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CENTER FOR YOUTH
PROGRAM QUALITY

Arkansas 21st Century Community Learning Centers Statewide Evaluation

2017-2018 Annual Report

Report to the Arkansas Department of Education

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**Arkansas 21st Century Community Learning Centers Statewide Evaluation Report: 2017-2018
Annual Report**

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A unit of the Forum for Youth Investment

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Communications Brief

Since 2002, ADE has operated a quality improvement system for its afterschool programs with the explicit model that afterschool programs benefit from training and professional development, coaching, self-assessment activities, and data-driven planning. The purpose of the 2017-2018 evaluation report was to assess the extent to which Arkansas 21st CCLC sites implemented YPQI with fidelity, contributing to improvements in both the skills of afterschool staff and improvements in the structure of afterschool programs. Specifically, this evaluation addressed the following three network wide program goals for the 2017-2018 program year:

- Goal 1:** Increase academic achievement in participants who regularly attend 21st CCLC programs;
- Goal 2:** Increase non-academic achievement in participants who regularly attend 21st CCLC programs; and
- Goal 3:** Offer quality activities to all youth attending the program.

Implementation of the YPQI and complimentary evaluation design included the following key activities:

2017-2018 YPQI Implementation and Evaluation Activities	
September – October 2017	YPQI Orientation and Project Training
October - December 2017	Self and External Program Quality Assessment
October 2017 - March 2018	Youth Work Methods Trainings
January 2018	Planning with Data Trainings
February 2018	Sites Submit Improvement Plans
March - April 2018	Project Director/Site Coordinator, Direct Staff/Youth Worker, Parent, and Youth Surveys Administered
May – August 2018	Annual Performance Report Data Submitted

This report draws upon data from the Program Quality Assessment (School-Age and Youth), Program Improvement Plans, Annual Performance Reporting, and Surveys (Project Director/Site Coordinator, Direct Staff/Youth Worker, Parent, and Youth) to assess the alignment between program goals and outcomes for the 2017-2018 program year.

Summary of Evaluation Data	
Program Quality Assessment Data	100% Sites
Program Improvement Plans	100% Sites
Annual Performance Report Data	97% Sites
Surveys	
<i>Manager</i>	107 responses; 100% Sites
<i>Staff</i>	782 responses; 100% Sites
<i>Youth</i>	3,167 responses; 96% Sites
<i>Sites</i>	1,240 responses: 92% Sites

Key Findings and Recommendations

Goal 1: Increase academic achievement in participants who regularly attend 21st CCLC programs;	
Objective 1.1: 60% of participants regularly attending the 21st CCLC program will increase OR stay in the Advanced or Proficient levels on the statewide assessment for English language/literacy and math.	Progress: Partially Met
Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just over 40% of regularly attending students increased OR stayed in the Advanced and Proficient levels of the English language/literacy (41%) and Math assessments (42%). Approximately half of participating students were identified as academically at-risk and in need of additional educational supports. 	
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued emphasis on aligning program activities with the individual needs of students will help Arkansas 21st CCLC sites achieve the goal of 60% of students achieving Advanced and Proficient levels on their English language/literacy and Math assessments. 	

Goal 2: Increase non-academic achievement in participants who regularly attend 21st CCLC programs	
Objective 2.1: 75% of youth attending 21st CCLC programs will report high levels of social and emotional skills, as reported on the youth survey administered by the Weikart Center	Progress: Partially Met
Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent with the past four years, a strong majority of youth reported high levels of SEL skills. The following items were identified as the greatest strengths for the 2017-2018 program year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work well with other kids (91%) Tell other kids what they thought, even if they disagreed (89%) Talk with people they did not know (78%) 	
Objective 2.2: 75% of youth attending 21st CCLC programs will report high levels of positive academic habits, as reported on the youth survey administered by the Weikart Center.	Progress: Partially Met
Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 75% of youth also reported strong work habits that are predictive of positive outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the rules in the classroom (95%) Keep track of their things at school (92%) Work well by themselves (89%) 	
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentional activities to support a sense of belonging and exposure to new experiences were identified as opportunities to improve non-academic outcomes among participating youth. 	

