related Leading Indicators 5 and 7 Associated With Common Core Skills and 21st Century Skills, 2016–17 to 2021–22

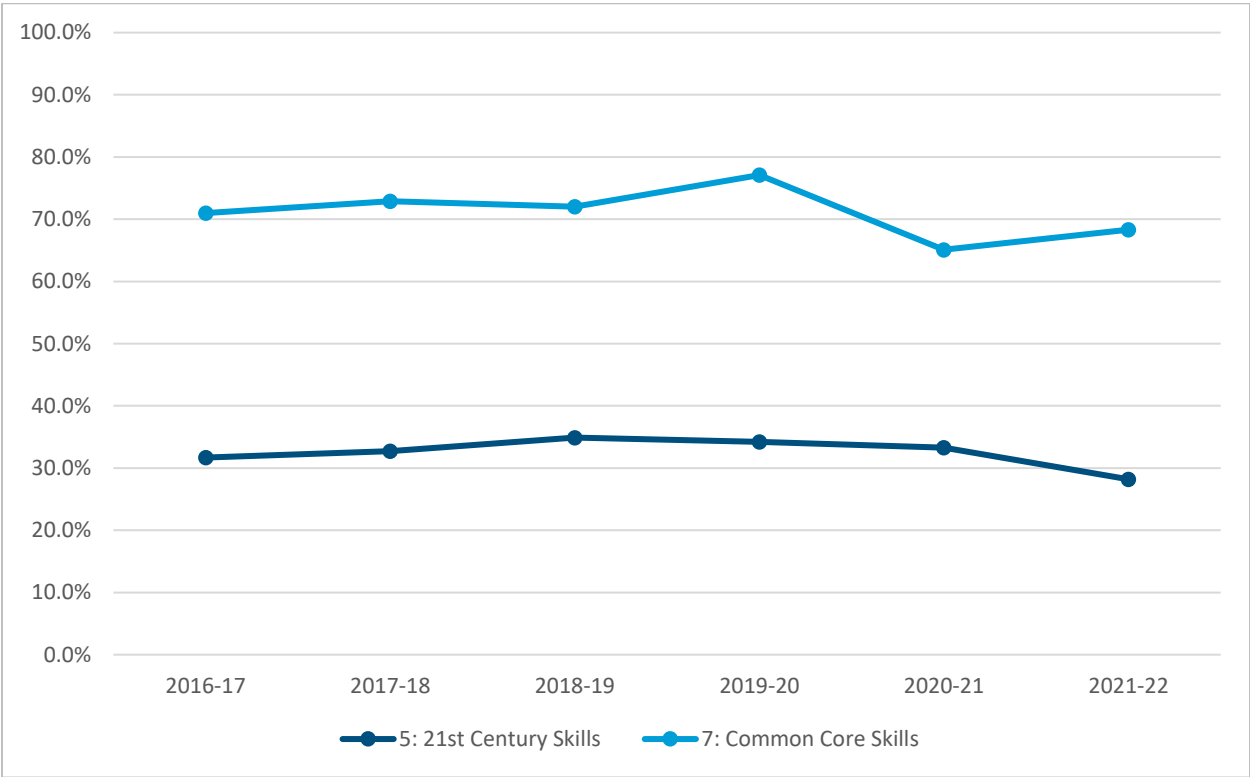
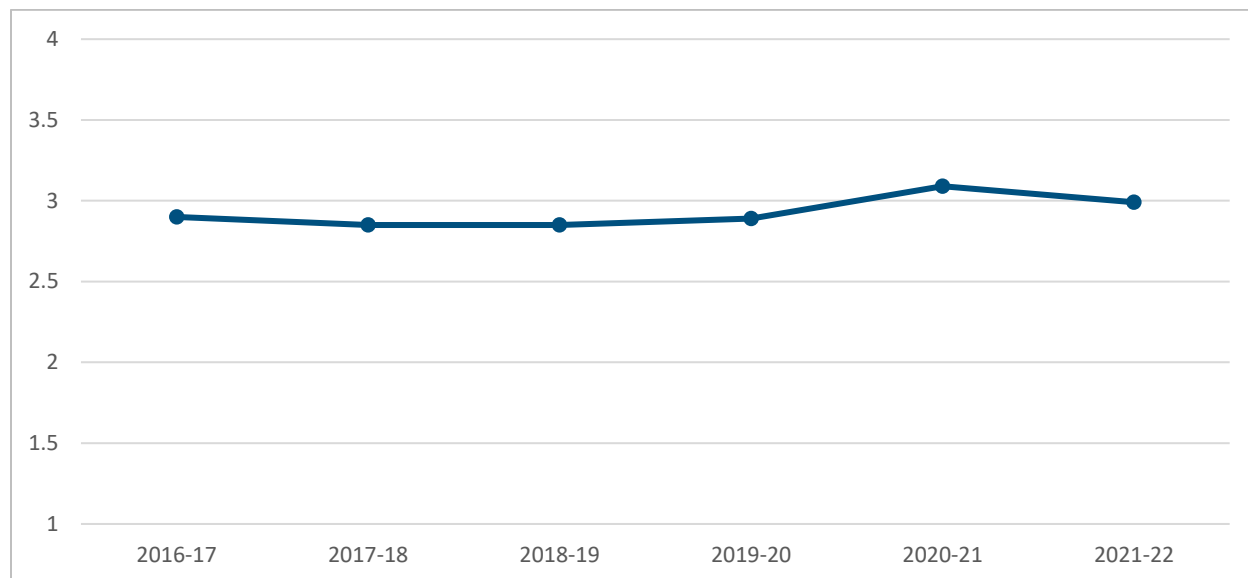


