University of
CINCINNATI

Ohio's 21st Century Community Learning Centers

2023-24 Annual Report

UC EVALUATION SERVICES CENTER
Data Inspiring Change

Executive Summary

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) provide academic enrichment and positive youth development opportunities through out-of-school time programming for students in Ohio. In 2023-24, 299 programs offered a wide range of opportunities during the summer and after school, which focused on providing activities and support aligned with the following components of 21st CCLC programming: academic enrichment, youth development, family engagement, and workforce readiness. Ohio's 21st CCLC programs served over 5,000 students in summer 2023 and over 21,000 students during the 2023-24 school year.

Key Outcomes for 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Program Participation

57% of programs
met goal for at least 60% of students attending regularly (90+ hours)

57% of students
regularly attended 21st CCLC programs during the school year (90+ hours)

53 Exemplar Programs

Exemplar programs were those that had 86% or more of their total program participants attending regularly (90+ hours). These programs noted that staff skills and experience as well as the relationships between staff and students were essential to increasing student participation in their programs.

Chronic Absenteeism

56% of students
regularly participating in 21st CCLC programs who were chronically absent in 2022-23 demonstrated an improvement in school day attendance in 2023-24

29 Exemplar Programs

Exemplar programs reported that over 86% of their students who had previously been chronically absent demonstrated improvement. These programs noted that providing highly engaging enrichment activities was the most effective way to boost school day attendance

> "Offering highly engaging enrichment activities was the most impactful on school-day attendance. Students were not permitted to attend the afterschool program if they did not attend school. Kids were always engaged in the activities and looked forward to coming to program. They loved telling their parents about the activities and showing what they did. We have found that the more activities we do with the children means more time for them to engage in the program and with other children and staff in the program."
>
> **- 21st CCLC Grantee**

Literacy Achievement

73% of students

regularly participating in 21st CCLC programming demonstrated any growth in literacy

27% of students

regularly participating in 21st CCLC programs who were "basic" or "limited proficiency" improved to "proficient" or above in reading

41 Exemplar Programs in Literacy Growth and 25 Exemplar Programs in Literacy Proficiency

Exemplars for improvement in literacy growth were those that had 94% or more of their regularly attending total program participants demonstrate any growth. Exemplars in literacy proficiency were those that had 55% or more of their regularly attending total program participants demonstrate proficiency. These programs reported higher rates of utilizing curriculum and online instructional materials.

Math Achievement

73% of students

regularly participating in 21st CCLC programming demonstrated any growth in math

22% of students

regularly participating in 21st CCLC programs who were "basic" or "limited proficiency" improved to "proficient" or above in math

37 Exemplar Programs in Math Growth and 32 Exemplar Programs in Math Proficiency

Exemplars for improvement in math growth were those that had 97% or more of their regularly attending total program participants demonstrate any growth. Exemplars in math proficiency were those that had 50% or more of their regularly attending total program participants demonstrate proficiency. These programs reported using the Concrete-Representational-Abstract method as well as project-based learning, entrepreneurship, or other instructional techniques for learning that incorporate real world context.

Conclusion

Across all core outcomes for 21st CCLC programs, including chronic absenteeism, literacy, and math, **students that regularly participated in the program demonstrated the greatest improvements.** These results underscore the importance of students regularly attending to obtain the maximum benefits of out-of-school time programming. In addition program exemplars, or those that are demonstrate the strongest impact on student-level outcomes, were identified to create new insights on the strategies and practices that programs report having the most success on improving key outcomes for 21st CCLC programs.

Report Overview

This report describes how Ohio supported 21st CCLC programs across the state, the students who participated in these programs, the types of activities provided, and the outcomes the program participants achieved. The University of Cincinnati Evaluation Services Center (UCESC) currently serves as the statewide evaluator for Ohio helping to measure the impact of programs across the state to align with the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's priorities. Additionally, this report summarizes key findings from exemplars, which are defined as programs that are demonstrating the strongest impact on student-level outcomes. These findings provide insights into the strategies and practices of programs with the most success in improving key outcomes for 21st CCLC participants.

Table of Contents

Data Sources, Methodology, & Limitations

Data included in this statewide evaluation report are derived from qualitative and quantitative data reported by grantees in their 2023-24 end-of-year reports and 21APR data. End-of-year data are submitted directly to UCESC by 21st CCLC grantees through an online survey system. 21APR data are obtained from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, submitted through an online data portal by grantees. Data are collected to align with indicator measures developed by the U.S. Department of Education and are common amongst 21st Century programs across the country.[2] Quantitative data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, using SPSS Statistics (version 30.0.0.0). Qualitative data—provided through open-ended comments —were coded, analyzed, and summarized for key themes, using MAXQDA Analytics Pro v.2024. When possible, quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated using mixed methods to allow for integration of these two sources to generate new insights.

It is important to note that these data are self-reported from programs, therefore the reliability and fidelity of these data cannot be determined. For instance, some programs reported a lack of data availability for some outcomes by reporting N/A or "no available data." Other limitations stem from suspected data entry errors within the online survey system. Exploratory analyses were conducted to identify suspected data entry errors (e.g., reporting more students improving in literacy than the total number of students served) prior to conducting analyses for each outcome, and those with suspected errors were removed from subsequent analyses. Program sample sizes are provided throughout to aid in interpretation of the results. In addition, programs reported utilizing different measurement sources for many outcome data, but when available these sources are listed to provide additional context. Taken together, these limitations should be kept in mind when interpreting the findings in this report.

Exemplar programs were identified for the following student outcomes: student growth in literacy and literacy proficiency, student growth in math and math proficiency, improvement in school day attendance for students who were previously chronically absent, and programs with the largest percentage of students participating regularly. The exemplar programs were identified through the following process:

- For each of the different student outcomes, programs with actual or suspected data errors were removed from the analysis. By cleaning data separately for each student outcome, programs that may have an identified data error in one category were still included in the analysis for other categories. In other words, programs were included as much as possible in the analysis.
- The mean was calculated for each outcome across programs, and programs whose outcome means were one standard deviation above the mean were designated as exemplars for that outcome. By doing so, program student outcomes were being compared to one another, not to an external standard.
- Once program exemplars were identified, further qualitative analyses were conducted to identify strategies and practices of exemplary programs, as reported in their open-ended responses.

Introduction

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Office of Whole Child Supports administers the federally funded Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant program to support out-of-school and expanded learning time opportunities for students in Ohio.

Across the state of Ohio, local education agencies (LEAs) or community-based organizations may apply for 21st CCLC funds through a competitive bidding process. Eligible organizations include schools, districts, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, city or county government agencies, for-profit corporations, and other public or private entities.

According to the U.S. Department of Education[1] the goal of the 21st CCLC grant program is to:

> "Support the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local academic standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children."
>
> - **U.S. Department of Education**

21st CCLC Program Purpose

The purposes of 21st CCLC programs include:

| Provide opportunities for academic enrichment to assist students in meeting the state academic standards. | Offer students positive youth development through positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), social-emotional learning practices, prevention education programs, mental health programming, civic engagement, and nutritional and physical health. | Offer adult family members of program participants opportunities for educational development and engagement in their children's education. |

How did Ohio support 21st CCLC programs across the state in 2023-24?

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce administers the federally funded grant program, which "supports high-quality, out-of-school time learning opportunities and related activities for students who attend eligible schools."[2] Grants are awarded through a competitive bidding process with priorities for applicants providing programming for students in Title I schools, programming targeted towards college/career entrepreneurial readiness, positive youth development programs, and/or family engagement, and programming focused on achieving fair geographic distribution. In 2023-24, Ohio provided:

$44 million
Federal dollars allocated

134
Grantee organizations

299
21st CCLC programs

Regions Served
The largest proportion of 21st CCLC grantees serve the **Northeast and Southeast** regions.