Goal 3: Offer quality activities to all youth attending the program.

Objective 3.1: All 21st CCLC programs will offer homework help time to 21st CCLC participants. **Progress:** Partially Met

Results

- More than 70% of sites offered homework time throughout the program year. Youth also shared the following experiences about homework support:
 - 54% almost always get their homework done when they come to the afterschool program
 - 56% reported that staff “almost always” understand their homework and can provide help when they get stuck
 - 51% “almost always” learn things that help them in school at the afterschool program

Objective 3.2: All 21st CCLC programs will offer academic (beyond homework help) and enrichment activities. **Progress:** Partially Met

Results

- Sites offered a range of academic and enrichment activities throughout the year.
 - STEM and Literacy were the most frequently offered academic activities.
 - Physical activity and Arts and Music were the most frequently offered enrichment activities.

Objective 3.3: Every data collection term, 90% of 21st CCLC programs will offer quality activities to families of participating students. **Progress:** Partially Met

Results

- While only one-third of sites provided quality family services throughout the 2017-2018 program year, parents continue to report high levels of satisfaction with Arkansas 21st CCLC sites.

Objective 3.4: All programs will fully engage and complete all elements of the YPQI. **Progress:** Partially Met

Results

- All Arkansas 21st CCLC submitted program assessment data and program improvement plans, demonstrating full engagement in half of the YPQI process.

Objective 3.5: 75% of programs will score a 3.90 or higher on the ITS as measured by the YPQA or School-Age PQA. **Progress:** Partially Met

Results

- Analysis of both School-Age PQA and Youth PQA show that program quality scores for Arkansas 21st CCLC sites are greater than average; 61% of sites using the School-Age PQA and 66% of sites using the Youth PQA scored above the national high-engagement threshold of 3.90.

Recommendations

- Opportunities for improvement include staff participation in training and follow-up coaching.
- Intentional efforts around training and program activities to promote youth engagement would support greater program quality.

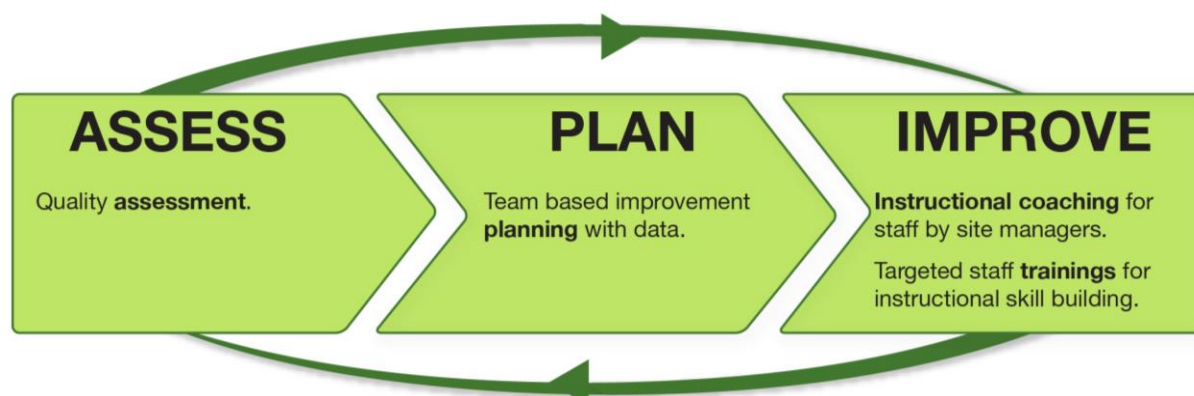
Introduction and Background

During the 2017-2018 program year, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) delegated approximately \$11.9 million of federal funds to 50 grantees, representing 72 different sites/centers across the state¹. Grants were awarded to 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC)² that had a primary focus on:

- Increasing academic achievement;
- Providing additional enrichment activities; and
- Providing literacy and educational services to the parents/guardians of youth who attended the afterschool programs (Arkansas State Department of Education Grant Guidance, 2018).