Exhibit 29. Activity-Related Leading Indicator 6 Associated With Mathematics and Language Arts, 2016–17 to 2020–21



The second set of activity-related leading indicators relates to social and emotional youth development. Youth development is a multifaceted construct consisting of a series of positive developmental experiences youth have when key supports and opportunities are afforded throughout their participation in youth-serving programs. In high-quality programs, environments are supportive and interactive, and they provide youth with opportunities to experience engagement and ownership of the setting (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Smith & Hohmann, 2005). Social and emotional learning (SEL) is also an integral component of youth growth and achievement and has been shown to be positively affected in afterschool settings that promote the development of these skills through the creation of specific conditions for learning (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). Afterschool programs that successfully support the development of SEL skills integrate opportunities for participants to build on their social and emotional competencies through sequenced activities that are actively engaging and focused on the development of social skills. Ideally, these strategies are based on an understanding of participants' assets and needs, garnered through ongoing formal and informal assessment.

As shown in Exhibit 30, the centers operating 21st CCLC programs during the course of the 2020–21 school year were characterized by the following levels of performance on the indicators associated with social and emotional development:

- Statewide, an average of approximately 90.7% of activity sessions offered in 2021–22 infused components that were meant to support youth development–related behaviors and SEL (Leading Indicator 8).

- An average of about 92.6% of regular attendees in 2021–22 (up from 85.2% of regular attendees in 2020–21 but down from 94.7% of regular attendees in 2019–20) participated for at least 20% of their time in activities meant to support youth development–related behaviors and SEL (Leading Indicator 9).
- The *Practices Supportive of Positive Youth Development* and *Opportunities for Youth Ownership* scales of the staff survey (the sources for Leading Indicator 10) suggest, as in previous years, that staff adoption of such practices is more common than not.

See Exhibit 30 for leading indicator values.

Exhibit 30. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on Activity-Related Indicators Associated With Social and Emotional Development

Leading indicator	Description and calculation	Source	Indicator value, 2021–22
Leading Indicator 8: Social and Emotional Learning—Staff infuse components that are meant to support the social and emotional development of participating youth.	Fields in PARS21 allow users to specify whether an activity is characterized by an infusion of components that are meant to support youth development–related behaviors and SEL functioning. Users specify what areas of youth development and SEL functioning are being targeted, if any. The goal is to have 20% of activity sessions delivered during the school year characterized by an infusion of components that are meant to support youth development–related behaviors and SEL.	Responses to the following field in PARS21: Is this activity intentionally designed to support the improvement of youth development–related behaviors and social-emotional functioning in any of the following areas (check all that apply)?	Statewide, 90.7% of activity sessions offered during the 2021–22 school year met these criteria (compared with 85.2% of activity sessions offered during the 2020–21 school year); and 97.1% of programs in 2021–22 (136 centers with indicator data) and 96.5% of programs in 2020–21 (139 centers with indicator data) had at least some activity sessions relating to youth development–related behaviors and SEL.
Leading Indicator 9: 21st Century Skills—Youth enrolled in the program participate in a meaningful level of activities designed to support youth development and social and emotional competencies.	PARS21 student attendance data were used to determine whether at least 50% of students participating in programming for more than 30 days participated in activities infused with components intended to support youth development–related behaviors and social-emotional functioning for at least 20% of their total time in the program.	Responses to the following field in PARS21: Is this activity intentionally designed to support the improvement of youth development–related behaviors and social-emotional functioning in any of the following areas (check all that apply)?	Statewide, 92.6% of students participating in programming during the 2021–22 school year and 89.4% of students participating in programming during the 2020–21 school year for more than 30 days met these criteria.
Leading Indicator 10: Youth Development—Staff develop activities	Each center received a score on a 1 to 4 scale, based on responses to questions about the degree to	Responses to questions that appear in the <i>Practices</i>	The statewide mean scale score was 2.94 in 2021–22 and 2.99 in 2020–21,