Northwest 9%

Northeast 42%

Central 14%

Southwest 12%

Southeast 23%
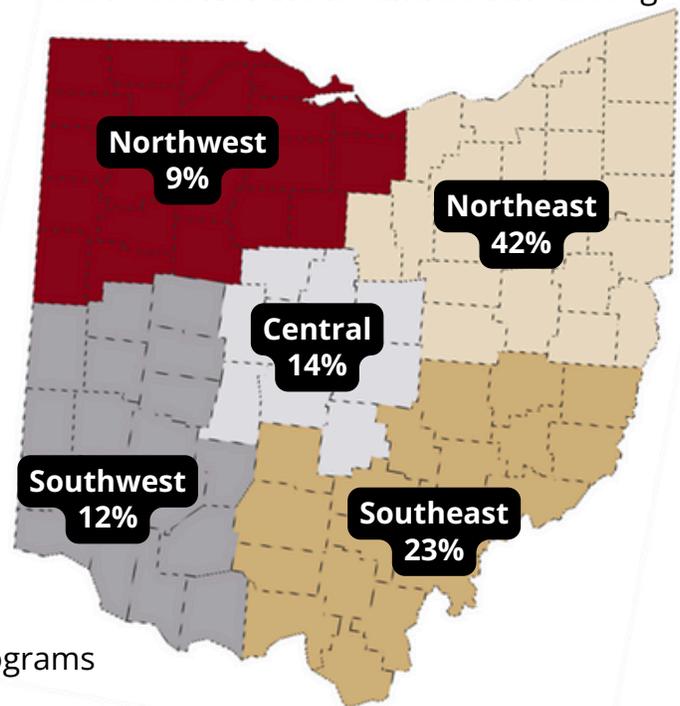
Program Options
Slightly over half of out-of-school time programs serve elementary students.

	% programs
Out-of-School Time (Elementary Students)	52%
Out-of-School Time (Middle & High School Students)	48%
Expanded Learning Time	1%
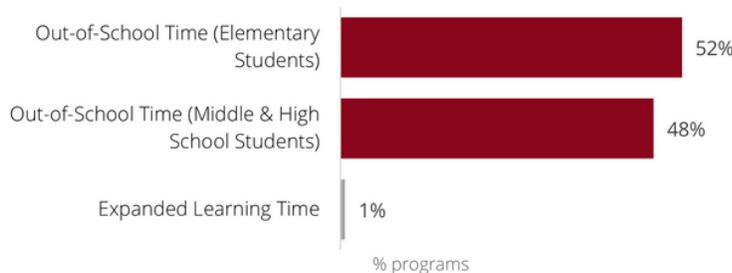
Who participated in Ohio's 21st CCLC programming in 2023-24?

Program participation is one of the most important metrics of success for 21st CCLC programs as students who participate regularly (defined as 90+ hours) receive the maximum benefits of the program. The table below summarizes total participants in the 2023-24 school year and summer 2023 segments.

	School Year	Summer
Total Participants	**21,395**	5,871
Regular Participants (90+ hours)	**57%**	49%

Race & Ethnicity		School Year	Summer
	American Indian or Alaska Native	**0%**	0%
	Asian	**1%**	1%
	Black or African American	**26%**	39%
	Hispanic or Latino	**6%**	9%
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	**0%**	0%
	White	**56%**	42%
	Two or more Races	**9%**	6%
	Data not provided	**3%**	4%
Sex	Female	**50%**	51%
	Male	**48%**	48%
	Not reported	**1%**	1%
	Something else provided	**1%**	0%
Population Specifics	**Students who are...**		
	English learners	**9%**	20%
	Economically disadvantaged	**84%**	88%
	Students with...		
	Disabilities	**16%**	15%

Note. Data source is from 21APR. Any programs with data discrepancies are removed. For the school year, this reflects data from 287 programs. For summer, this reflects data from 152 programs. Percentages for Race & Ethnicity Category adds up to 101% due to rounding and non-mutually exclusive categories.

Regular Program Participation

Ohio has set a participation goal for all 21st CCLC programs to have at least 60% of their students participate in programming regularly (90+ hours) to receive the maximum benefits of the program.

57% of programs
Met Ohio's regular participation goal
of 60% regular attendees
(*n* = 163 programs)

57% of students
**Regularly participated in 21st CCLC programs**
during the 2023-24 school year (90+ hours)
(*n* = 12,130 students)

Program Participation by Grade Level

Programs serving students in elementary school (Grades 1-5) reported higher rates of regularly participating students in 21st CCLC programs (90+ hours), compared to programs serving middle and high school students (Grades 6-12).
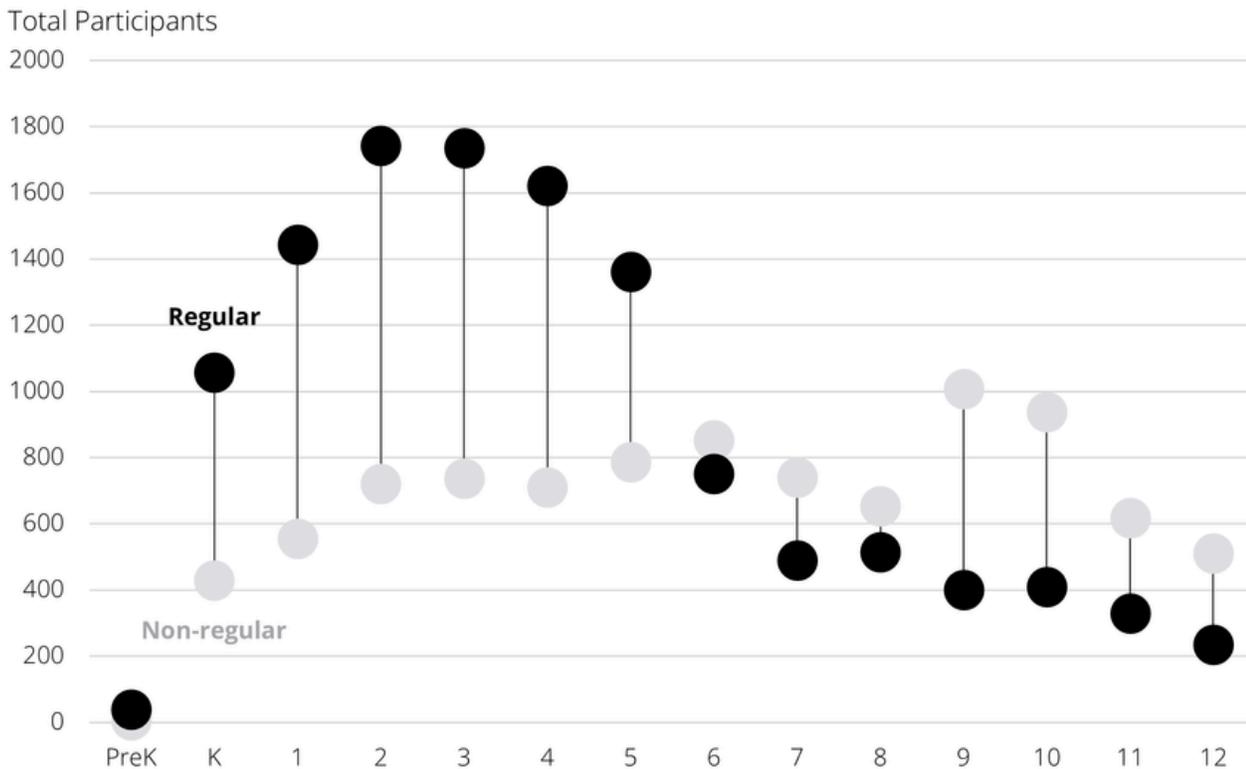
Note. *n* = 287 programs.

Exemplars in High Rates of Program Participation

For this report, data submitted by each program were analyzed to identify exemplars in program participation. Exemplary programs were those that had 86% or more of their total program participants attending regularly (90+ hours). A total of **53 programs** met this criterion.

53
Exemplar Programs

Among program participation exemplars, many reported that maintaining highly qualified staff encouraged students to attend programming. Specifically, the following aspects of staffing were described as important:

- **Staff experience and expertise**: Programs reported that staff are often school building teachers or licensed professionals (e.g., counselors, learning specialist). Staff skills (e.g., creativity) and training (e.g., program quality, PAX behavior) also support program participation success.
- **Youth-adult relationships**: Programs described staff as valuing young people and intentionally building relationships to facilitate student engagement in their program.