Since 2012, ADE has partnered with the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality (Weikart Center), a unit of The Forum for Youth Investment, to provide evaluations of the 21st CCLC programs³. Weikart Center evaluations are grounded in the Quality Improvement System (QIS; see Figure 1) and are aimed at embedding a culture of continuous assessment, planning, and improvement at program sites (Smith, Akiva, Sugar, Lo, et al., 2012). The QIS used in the Arkansas 21st CCLC network was adapted from the Weikart Center's evidence-based continuous improvement model⁴.

Figure 1. Quality Improvement System



¹ In 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was launched and reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This reauthorization shifted the responsibility for distributing federal funding regarding 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) to each state. These dollars are intended to fund afterschool programs that are located in high poverty areas or in low-achieving schools.

² The 21st CCLC program is authorized under Title IV, Part B, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (20 U.S.C. 7171-7176).

³ The State Education Agency (SEA) requires comprehensive annual evaluations of 21st CCLC programs about the performance measures outlined in their application to the United States Department of Education. These evaluation reports must be made available for public consumption.

⁴ The Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) is a data-driven continuous improvement model for afterschool systems. A cluster-randomized trial of the YPQI demonstrated a cascade of positive effects beginning with the provision of standards for practice, training, and technical assistance; flowing through managers and staff implementation of continuous improvement practices; and resulting in effects on staff instructional practices at the point of service. For more information, and to read the full report, please visit www.cypq.org/ypqi.

Implementation Timeline

Implementation of the YPQI and complimentary evaluation design included the following key elements: evaluation kickoff, data collection training, performance assessment (external and self), skill-based training on instruction for staff, planning with data and improvement planning, instructional coaching for staff, data collection and entry, and reporting of findings. The 2017-2018 timeline for implementing these elements of the QIS at Arkansas 21st CCLC are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. 2017-2018 Quality Improvement System Timeline

Date	Activities
September 11, 2017	Data Collection Webinar #1 : APR Data Management Spreadsheet
October 5 - 6, 2017	YPQI Kick Off: Quality and Evaluation Orientation, Team-Building, Live Youth PQA Basics/Plus Training
October 6 - December 1, 2017	Self Assessment by Arkansas Site Teams and External Assessment by Arkansas State University Division
October 2017 - March 2018	Professional Development: Youth Work Methods Trainings
November 10, 2017	Data Collection Webinar #2: Program Self Assessment and Scores Reporter
December 4, 2017 - February 19, 2018	Sites Develop Improvement Plans
January 25 - 26, 2018	Professional Development: Advanced Planning with Data
February 2, 2018	Data Collection Webinar #3: Improvement Planning Webinar
March 1 - April 27, 2018	Project Director/Site Coordinator, Direct Staff/Youth Worker, Parent, and Youth Surveys Administered
March 7, 2018	Data Collection Webinar #3 : Leading Indicator Surveys
May 22, 2018	Summer 2017 APR Due Date: State Data Entry Deadline
May 23 - July 31, 2018	Fall 2017 APR Data Due: State Data Entry Deadline
May 31, 2018	Spring 2018 APR Due Date: Operations, Feeder Schools, and Partners Data Due in APR
June 18 - July 6, 2018	Summer Only Project Director/Site Coordinator, Direct Staff/Youth Worker, Parent, and Youth Surveys Administered
June 30, 2018	Spring 2018 APR Data Due: Activities, Attendance, Staffing, and State Assessment
August 1 - 30, 2018	Spring 2018 APR Data Due: State Entry Deadline

Evaluation Design

During the 2017-2018 program year, Arkansas 21st CCLC developed three network wide program goals:

Goal 1: Increase academic achievement in participants who regularly attend 21st CCLC programs;

Goal 2: Increase non-academic achievement in participants who regularly attend 21st CCLC programs; and

Goal 3: Offer quality activities to all youth attending the program.