Leading indicator	Description and calculation	Source	Indicator value, 2021–22
that are meant to support youth ownership and other opportunities for positive youth development.	which staff reported adopting practices designed to support youth development and ownership.	<i>Supportive of Positive Youth Development</i> and <i>Opportunities for Youth Ownership</i> scales of the staff survey	which meant the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select opportunities for youth development were made available regularly. Staff largely agreed that youth ownership opportunities are provided.

In terms of changes over time, the results presented in Exhibit 31 show that the activity-related indicators associated with social and emotional activity content have fluctuated over the past 6 years, with a slight decrease in values for Leading Indicators 8 and 9 (“Staff infuse components that are meant to support the social and emotional development of participating youth” and “Youth enrolled in the program participate in a meaningful level of activities designed to support youth development and social and emotional competencies,” respectively) during 2020–21, followed by a modest increase in 2021–22. Leading Indicator 10 (“Staff develop activities that are meant to support youth ownership and other opportunities for positive youth development”) stayed roughly flat compared to previous years (Exhibit 32).

Exhibit 31. Activity-Related Indicators 8 and 9 Associated With Social and Emotional Development, 2016–17 to 2021–22

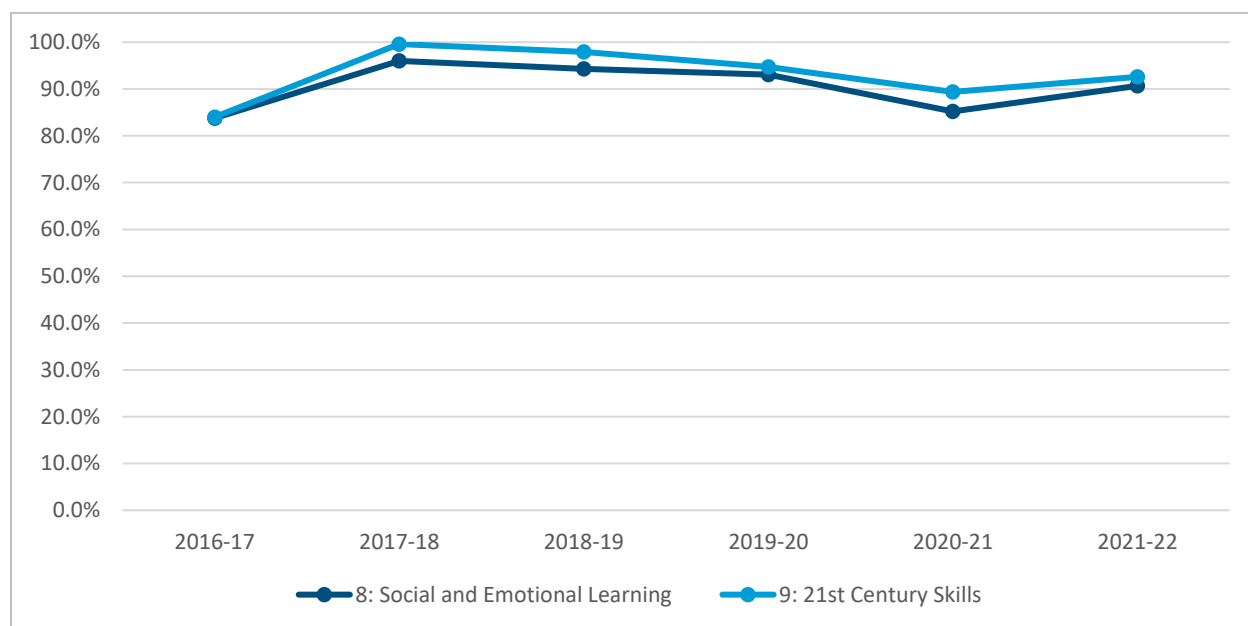
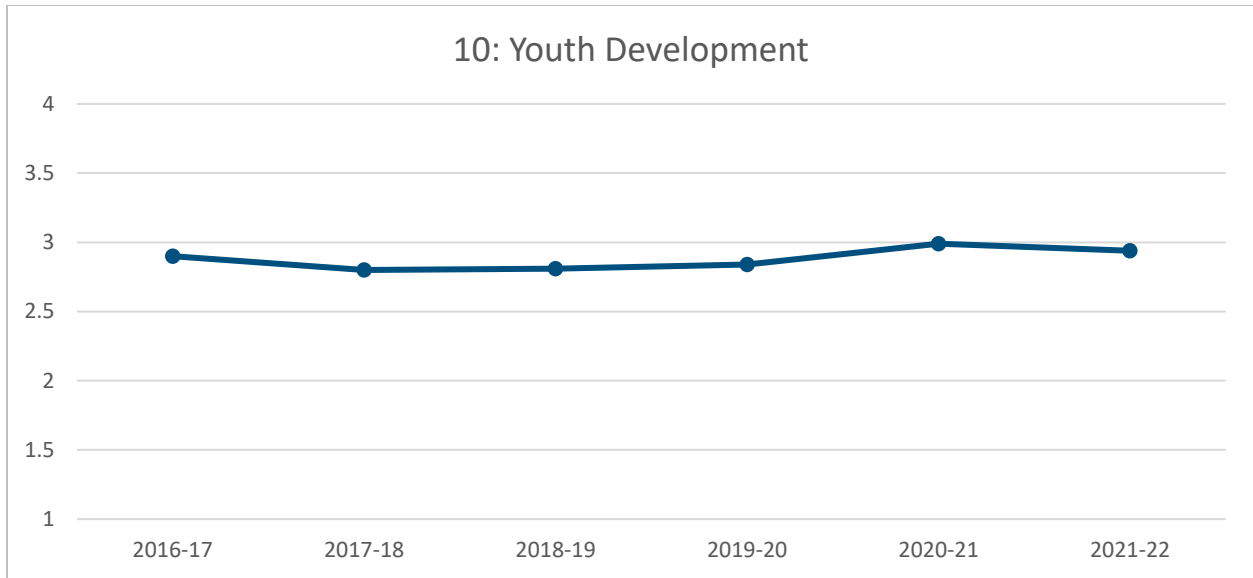