> "Staffing drives the program. If they don't like the adults/staff, students won't attend. It moves the program from just after school tutoring place to a highly engaged interactive place with youth voice and collaboration."
>
> **- 21st CCLC Grantee**

Some program participation exemplars also highlighted the importance of offering programming that celebrates student cultures. For instance, this included creating opportunities to celebrate students' own cultures, to experience other cultures through food, or to learn about new cultures.

> "Cultural programs were very impactful to our scholars. For our yearly International Festival, scholars learned about various countries by researching the art, food, and culture of their chosen country. They underwent a 6-week intensive study which culminated in the festival where students prepared food from their country, and families and school partners came together to taste food and watch presentations. Students demonstrated their knowledge and communication skills through presentations and performances, which included poetry, skits, and dance."
>
> **- 21st CCLC Grantee**

What enrichment opportunities did 21st CCLC programs provide?

Ohio's 21st CCLC Program Overview

Across Ohio, 21st CCLC programs are tasked to help "students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offer students positive youth development through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), mental health programming, social and emotional learning, and prevention education activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offer literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children."[3] Programs prioritize the following core components: academic enrichment, family engagement, positive youth development, and workforce readiness. Within each 21st CCLC program, site staff determine the best mixture of programming and opportunities based on student and family needs and community partner support. Enrichment activities are aligned across these core components.[4]

Academic Enrichment
21st CCLC programs maintain a strong emphasis on providing literacy and math supports for students to positively impact academic growth and proficiency.

Positive Youth Development
21st CCLC programs incorporate Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), social and emotional learning practices, prevention education activities, and mental health programming into their programs.

Family Engagement
21st CCLC programs implement evidence-based educational development opportunities to promote family engagement in their child's learning, both within the program and at home.

Workforce Readiness
21st CCLC programs prepare middle/high school students for college and careers by utilizing strategies that connect academic content with careers, promote career technical routes, and provide opportunities to develop professional capabilities.

Academic Enrichment

21st CCLC programs provide academic enrichment focused on literacy and math to increase learning opportunities and support during out-of-school time. Program staff chose to implement a variety of interventions to support the needs of the students they serve. Often, programs used the following strategies: tutoring support, instructional strategies, online learning platforms, and other learning materials, approaches, and curricula. More detail on each of these interventions is provided below.

Online learning platforms

Online learning platforms provide tailored interventions to deliver instruction, promote extra practice, and track students' progress. Eighty-six percent of 21st CCLC programs reported using online learning platforms to support academic enrichment.

Programs reported using a variety of online learning platforms, but the most common ones included:
- **IXL**: 73 programs, 24%
- **iReady**: 55 programs, 18%
- **NWEA MAP**: 55 programs, 18%
- **STAR**: 54 programs, 18%

Instructional strategies

21st CCLC programs implemented instructional strategies to facilitate learning in literacy and math. Ninety-one percent of 21st CCLC programs reported using instructional strategies to support academic enrichment. This included project-based learning, hands-on activities, differentiated or personalized instruction based on student need, and entrepreneurship education.

Tutoring support

Almost all programs (97%) reported offering tutoring support for students in their program. Most often, tutoring support focused on supporting students with homework or supplementing their school-day work. Tutoring support was often provided in large group (4+ students) or small group (2-4 students) settings by teachers or paraprofessionals.

Physical learning materials and curricula

Many 21st CCLC programs used additional materials to facilitate activities, provide interventions, or develop skills. Eighty-one percent of 21st CCLC programs reported using curricula to support academic enrichment.

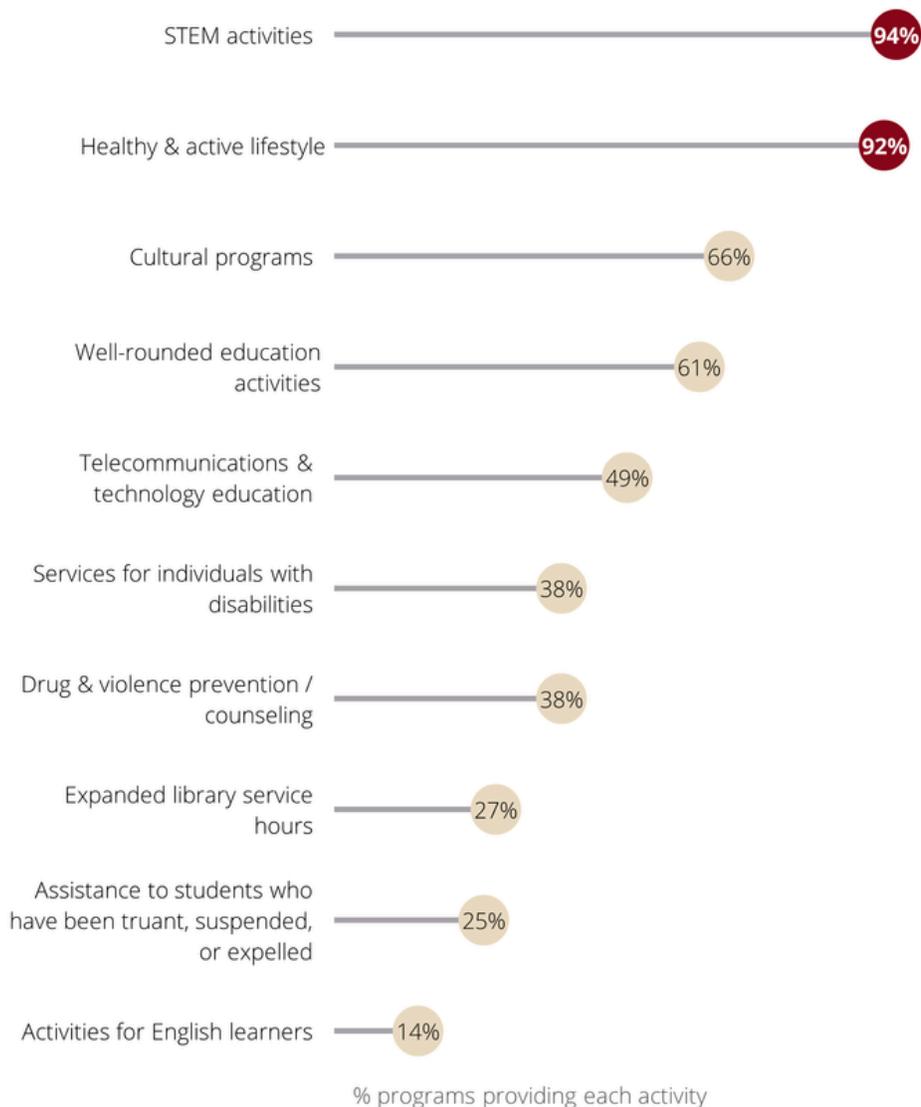Programs reported utilizing a variety of resources and materials such as:
- **SEL curriculum**: 99 programs, 33%
- **Embedding literacy across the curriculum**: 44 programs, 15%
- **Heggerty**: 37 programs, 12%

Positive Youth Development

21st CCLC programs provide a variety of opportunities and activities to support positive youth development and other social or behavioral benefits. These activities may include art instruction, entrepreneurial education, language skills development, service learning, recreation or physical education, expanded library access hours, health and nutrition, and other mental health and wellness programming.[3]

Enrichment Activities Provided

STEM and healthy and active lifestyle programs were the most offered enrichment opportunities.