To track progress on these goals, ADE set nine measurable objectives and collected data focused on specific best practices in youth program quality. Data were collected across multiple roles (i.e., grantee directors, site coordinators, staff, youth, and parents) at various program settings (e.g. point-of-service, youth outcomes).

The evaluation design includes a number of steps intended to support sites not only with their data collection efforts, but also with the interpretation of those data. Program evaluation includes:

- Support in the collection and submission of federally required data through the Advanced Performance Reporting (APR) system;
- Collection of statewide survey data at multiple levels from multiple sources; and
- Preparation of site-level Leading Indicator, Afterschool Survey Results, and External Evaluator Site Summary reports allowing for site-level comparisons to statewide norms.

Performance Measures

The performance data described in this report were collected each year from participating staff, youth and parents to monitor and evaluate the impact of Arkansas 21st CCLC programs. During the 2017-2018 program year, data were collected from 72 total sites using the following data sources: Program Quality Assessment (PQA), Program Improvement Plans (PIP), Annual Performance Report (APR), and Leading Indicator Surveys for Managers, Staff, Parents and Youth.

Program Quality Assessment

The Program Quality Assessment (PQA) is a validated, observation-based instrument designed to evaluate the quality of K-12 youth programs and identify staff training needs (Smith, Akiva, Sugar, Lo, et al., 2012; Smith & Hohmann, 2005). PQA data spans four domains of program quality: Safe Environment, Supportive Environment, Interaction, and Engagement. ADE used both the School-Age PQA and the Youth PQA to collect site performance data.

- The **School-Age PQA** is composed of 70 items comprising 19 scales. The School-Age PQA is appropriate for observing programs that serve youth Kindergarten – 6th grades.
- The **Youth PQA** is composed of 63 items comprising 18 scales. The Youth PQA is appropriate for observing programs that serve youth in 4th – 12th grades.

PQA data were collected for all sites as a self-assessment and for a select set of sites as external assessment. To collect self-assessment data, an internal team was selected at each site to observe staff practices using the PQA. After observations, the team had a scoring meeting to discuss their notes and come to a consensus on the score for each item on the tool. ADE contracted with Arkansas State University (ASU) to hire trained reliable assessors to collect external assessment data for second year grantees. Raters received endorsement through a reliability training process in which they were required to reach 80% agreement with the Weikart Center's master scores on the PQA. Scores were entered into Scores Reporter, a Weikart Center online data collection platform.

Program Improvement Plans

Arkansas 21st CCLC sites participated in the Weikart Center's Planning with Data sessions in the winter of 2017. During this workshop, site teams used their PQA data to establish priorities for improving staff skills and instructional practices. Following identification of priorities, sites developed and submitted **Program Improvement Plans** (PIP) to implement changes during youth development offerings. Sites submitted PIPs to the Scores Reporter system.

Annual Performance Reporting

APR is an online, federal data collection system that collects information about recruitment, retention, program attendance, and academic achievement. To measure academic achievement, the Arkansas State Board of Education chose the American College Testing (ACT) Aspire⁵ end-of-year summative assessment as the tool. The ACT Aspire is administered to youth in grades 3-10, thus only this subset of youth were assessed for academic achievement.

All ADE sites collected and submitted Annual Performance Reporting (APR) data at three time points throughout the program year (Fall, Spring, and Summer). Sites submitted data management spreadsheets to Weikart staff who then entered the data into the APR system.

Leading Indicator Surveys

Project Directors, Site Coordinators, Youth Workers, Parents and Youth were all invited to complete surveys to share feedback on their experience during the 2017-2018 program year (see Table 2). Online surveys were created and administered via Qualtrics and electronic links for each were posted to Arkansas 21st CCLC's webpage on the evaluation contractor's website (www.cypq.org/ar21cclc). Data was collected between February and May 2018.