Exhibit 32. Activity-Related Indicator 10 Associated With Social and Emotional Development, 2016–17 to 2021–22



The third set of indicators concerning activity provision relates to parent or guardian involvement. Engaging families in programming and providing family learning events is an important component of 21st CCLC programming. Programs can engage families by communicating with them about center programming and events, collaborating to enhance their child’s educational success, and providing intentional activities meant to both support family involvement and cultivate family literacy and related skills. Historically, 21st CCLC programs have witnessed some of their greatest challenges in getting parents and adult family members meaningfully engaged in program offerings and events (Naftzger et al., 2011). Leading Indicators 11 and 12 relate to programs’ efforts to involve parents or guardians in 21st CCLC programming:

- In terms of engaging in practices to support and cultivate parent involvement and engagement (Leading Indicator 11), most centers were found to do so sometimes or frequently, with a statewide mean scale score of 2.66 in 2021–22.
- Only a very small percentage of program participants (3.5% in 2021–22, 4.4% in 2020–21, and 4.1% in 2019–20) had parents or other adult family members attend activities during the school year. However, a slightly higher proportion of centers (36 centers, or 25.0%) reported activities of this sort in 2021–22 (compared with 29 centers, or 20.1%, in 2020–21; and 25 centers, or 17.2%, in 2019–20).

See Exhibit 33 for a summary of Leading Indicators 11 and 12.