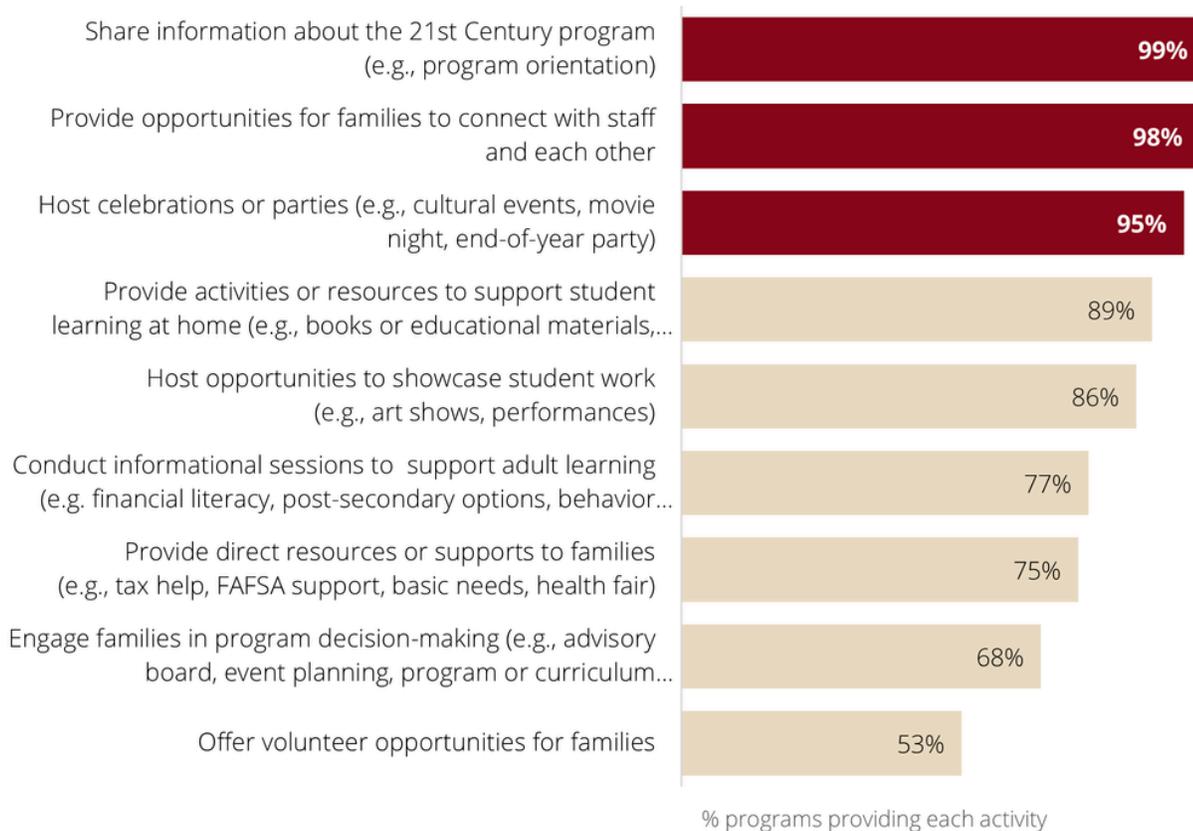| Activity	%
STEM activities	94%
Healthy & active lifestyle	92%
Cultural programs	66%
Well-rounded education activities	61%
Telecommunications & technology education	49%
Services for individuals with disabilities	38%
Drug & violence prevention / counseling	38%
Expanded library service hours	27%
Assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled	25%
Activities for English learners	14%

% programs providing each activity

Family Engagement

21st CCLC programs create opportunities for families to engage in the out-of-school time program to support involvement in their children's learning.[3] Programs hosted a wide array of family engagement events and opportunities focused on information sharing, education, cultural diversity, financial literacy, and student showcases. Program staff often collaborated with school staff and/or community partners to organize these events.

Additionally, program staff regularly connect with families to provide information and build relationships. 21st CCLC programs reported that they regularly used the following strategies (at least once a month) to connect with families: emails, in-person or informal communications, and physical or digital newsletters. In addition, most programs reported they also used more personalized strategies when needed, including individual meetings, personal notes, phone calls, and group meetings. Finally, a handful of programs reported using home visits as an additional engagement strategy.

Family Engagement Opportunities

Almost all 21st CCLC programs provided opportunities for families to learn about the program, to connect with staff and each other, and to celebrate together.

Activity	%
Share information about the 21st Century program (e.g., program orientation)	99%
Provide opportunities for families to connect with staff and each other	98%
Host celebrations or parties (e.g., cultural events, movie night, end-of-year party)	95%
Provide activities or resources to support student learning at home (e.g., books or educational materials,...	89%
Host opportunities to showcase student work (e.g., art shows, performances)	86%
Conduct informational sessions to support adult learning (e.g. financial literacy, post-secondary options, behavior...	77%
Provide direct resources or supports to families (e.g., tax help, FAFSA support, basic needs, health fair)	75%
Engage families in program decision-making (e.g., advisory board, event planning, program or curriculum...	68%
Offer volunteer opportunities for families	53%

% programs providing each activity

Workforce Readiness

21st CCLC programs support students on their journey toward developing a vision and realistic plan for the future. The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce has developed the Career Connections Framework - a comprehensive guide that program staff can utilize to plan activities and opportunities that support students along their path toward a meaningful career and/or college experience.[4] Aligned with this guide, programs were asked to report on the types of opportunities they provided to students to support workforce readiness.

Of the 215 programs providing workforce readiness opportunities, each provided a unique blend of activities as summarized below. 21st CCLC programs often partnered with external organizations to provide these workforce readiness opportunities. Programs most reported partnering with local non-profit organizations (165 programs, 77%), public libraries (102 programs, 47%), universities (103 programs, 48%), and local businesses (89 programs, 41%) to facilitate programming.

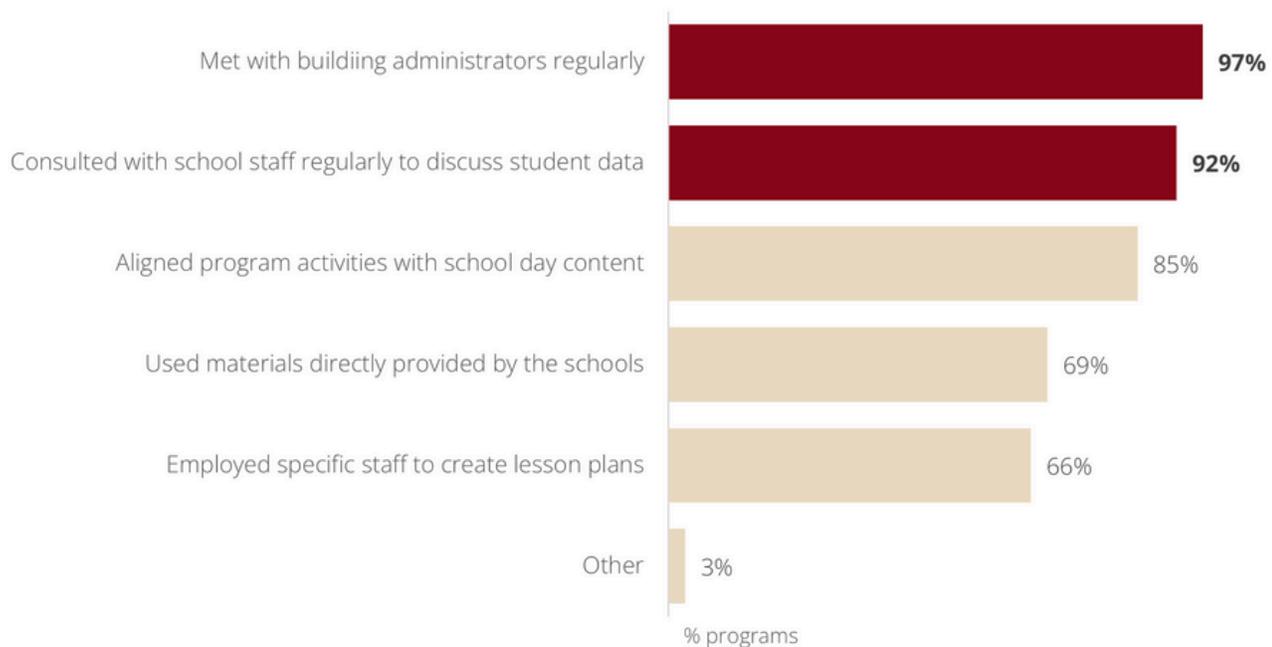|	
97% (n = 209)	Supported 21st Century Skill Development
87% (n = 186)	Supported Career & Interest Exploration
81% (n = 174)	Provided Career Awareness activities
43% (n = 92)	Provided College Exposure activities
38% (n = 82)	Supported College & Career Planning
37% (n = 80)	Provided Career-based Learning
22% (n = 48)	Provided Drop-out & Recovery Support

How are Ohio's 21ˢᵗ CCLC programs partnering with schools and communities?