⁵ On the ACT Aspire assessment, points earned are counted and a raw score is obtained. The raw score is then converted to a three-digit scale score for each subject area measured against the ACT Readiness Benchmarks. These benchmarks identify whether students are on target to meet the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by the time they take the ACT in grade 11. Four Readiness Levels are used for each subject to further identify how student performance relates to the Benchmarks: Exceeding (i.e., Advanced), Ready (i.e., Proficient), Close (i.e., Limited Knowledge), and In Need of Support (i.e., Unsatisfactory) (Arkansas Department of Education, 2014b).

Table 2. 2017-2018 Surveys Administered

Survey	Intended Audience	Length
Project Director/ Site Coordinator⁶	Individual(s) responsible for site operations.	82 items
Direct Staff/Youth Worker	Staff responsible for providing direct programming to youth.	65 items
Parent	All parents/guardians of youth attending the afterschool programs (regardless of youth age)	24 items
Youth	Youth in grades 4 through 12 ⁷ who attended the afterschool programs	40 items

Survey questions aligned with the Leading Indicators Framework derived from the Youth Program Quality Intervention Study (Smith, Akiva, Sugar, Lo, et al., 2012). This framework defines five specific domains of action that characterize afterschool programming:

1. Organizational Context
2. Instructional Context
3. External Relationships
4. Child/Youth Beliefs and Skills
5. Family Satisfaction.

These domains are then subdivided into 13 Leading Indicators composed of 29 scales selected from the performance measures and are outlined in Table 3.

⁶ In many programs offered in Arkansas’s 21st CCLC System, there are grantees who offer programming at only one site such that the project director is also the site coordinator. However, in some cases the grantee offered programming at more than one site and a site coordinator was also responsible for responding to the survey.

⁷ Surveys are directed only at this age group because the survey method is not developmentally appropriate for children in third grade or lower.

Table 3. Leading Indicators Framework

Organizational Context		
Indicator	Scale	Source
Staffing Model	Capacity	Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey
	Job Satisfaction	Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey Direct Staff/Youth Worker Survey
Continuous Improvement	Continuous Quality Improvement	Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey Direct Staff/Youth Worker Survey
	Participation in YPQI Supports	Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey Direct Staff/Youth Worker Survey
	Horizontal Communication	Direct Staff/Youth Worker Survey
	Vertical Communication	Direct Staff/Youth Worker Survey
Youth Governance	Youth Role in Governance	Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey
Enrollment Policy	Academic Targeting	Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey
Instructional Context		
Indicator	Scale	Source
Academic Press	Academic Planning	Direct Staff/Youth Worker Survey
	Homework Completion	Youth Survey
Engaging Instruction	Youth Engagement and Belonging	Youth Survey
	Growth and Mastery Goals	Direct Staff/Youth Worker Survey
	Instructional Quality	Youth PQA & School-Age PQA
External Relationships		
Indicator	Scale	Source
System Norms	Accountability	Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey
	Collaboration	Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey
Family Engagement	Communication	Parent Survey
School Alignment	Student Data	Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey
	School Day Content	Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey Direct Staff/Youth Worker Survey
Community Resources	Community Engagement	Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey
Youth Skills		
Indicator	Scale	Source
Socioemotional Development	Social and Emotional Competencies	Youth Survey
Academic Efficacy	Work Habits	Youth Survey
	Reading/English Efficacy	Youth Survey
	Math Efficacy	Youth Survey
	Science Efficacy	Youth Survey
	Technology Efficacy	Youth Survey
	Academic Efficacy	Parent Survey
Family Satisfaction		
Indicator	Scale	Source
Family Satisfaction	Confidence in Care	Parent Survey
	Convenience of Care	Parent Survey
	Family School Connection	Parent Survey

Evaluation Sample

Data were collected from 72 participating sites. Response rates across all data sources are presented in Table 4. All sites submitted PQA data, Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey data, and Direct Staff/Youth Worker Survey data. Only a subset of sites (second year grantees) were required to submit external assessments and sites submitted either the Youth PQA of the School-Age PQA depending on the age range of youth in their programs. Additional details about participation demographics can be found in Appendix A.