Exhibit 33. Summary of Statewide Leading Indicator Performance on Activity-Related Indicators Associated With Family Involvement

Leading indicator	Description and calculation	Source	Indicator value, 2020–21
Leading Indicator 11: Staff and Family Connections—Staff actively engage in practices supportive of parent involvement and engagement meant to support youth growth and academic development.	Each center received a score on a 1 to 4 scale, based on mean responses to questions about the extent to which staff engage in practices supportive of parent involvement and engagement.	Responses to questions that appear in the <i>Practices Supportive of Parent Involvement and Engagement</i> scale of the staff survey	The statewide mean scale score was 2.66 in 2021–22 and 2.22 in 2020–21, both of which were within the <i>did sometimes</i> portion of the scale.
Leading Indicator 12: Family Involvement—Parents and family members of enrolled youth participate in activities designed to support family engagement and skill building.	PARS21 parent and adult family member attendance data were used to determine whether at least 15% of youth attending programming during the school year had at least one parent or adult family member participate in at least one activity meant to support parental or adult family member involvement or skill building.	Activity detail and attendance pages in PARS21	Overall, 3.5% of all program participants had at least one parent or adult family member participate in at least one activity in 2021–22, compared with 4.8% in 2020–21. Only 35 programs (25.0%) in 2021–22 reported activities of this sort, though this proportion was higher than in 2020–21 (20.1%) or 2019–20 (17.2%).

The results presented in Exhibit 34 show that the activity related to Leading Indicator 11 (“Staff actively engage in practices supportive of parent involvement and engagement meant to support youth growth and academic development”) increased in 2021–22. Results for Leading Indicator 12 (“Parents and family members of enrolled youth participate in activities designed to support family engagement skill building”), however, declined (Exhibit 35).

Exhibit 34. Activity-Related Indicator 11 Associated With Staff and Family Connections, 2016–17 to 2021–22

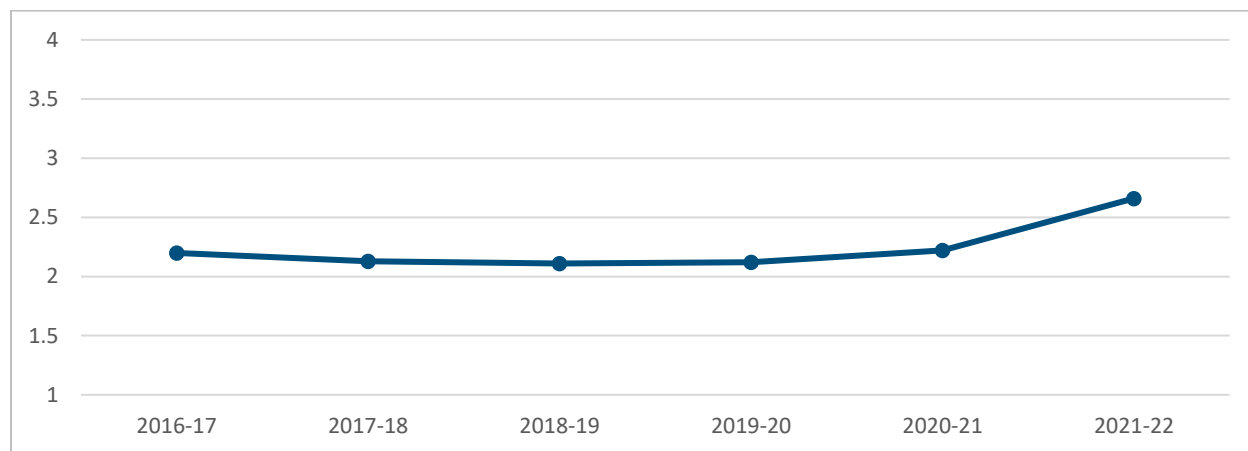
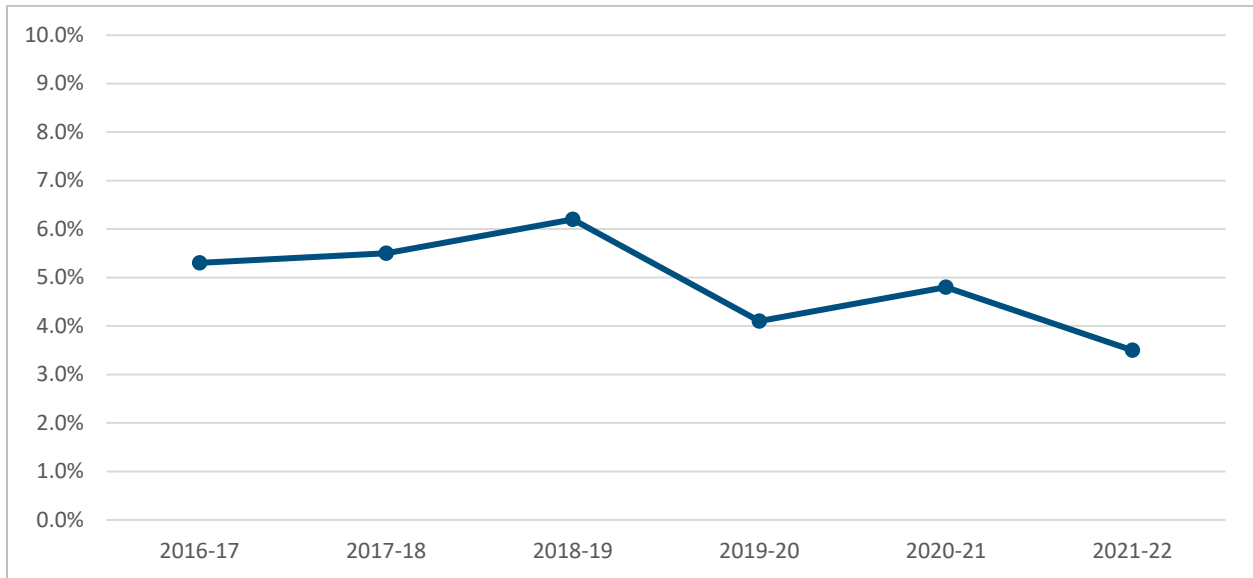