Partnerships with Local Education Agencies (LEAs)

Ohio's 21st CCLC programs are required to partner with LEAs (if they are not an LEA themselves) to ensure alignment of out-of-school time and expanded learning time programs with school-day learning.[3] Programs were asked to report on what these collaborations looked like.

LEA Partnerships

Most 21st CCLC programs reported meeting regularly with building administrators.

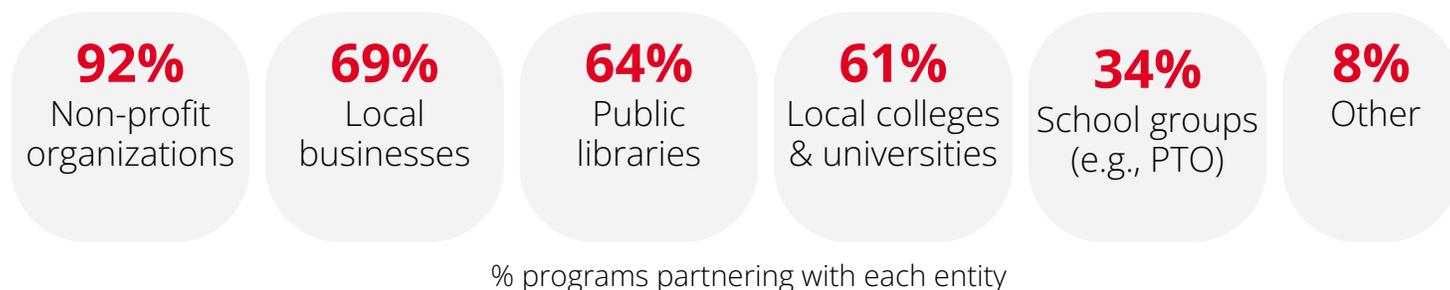| Category	% programs
Met with building administrators regularly	97%
Consulted with school staff regularly to discuss student data	92%
Aligned program activities with school day content	85%
Used materials directly provided by the schools	69%
Employed specific staff to create lesson plans	66%
Other	3%

Partnerships with Community Organizations

21st CCLC programs are required to establish and maintain relationships with other community-based organizations that provide ongoing partnerships of mutual support and that result in strengthened implementation of the 21st CCLC program.[3] Programs were asked to report on what these collaborations with community organizations looked like.
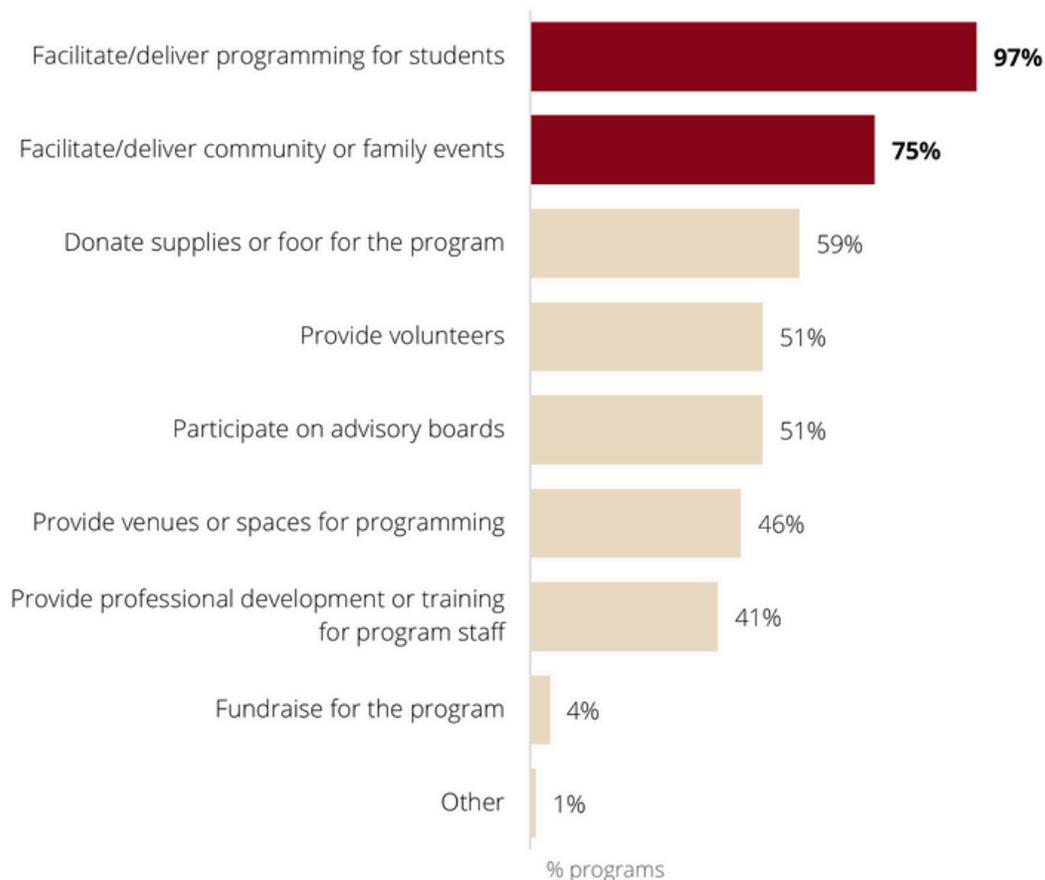
Community Partner Engagement

21st CCLC programs most reported partnering with local non-profit organizations and local businesses.

92% Non-profit organizations	**69%** Local businesses	**64%** Public libraries	**61%** Local colleges & universities	**34%** School groups (e.g., PTO)	**8%** Other

% programs partnering with each entity

Community Partner Support

Community partners most often supported 21st CCLC programs by facilitating or delivering programs or events for students and families.

	% programs
Facilitate/deliver programming for students	97%
Facilitate/deliver community or family events	75%
Donate supplies or foor for the program	59%
Provide volunteers	51%
Participate on advisory boards	51%
Provide venues or spaces for programming	46%
Provide professional development or training for program staff	41%
Fundraise for the program	4%
Other	1%

What are the key outcomes for 2023-24?

Ohio 21st CCLC programs are designed specifically to provide academic enrichment and youth development to demonstrate educational and social benefits and positive behavioral changes for students. To evaluate these areas, Ohio 21st CCLC programs measure outcomes for participants to meet state[3] and federal[5] outcome requirements.

Educational and behavioral outcomes are available for the following outcomes, and key findings are described in the sections that follow:

Chronic Absenteeism

Literacy Achievement

Math Achievement

Dropout Prevention

Workforce Readiness

Family Engagement

Chronic Absenteeism

21st CCLC programs encourage school day attendance because students must be present at school to participate in afterschool enrichment activities. Therefore, programs specifically aim to recruit students with chronic absenteeism. Federal guidance requires 21st CCLC programs to report on school day attendance using the following indicator[5]:

> "Percentage of students in grades 1-12 participating in 21st CCLC during the school year who had a school day attendance rate at/or below 90% in the prior school year and demonstrated an improved attendance rate in the current school year."

2,323 students

attending 21st CCLC programs who were chronically absent in 2022-23 demonstrated improvement in school day attendance in 2023-24.

56% of regularly participating students demonstrated improvement
Students who regularly attended 21st CCLC programs (90+ hours) that demonstrated improvement in school day attendance
(*n* = 1,278 / 2,300 students)

49% of non-regularly participating students demonstrated improvement
Students who did not regularly attend 21st CCLC programs (<90 hours) that demonstrated improvement in school day attendance
(*n* = 1,045 / 2155 students)

Chronic Absenteeism Improvements

On average, **regularly participating students** (90+ hours) achieved greater improvements in chronic absenteeism than those that were **non-regularly participating students**.