Table 4. Performance Information Response Rates

	Individual Responses	Sites with Data	Site-Level Response Rate
Program Quality Assessment			
Self YPQA	61	32	100%
External YPQA	3	2	100%
Self SAPQA	64	44	100%
External SAPQA	18	12	100%
Program Improvement Plans	179	72	100%
APR	59	59	82%
Surveys			
Manager	107	72	100%
Staff	782	72	100%
Youth	3,167	69	96%
Parent	1,240	66	92%

Results

Goal 1: Increase academic achievement in participants who regularly attend 21st CCLC

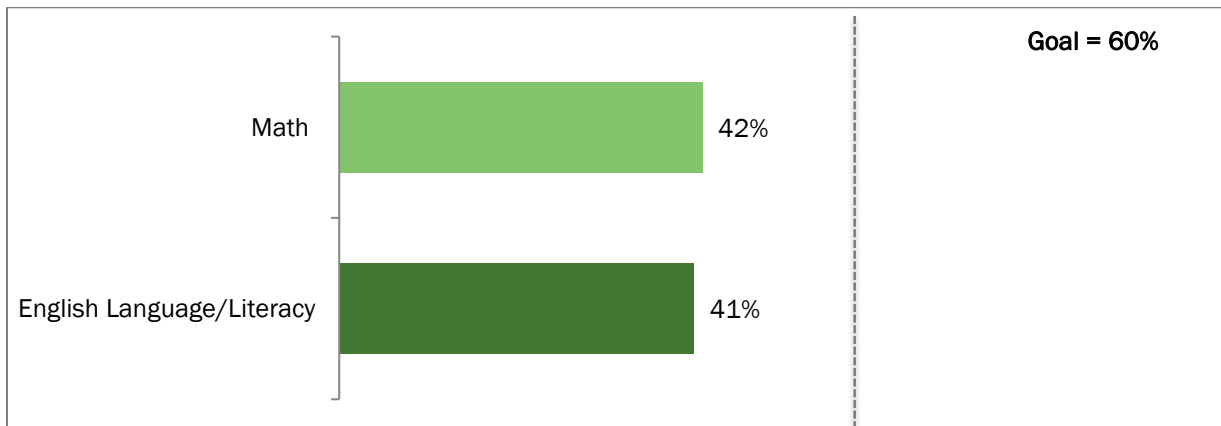
Two objectives were set by Arkansas 21st CCLC to answer the question: did youth who regularly attended 21st CCLC programs in 2017-2018 increase academic achievement? Academic achievement data were collected using the APR and measured using the ACT Inspire, thus data only represents academic achievement for youth in 3rd – 10th grades. Arkansas selected English language/literacy and math as the two areas of focus.

Objectives	Progress
1.1: 60% of participants regularly attending the 21st CCLC program will increase OR stay in the Advanced or Proficient levels on the statewide assessment for English language/literacy and math.	Partially Met
1.2: 60% of participants regularly attending the 21st CCLC program will show improvement in classroom academic performance as reported on the ADE Statewide Information System.	Data not collected

Objective 1.1

For the 2017-2018 programming year, **41% of regularly attending students increased OR stayed in the Advanced and Proficient levels on the English language/literacy assessment and 42% of regularly attending students increased OR stayed on the math assessment** (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Academic Proficiency Levels



Source: APR Data 2017-2018 (N = 58)

It is interesting to note that although the 60% objective for academic proficiency was not met, perceptions of academic efficacy among participants were high with an overwhelming majority of parents and youth reporting high expectations for English and Math achievement (See 2017-2018 Leading Indicator Survey Memo, Academic Efficacy). This difference between performance and expectation can likely be attributed to the fact that while the strong majority of staff reported that program activities were intentionally designed to align with academic content and homework assignments for almost all students (See 2017-2018 Leading Indicator Survey Memo, School Day Content), **approximately half of participating students were identified as academically at-risk due to assessment performance, classroom grades, or recommendations for tutoring** (See 2017-2018 Leading Indicator Survey Memo, Enrollment Policy). As staff continue to prioritize academic support within program activities, academic performance will continue to improve, contributing to more positive observations like this, **“Math, reading and science scores showed improvements in the classroom. Children learned new skills that weren’t offered in day school. I believe children felt less pressured to learn as in the regular day, and instead learned in a fun way without realizing they were actually learning.”**

Goal 2: Increase non-academic achievement in participants who regularly attend 21st CCLC programs.