Exhibit 35. Activity-Related Indicator 12 Associated With Family Involvement, 2016–17 to 2021–22



Determining Program Improvement Priorities From the Leading Indicators

One goal of the leading indicator system is to help NJDOE determine where efforts should be invested to support programs to adopt quality afterschool practices. This section therefore focuses on areas where it seems there is room for growth, based on overall percentages or averages.

As in previous years, two indicators showed consistent room for growth:

- **Leading Indicator 5, “Offering activities meant to support student growth in either mathematics or language arts that are led by a certified teacher.”** Statewide, 28.2% of activity sessions offered in 2021–22 targeted mathematics or ELA, compared with 33.3% in 2020–21, 34.2% in 2019–20, and 34.9% in 2018–19. As in previous years, most centers did offer at least *some* activities of this sort: 108 centers in 2021–22 (77.1% of centers with indicator data) had at least some activities that intentionally targeted mathematics or language arts, compared with 119 centers in 2020–21 (82.6%) and 116 centers in 2019–20 (79.6%).
- **Leading Indicator 12, “Parent or family member involvement in activities.”** This indicator value has dropped from a high of 6.2% (of youth program participants having a parent or family member participate in an activity) in 2018–19 to 3.5% in 2021–22. However, a modestly higher proportion of centers reported offering activities of this sort during 2021–22 (36 centers, or 25.0%), compared with previous years (20.1% in 2020–21 and 17.2% in 2019–20).

Most indicator values seem fairly stable over time, albeit with some movement (upward or downward) at specific time points. Leading Indicator 12 does seem to be an important exception to this, however, with an overall downward trend. Leading Indicator 11 also showed a fairly sharp increase in 2021–22 compared with previous years, which will bear watching in 2022–23.

Section 6. Conclusions and Next Steps

As in previous years, the 21st CCLC program in New Jersey appears to be serving the intended population and is offering activities in keeping with New Jersey’s 21st CCLC goals. Further, 2021–22 attendance levels appeared to rebound from the 2020–21 lows, presumably driven by a return to in-person programming. However, 2021–22 attendance levels were still well below pre-pandemic attendance levels. It will be important to watch 2022–23 attendance levels to see whether the upward trend continues.

In contrast to student attendance, total staff levels continue to decline year to year. There have now been 2 successive years of total staff declines, even as student attendance rebounds. While the student-to-staff ratio is now about what it was in 2019–20, this bears watching; if total student attendance continues to increase, total staff will need to reverse its downward trend in order for the ratio to remain the same. If total student attendance increases and programs are unable to rebuild their staffing, program offerings and attendance will presumably be negatively affected, as will the staff themselves.