Regular

Chronic absenteeism ———————— 49% **56%** ————————

Non-regular

Note. Findings reflect data from 224 programs (51 programs reported no chronically absent students, and six program's data were removed due to errors).

Exemplars in Improving Chronic Absenteeism

Programs that demonstrated exemplary outcomes in improving chronic absenteeism were those that had 87% or more of regularly attending participants that were chronically absent improve in their school-day attendance. A total of **29 programs** met this exemplary criterion.

Many programs whose chronically absent students improved their attendance ("exemplars"), reported that **providing highly engaging enrichment activities in their out-of-school time program was the most effective way to boost school day attendance.**

29
Exemplar Programs

Exemplar programs reported that students often look forward to staying for the 21st CCLC program to participate in fun and engaging activities offered during out-of-school time. Program staff also described how these engaging activities provide an extra incentive for students to attend during the school day, as they are not able to participate without attending school.

> "Offering highly engaging enrichment activities was the most impactful on school-day attendance. Students were not permitted to attend the afterschool program if they did not attend school. Kids were always engaged in the activities and looked forward to coming to program. They loved telling their parents about the activities and showing what they did. We have found that the more activities we do with the children means more time for them to engage in the program and with other children and staff in the program."
>
> **- 21st CCLC Grantee**

Exemplars in school-day attendance consistently reported that activities that integrate STEM and healthy and active lifestyle programs were most successful for engaging their students.

STEM activities included hands-on lessons and engaging with materials	**Physical activities** often included recreation and movement-focused programming
"STEM activities – especially Math and hands-on STEM games during the program sessions throughout the year were the most effective enrichment activities. Family guides to support learning were sent home with the students in the program. Everyday Math Activities and Storybooks for students to read through the breaks, PBS Kids Adventure of Fun Activity Booklets, and guides to grade-level proficiency scores in exams were also shared. These engaged the family and students more even during the breaks and kept them motivated for activity completion through marking the activity Bingo sheet post break." **- 21st CCLC Grantee**	"Students participated in outside recreational activities that included both structured and unstructured activities. A partnership with a local rugby organization allowed students the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of rugby. Additionally, students learned the true meaning of teamwork through this partnership." **- 21st CCLC Grantee**

Academic Achievement

21st CCLC programs measure academic achievement through two performance measures:

- **Any growth in literacy/mathematics** – Programs reported the number of students who demonstrated any growth on Ohio's approved literacy/mathematics assessments from baseline to the end of the year. This was most often measured from fall 2023 to spring 2024 using Ohio State Tests, MAP, STAR, and iReady. This measure allows programs to capture any literacy/mathematics growth across all students.

- **Growth in literacy/mathematics proficiency** – Programs reported the number of students who improved from reading at a "basic" or "limited proficiency level" to "proficient" or above on Ohio's list of approved literacy/mathematics assessments. About half of programs measured this from fall 2023 to spring 2024 and half measured this from spring 2023 to spring 2024 using Ohio State Tests and/or MAP. This measure allows programs to capture the greatest growth for the subsets of students for whom proficiency measures are available.

To examine the impact of regular program participation on academic outcomes, a matched sample of programs was created that included both regular and non-regular participants in literacy and math enrichment.

📖 Literacy Acheivement

Literacy improvement is one of the primary goals for Ohio's 21st CCLC programs. Almost all programs reported providing academic enrichment (91%) and literacy education (99%) opportunities for students.

19,171 students
participated in literacy enrichment provided within their 21st CCLC program

The data below summarize results from the matched sample, indicating that students that received higher program dosage (participating in 90+ hours of programming) demonstrated greater growth in literacy scores than students that did not attend regularly.

Any Literacy Growth

73% of **regularly participating students** demonstrated any literacy growth
(*n* = 5,744 / 7,920 students)

65% of **non-regularly participating students** demonstrated any literacy growth
(*n* = 3,397 / 5,257 students)

Literacy Proficiency

27% of **regularly participating students** demonstrated improved proficiency in literacy
(*n* = 831 / 3,130 students)

24% of **non-regularly participating students** demonstrated improved proficiency in literacy
(*n* = 518 / 2,193 students)

Literacy Improvements

On average, **regularly participating students** (90+ hours) achieved greater growth in literacy and literacy proficiency than those that were **non-regularly participating students**.

		Regular
Any growth	65%	**73%**
		Non-regular
	Regular	
Literacy proficiency	24% **27%**	
	Non-regular	
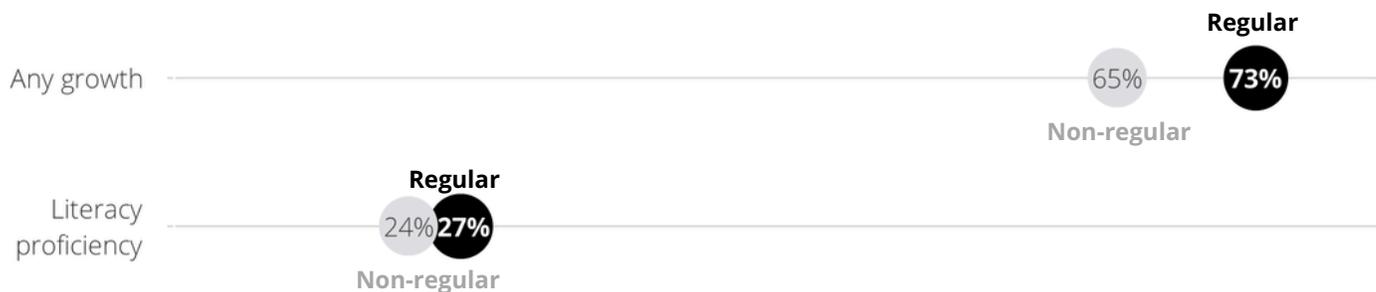
Note. Findings reflect data from programs with the matched sample, or those that had both non-regular and regular participants for each literacy outcome. For literacy growth, these findings reflect data from 235 programs. For literacy proficiency, these findings reflect data from 205 programs.

📖 Math Acheivement

In addition to literacy, 21st CCLC programs provide academic enrichment opportunities focusing on mathematics. Almost all programs reported providing math enrichment (99%) opportunities for students.

19,256 students
participated in math enrichment provided within their 21st CCLC program

The data below summarize results from the matched sample, indicating that students that received higher program dosage (participating in 90+ hours of programming) demonstrated greater growth in math scores than students that did not attend regularly.

Any Math Growth

73% of **regularly participating students** demonstrated any math growth
(*n* = 5,439 / 7,467 students)

63% of **non-regularly participating students** demonstrated any math growth
(*n* = 3,361 / 5,304 students)

Math Proficiency

22% of **regularly participating students** demonstrated improved proficiency in math
(*n* = 649 / 3,002 students)

18% of **non-regularly participating students** demonstrated improved proficiency in math
(*n* = 404 / 2,294 students)

Math Improvements

On average, **regularly participating students** (90+ hours) achieved greater growth in math and math proficiency than those that were **non-regularly participating students**.

		Regular
Any growth	63% Non-regular	**73%**
	Regular	
Math proficiency	18% **22%**	
	Non-regular	
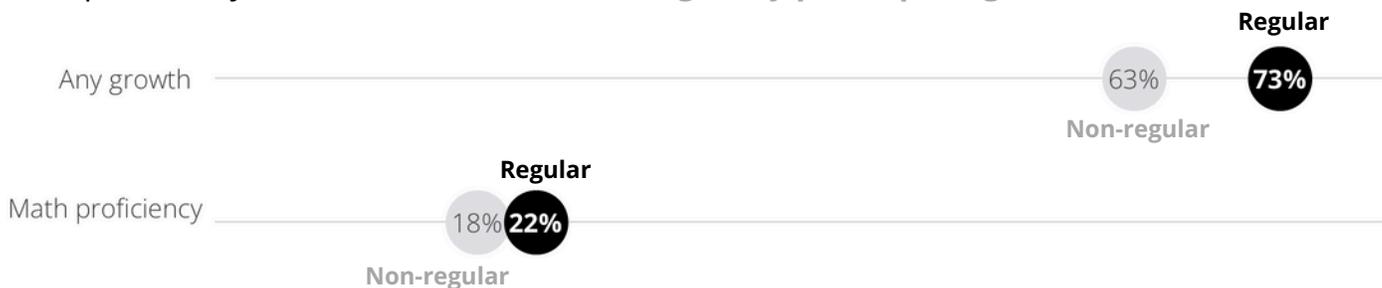
Note. Findings reflect data from programs with matched sample, or those that had both non-regular and regular participants for each math outcome. For math growth, these findings reflect data from 233 programs. For math proficiency, these findings reflect data from 209 programs.