Two objectives were set by Arkansas 21st CCLC to answer the question: did youth who attended 21st CCLC programs increase in non-academic achievement areas? The two areas of non-academic skills Arkansas selected to measure for this goal were social and emotional (SEL) skills and

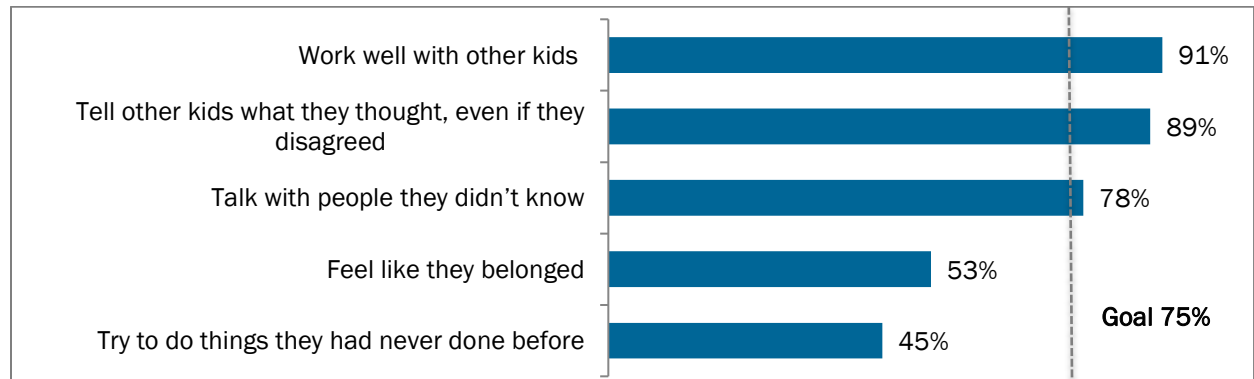
academic habits. Non-academic achievement data was collected using the youth survey and thus only youth in 4th-12th grades are represented.

Objectives	Progress
2.1: 75% of youth attending 21st CCLC programs will report high levels of social and emotional skills, as reported on the youth survey administered by the Weikart Center	Partially Met
2.2: 75% of youth attending 21st CCLC programs will report high levels of positive academic habits, as reported on the youth survey administered by the Weikart Center.	Partially Met

Objective 2.1

For the 2017-2018 programming year, more than 75% of youth reported high levels, as measured by a response of true half the time or more, of SEL skills on three of the five indicators measured (Figure 3). A strong majority of youth reported that the program frequently helped them work well with others, talk with people they did not know, and tell other youth what they thought, even if differed from what the other youth thought. These findings are consistent with previous years, as participating youth have reported strong SEL skills for the past four years (See 2017-2018 Leading Indicator Survey Memo. Social and Emotional Competencies).

Figure 3. Youth Report of SEL Skills



Source: Youth Survey 2017-2018 (N = 69)