In terms of youth-reported program experience during the pandemic, youth indicated positive experiences with respect to opportunities for choice, relationships with other youth, and relationships with adults in the program. In fact, the proportion of *often* and *very true* responses (i.e., highest possible agreement) to items associated with these scales was higher than was the case pre-pandemic. Youth did not respond more positively with respect to how the program had helped them, however, with response options roughly in line with pre-pandemic survey administrations.

In terms of leading indicator values, most indicator values for 2021–22 were similar to the values observed in previous years. Leading Indicators 5 and 12 showed room for improvement, however. Leading Indicator 5 (“Offering activities meant to support student growth in either mathematics or language arts that are led by a certified teacher”) declined compared with the previous year, continuing a multiyear downward trend. Leading Indicator 12 (“Parent or family member involvement in activities”) also dropped (from already low levels), continuing a similar multiyear decline. However, both of these indicator values are likely affected to some extent by the pandemic (given program priority shifts). Leading indicator values observed for summer 2023 will likely clarify whether these are persistent trends or primarily pandemic-related.

AIR’s recommendations for NJDOE follow from these observations. First, attendance trends should be watched closely in the coming 1 to 2 years, largely to ensure a return to pre-pandemic levels. Second, NJDOE should explore staffing-related challenges that programs are

facing, notably with respect to finding and retaining staff for activity provision. Third, youth survey response data for spring 2023 should be reviewed by NJDOE earlier than usual in order to assess how youth responses are changing year to year. The results should be discussed with the grantees themselves in order to gain insight into any observed shifts in response patterns.

References

- Akiva, T., Cortina, K. S., Eccles, J. S., & Smith, C. (2013). Youth belonging and cognitive engagement in organized activities: A large-scale field study. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 34*(5), 208–218. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2013.05.001>
- Auger, A., Pierce, K. M., & Vandell, D. L. (2013). *Participation in out-of-school settings and student academic and behavioral outcomes*.
- Beymer, P. N., Rosenberg, J. M., Schmidt, J. A., & Naftzger, N. J. (2018). Examining relationships among choice, affect, and engagement in summer STEM programs. *Journal of Youth & Adolescence, 47*(6), 1178–1191. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-018-0814-9>
- Birmingham, J., Pechman, E. M., Russell, C. A., & Mielke, M. (2005). *Shared features of high-performing after-school programs: A follow-up to the TASC evaluation*. Policy Studies Associates.
- Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2007). *The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills*. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.
- Eccles, J., & Gootman, J. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. National Academies Press.
- Glisson, C. (2007). Assessing and changing organizational culture and climate for effective services. *Research on Social Work Practice, 17*(6), 736–747.
- Naftzger, N., Vinson, M., Manzeske, D., & Gibbs, C. (2011). *New Jersey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) impact report 2009–10*. American Institutes for Research.
- Smith, C. (2007, March). *Predictors of quality at the point-of-service provision: Empirical and methodological background for the YPQA field trial*. Presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Boston, MA.
- Smith, C., & Hohmann, C. (2005). *Full findings from the Youth PQA validation study*. High Scope Educational Research Foundation.

Appendix. Youth Post-Administration Survey

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) administered a post-administration survey in spring 2018, spring 2019, and spring 2022. This survey included youth program experience questions, which are analyzed in Section 4 of this report. Note that, in the survey shown on the following pages, items associated with Question 1 are the youth outcome questions that appeared on both the pre-administration and post-administration versions of the youth survey, whereas items associated with Questions 2 through 5—the experience questions—appeared only on the post-administration version of the survey. Items associated with Question 1 are not covered in this report, given this report’s descriptive character.

Youth Survey for Middle and High School (4th–12th Grades)
New Jersey 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Instructions: The purpose of this survey is to find out more about 21st CCLC out-of-school programs in New Jersey. Our goal is to help make out-of-school time programs better for you and other young people. This survey should take about 15 minutes. Below are questions that ask about you and some of the things you think and feel about yourself and your out-of-school-time program. **This is not a test.** There are no “wrong” answers. Please choose the answer that is most true or most like you.

This survey is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any of the questions if you don’t want to, and you can stop taking this survey at any time. This survey is confidential to the extent permitted by law, which means that no one (not your parents, teachers, school staff or other students) will be allowed to know how you answer these questions.