Exemplars in Academic Achievement

Exemplars in academic achievement were identified by examining data submitted by programs across four variables: any literacy growth, literacy proficiency achievement, any math growth, and literacy proficiency achievement.* The following exemplars were identified for each category:

Literacy Growth

41
Exemplar Programs

Literacy Proficiency

25
Exemplar Programs

Math Growth

37
Exemplar Programs

Math Proficiency

32
Exemplar Programs

Overall, programs with strong academic outcomes in literacy and math ("exemplars"), reported using curriculum, online materials, or other practices to support student achievement. When compared to programs overall, exemplary programs reported higher rates of utilizing curriculum (e.g., Heggerty, Orton-Gillingham, McGraw Hill) and online instructional materials (e.g., iReady, STAR, Lexia). When describing their tutoring models, exemplary programs were also more likely to report that the same tutors routinely provided support to students, which is a best practice in tutoring implementation.[6]

Literacy exemplars

Exemplar programs in literacy growth reported the following instructional practices: differentiated instruction, writing prompts, and intentionally integrating literacy enrichment with other topics and subjects.

Math exemplars

Many exemplar programs in math growth referenced the Concrete-Representational-Abstract method and its value for students, while a few referenced programming related to project-based learning, entrepreneurship, or other instructional techniques for learning that incorporate real world context.

*Note. Exemplars for improvement in literacy growth were those that had 94% or more of their regularly attending total program participants demonstrate any growth. Exemplars in literacy proficiency were those that had 55% or more of their regularly attending total program participants demonstrate proficiency. Exemplars for improvement in math growth were those that had 97% or more of their regularly attending total program participants demonstrate any growth. Exemplars in math proficiency were those that had 50% or more of their regularly attending total program participants demonstrate proficiency.
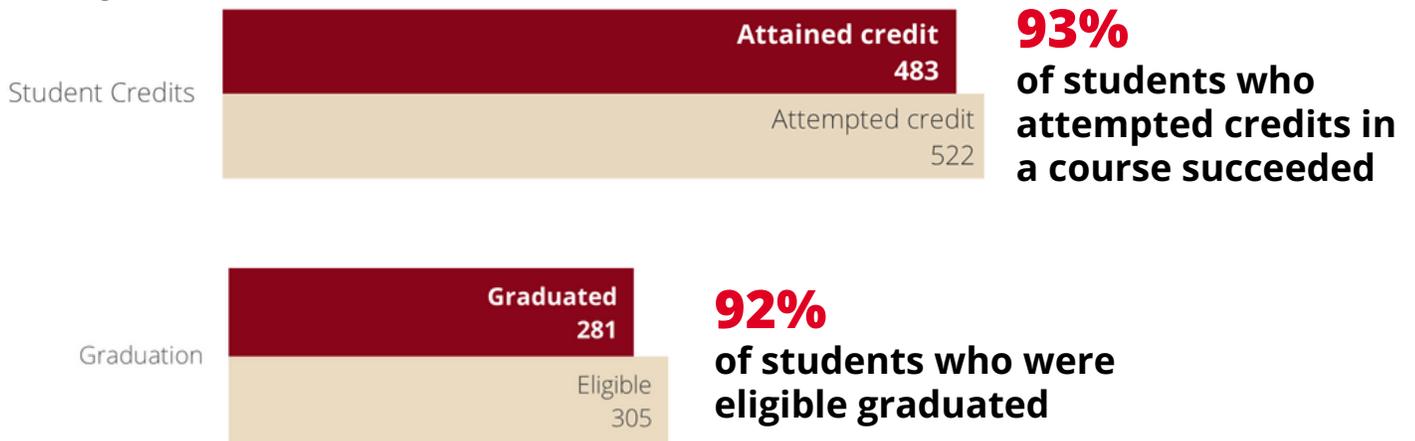
Dropout Prevention

In the 2023-24 school year, a total of 24 21st CCLC programs provided dropout prevention programming. These programs were intended to provide evidence-based strategies and interventions that keep middle and high school students enrolled and on-track for earning high school diplomas. To measure the impact of dropout prevention programming, grantees were asked to report on how many students attempted and attained credits in a graduation-required course and how many students who were eligible to graduate were able to graduate.

618 students
participated in dropout prevention programs provided within their 21st CCLC program

Dropout Prevention Outcomes

Most students that participated in dropout prevention programs who were attempting to attain credits or graduate were successful.

Student Credits

Attained credit
483

Attempted credit
522

93%
of students who attempted credits in a course succeeded

Graduation

Graduated
281

Eligible
305

92%
of students who were eligible graduated

Workforce Readiness: Opportunities

21st CCLC programs are committed to "preparing students for college and careers utilizing evidence-based strategies that connect academic content with careers, promote career technical routes, and provide opportunities for students to develop professional capabilities."[3]

52% of programs provided **workforce readiness activities**

15,226 **hours of programming** were provided in the 2023-24 school year to support workforce readiness

7,726 **total students participated** in workforce readiness activities

2,467 students in Grades **K-6**
5,259 students in Grades **7-12**

Workforce Opportunities and Experiences

Most programs offer unique opportunities to complete graduation requirements, earn certifications or credentials, or gain workforce experience. In the 2023-24 school year, 215 programs offered these types of experiences. Opportunities to complete graduation requirements or earn additional graduation seals were most offered.

Programs offered opportunities to...

Number of programs

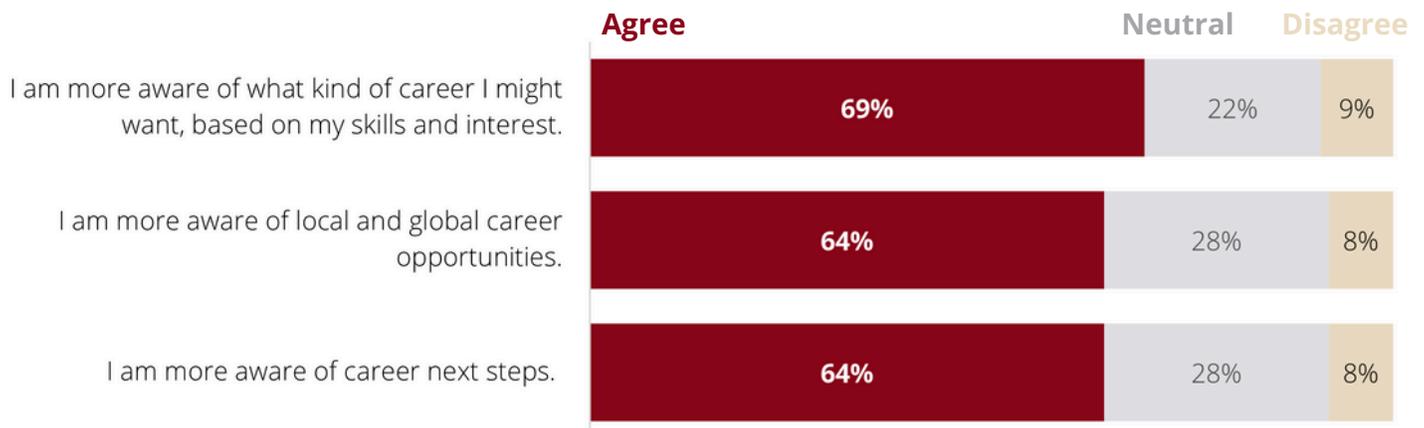|	Number of programs
Earn high school credits or other graduation requirements	43
Earn an Ohio Graduation Seal	31
Participate in Internships	27
Earn industry recognized credentials	25
Participate in pre-apprenticeships	19
Earn college credits	12

Workforce Readiness: Student Reflections

Program staff asked students who participated in their workforce readiness programming to reflect on their experiences through a brief survey. Over **2,000 students** from 137 different 21st CCLC programs participated in this survey, which asked students to identify which experiences were most helpful for their career pathway. Results indicate that among the various experiences, students most valued guest speakers to support their workforce readiness. In addition, research, service, and college visits were also beneficial.

Additionally, students were asked to reflect on how participating in the 21st CCLC program impacted their career awareness and future career opportunities.

Student Reflections on Workforce Experience

Most students reported gaining awareness in career possibilities.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I am more aware of what kind of career I might want, based on my skills and interest.	69%	22%	9%
I am more aware of local and global career opportunities.	64%	28%	8%
I am more aware of career next steps.	64%	28%	8%

Family Engagement

Ohio's 21st Century Community Learning Centers "deliver evidence-based educational development opportunities that promote family involvement and family literacy, and that result in family members engaging in their children's learning, either at home, at programs sponsored by the center, or elsewhere in ongoing and meaningful ways." [3]

63% of programs
met Ohio's family engagement goal, providing 3+ evidence-based developmental opportunities

For the statewide evaluation, two surveys were implemented to collect perspectives on family engagement with 21st CCLC programs:

| Family Survey	Staff Survey
21st CCLC staff recruited families of students that participated in their programming to complete a survey to reflect on their experiences. Over **4,500 families from 245 different 21st CCLC programs** participated in this survey to explore how the program supported families.	Program staff were asked to complete a brief survey to understand their experience in supporting families. Over **1,200 staff** from 21st CCLC programs across Ohio participated in this survey. Staff reported they served as teachers (52%), site coordinators (16%), other roles (14%), or program managers (9%).

Findings from these surveys are presented in the figure below. These results highlight that **staff and families both perceived family engagement in 21st CCLC to be positively supporting program goals for students (behavior, learning, and attendance)**.

Reflections on Family Engagement in 21st CCLC Programs
Most **families** and **staff** reported positively on their experiences with family engagement.

	Family	Staff
Behavior	87%	**92%**
Learning	87%	**92%**
Attendance	85%	**86%**
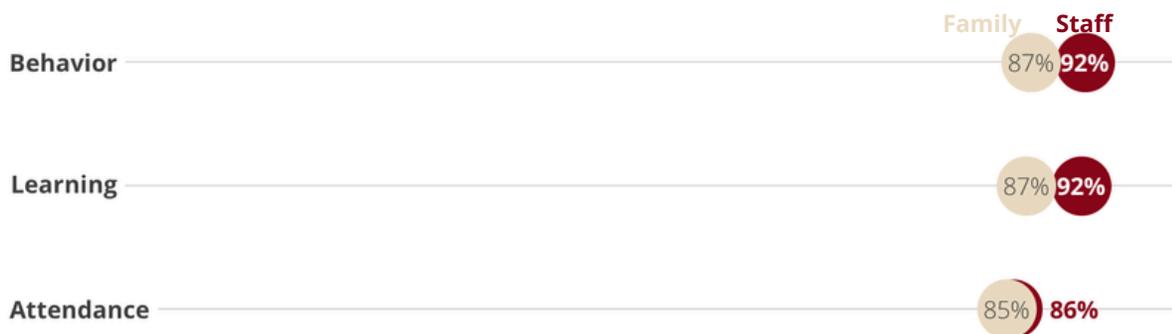
Note. For each domain, staff and families reflected on staff capacity to support families in meeting program goals. For instance, for behavior domain, families reported on the extent to which they felt better prepared to support their child's behavior because of support provided by program staff. Staff self-reported their own capacity in supporting families around behavior strategies.

Exemplar Strategies for Family Engagement

For this report, program data were analyzed to identify exemplars in program participation, or those that achieved 86% or more of their total program participants attending regularly (90+ hours). Forty-eight programs were included as exemplars for these analyses.

48
Exemplar Programs

Among program participation exemplars, the **opportunity to connect with families and staff was identified as one of the most important strategies for family engagement**. For these programs, 21st CCLC staff described the ways in which they build and facilitate relationships between school day staff and families. Programs described this in the following ways:

"We work closely with classroom teachers and have nightly contact with parents. We see ourselves as a bridge between home and school. We are able to bring classroom concerns directly to parents and vice versa. Our bilingual staff makes sure nothing is lost in translation."
- **21st CCLC Grantee**

"Families share more with the on-site Coordinator then Teachers or Administration. They have a better connection and response from the program staff and definitely more trust."
- **21st CCLC Grantee**

"The on-site coordinator's support and connections with the after school program and school during the day is essential. She is often aware of issues before the school and shares information with Principal, Counselor and teachers. The community that she has built with [the 21st CCLC program] is impressive."
- **21st CCLC Grantee**

This finding was unique compared to 21st CCLC programs overall, where top strategies for engaging families in 21st CCLC programming included providing materials for student learning at home, hosting opportunities to showcase student work, and celebrations or parties. **Taken together, these results suggest that going beyond parties and celebrations to intentionally build relationships with families and staff may drive family and student engagement in out-of-school time programs and ultimately result in greater student outcomes.**

Conclusion

Ohio's 21st CCLC programs provided academic and enrichment opportunities to over 21,000 students during the school year and over 5,000 students during the summer. Programs partnered with a variety of local education agencies and community organizations to deliver programming to students focused on academic enrichment, positive youth development, family engagement, and workforce readiness. Outcomes in this report provide a snapshot of the different areas of impact that are aligned with priorities established by the U.S. Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

In 2023-24, the majority of students participating in Ohio's 21st CCLC programs attended regularly, receiving the maximum benefits the programs had to offer. Academic outcomes revealed that regularly participating students demonstrated higher growth in literacy, math, and improved school-day attendance for those who were chronically absent compared to students who did not participate regularly, suggesting the importance of program dosage.

In addition to the key outcomes, this report summarizes key findings from program exemplars, or those programs that are demonstrating the strongest impact on student-level outcomes, including program participation, chronic absenteeism, literacy, and math. These findings present new insights on the strategies and practices that programs report having the most success on improving key outcomes for 21st CCLC programs. Specifically, these results emphasize the importance of providing highly engaging enrichment activities, fostering youth-adult relationships, utilizing strong instructional materials and curriculum, and facilitating relationships between school day staff and families.

References

[1] Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers **|** US Department of Education

[2] Ohio's 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) **|** Ohio Department of Education & Workforce

[3] Ohio's FY24 21stCCLC RFA | Ohio Department of Education & Workforce

[4] Ohio's Career Connections Framework | Ohio Department of Education & Workforce

[5] Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Measure Indicators **|** US Department of Education

[6] Design Principles for Accelerating Student Learning with High Impact Tutoring **|** EdResearch for Action

Suggested Citation

Holton, J., Stacy, S. T., Glueckert, K., Schutzman, C. B., & Turner, S. T. (2025, June). *21st Century Community Learning Centers: 2023-24 Annual Report.* Cincinnati, Ohio: Evaluation Services Center, University of Cincinnati.

University of Cincinnati Evaluation Services Center

Carissa Schutzman, Ph.D., Executive Director

The University of Cincinnati Evaluation Services Center (UCESC) currently serves as the statewide evaluator for Ohio's 21st Century Community Learning Center program and has served as an independent evaluator for hundreds of projects in Ohio and nationally since its founding in 1996. The UCESC team of specialists has expertise in statistics, measurement, assessment, and qualitative research methods within the fields of education and public health.

www.uc.edu/evaluationservices

schutzcb@ucmail.uc.edu

(513) 556-3900

UC EVALUATION SERVICES CENTER
Data Inspiring Change