[NOTE: Question 1 appeared on both the pre-administration and post-administration versions of the youth survey.]

1. Young people might describe themselves in many ways. We have listed some things youth might say or think about themselves. How true is each statement for you? Choose the answer that is most true for you for each statement.

	<i>Not at all true</i>	<i>Somewhat true</i>	<i>Mostly true</i>	<i>Completely true</i>
Doing well in school is an important part of who I am	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting good grades is one of my main goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I take pride in doing my best in school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting a college education is important to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a hard worker when it comes to my schoolwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to me to learn as much as I can	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I finish whatever I begin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I stay positive when things don’t go the way I want	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don’t give up easily	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	<i>Not at all true</i>	<i>Somewhat true</i>	<i>Mostly true</i>	<i>Completely true</i>
I try things even if I might fail	0	0	0	0
I can solve difficult problems if I try hard enough	0	0	0	0
I can do a good job if I try hard enough	0	0	0	0
I stay focused on my work even when it's boring	0	0	0	0
I can stop myself from doing something I know I shouldn't do	0	0	0	0
When I'm sad, I do something that will make me feel better	0	0	0	0
I can control my temper	0	0	0	0
I can handle stress	0	0	0	0
I can calm myself down when I'm excited or upset	0	0	0	0
When my solution to a problem is not working, I try to find a new solution	0	0	0	0
I think of my past choices when making new decisions	0	0	0	0
I listen to other people's ideas	0	0	0	0
I work well with others on group projects	0	0	0	0
I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt	0	0	0	0
I respect what other people think, even if I disagree	0	0	0	0
I try to help when I see someone having a problem	0	0	0	0
When I make a decision, I think about how it will affect other people	0	0	0	0

[NOTE: Questions 2 through 5 appeared ONLY on the post-administration version of the youth survey.]

2. Now think about this program in particular. When you are at this program, how often...

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>
Do you get to choose how you spend your time?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can you suggest your own ideas for new activities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you get to choose which activities you do?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you get to help plan activities for the program?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you get the chance to lead an activity?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you get to be in charge of doing something to help the program?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you get to help make decisions or rules for the program?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Thinking about the adults in this program, how true are these statements for you?

In this program, there is an adult here...

	<i>Not at all true</i>	<i>Somewhat true</i>	<i>Mostly true</i>	<i>Completely true</i>
Who is interested in what I think about things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Who I can talk to when I am upset.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Who helps me when I have a problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Who I enjoy being around.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Who has helped me find a special interest or talent (something I'm good at).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Who asks me about my life and goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Who I will miss when the program is over.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. At this program, how do kids get along? Indicate how true each statement is based on your own experience in this program.

	<i>Not at all true</i>	<i>Somewhat true</i>	<i>Mostly true</i>	<i>Completely true</i>
Kids here are friendly with each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kids here treat each other with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kids here listen to what the teachers tell them to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kids here don't tease or bully others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kids here support and help one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. How has this program helped you specifically? For each line, indicate how true each statement is for you. This program has helped me...

	<i>Not at all true</i>	<i>Somewhat true</i>	<i>Mostly true</i>	<i>Completely true</i>
Feel good about myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
With my confidence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To make new friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Find out what is important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Find out what I'm good at doing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Find out what I like to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discover things I want to learn more about.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learn things that will help me in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learn things that will be important for my future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Think about the kinds of classes I want to take in the future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Think about what I might like to do when I get older.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learn about things that are important to my community or the environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel good because I was helping my community or the environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Thank you!

About the American Institutes for Research®

Established in 1946, the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance both domestically and internationally in the areas of education, health, and the workforce. AIR's work is driven by its mission to generate and use rigorous evidence that contributes to a better, more equitable world. With headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, AIR has offices across the U.S. and abroad. For more information, visit [AIR.ORG](https://www.air.org).



AIR® Headquarters

1400 Crystal Drive, 10th Floor
Arlington, VA 22202-3289
+1.202.403.5000 | [AIR.ORG](https://www.air.org)

Notice of Trademark: "American Institutes for Research" and "AIR" are registered trademarks. All other brand, product, or company names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners.

Copyright © 2023 American Institutes for Research®. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, website display, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the American Institutes for Research. For permission requests, please use the Contact Us form on [AIR.ORG](https://www.air.org).