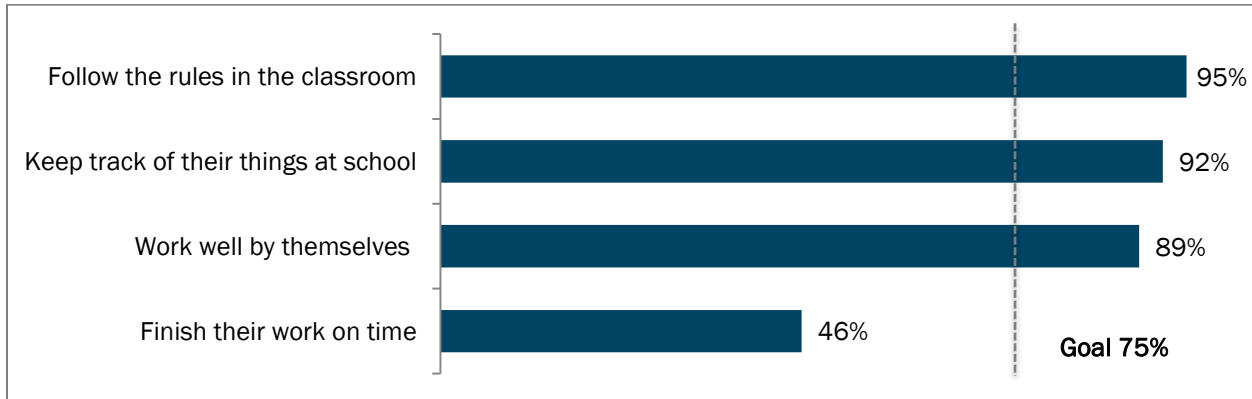
While youth reported they tried new things or felt that they belonged in the program less than half the time, staff did take note of successful strategies, such as **“The most important change I have seen is how much better our students work since we have put them in family groups. It truly is what is missing in most of their lives. The feeling of belonging and mattering has made great differences in both behavior and academics.”**

Objective 2.2

Following the 2017-2018 programming year, **more than 75% of youth reported high levels of academic habits, as measured by a response of true half the time or more, on three of the four**

indicators measured (Figure 4). Youth reported that they follow the rules in the classroom, work well by themselves, and keep track of their things at school. The item that did not reach the 75% threshold was finishing work on time (See 2017-2018 Leading Indicator Survey Memo, Work Habits).

Figure 4. Youth Report of Academic Habits



Source: Youth Survey 2017-2018 (N = 69)

Goal 3: Offer quality activities to all youth attending the program.

Five objectives were set by Arkansas 21st CCLC to answer the question: were quality activities offered to all youth attending the programs? The areas of program quality Arkansas selected to measure for this goal were: homework help, enrichment activities, offerings for families, fidelity to the YPQI model, and Instructional Total Scores (ITS) at or above the high engagement threshold (3.90) at a minimum of 75% of sites.

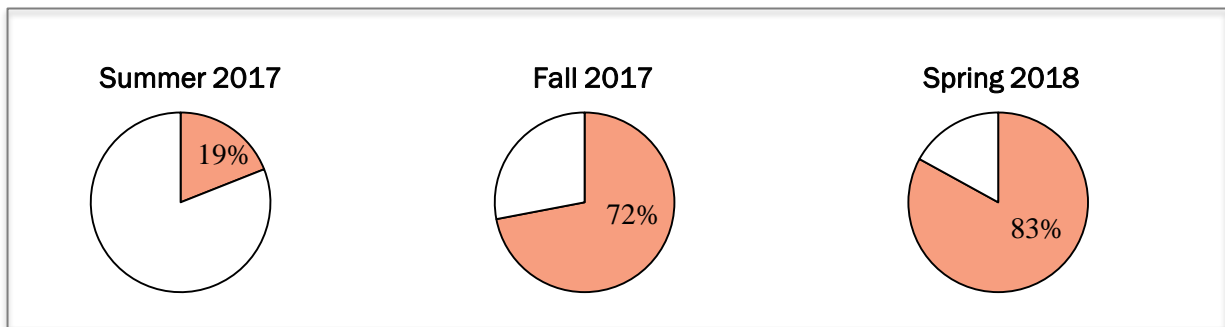
Objectives	Progress
3.1: All 21st CCLC programs will offer homework help time to 21st CCLC participants.	Partially Met
3.2: All 21st CCLC programs will offer academic (beyond homework help) and enrichment activities.	Partially Met
3.3: Every data collection term, 90% of 21st CCLC programs will offer quality activities to families of participating students.	Partially Met
3.4: All programs will fully engage and complete all elements of the YPQI.	Partially Met
3.5: 75% of programs will score a 3.90 or higher on the ITS as measured by the YPQA or School-Age PQA.	Partially Met

Objectives 3.1

Each term, grantees reported via APR if they offered homework help to youth at their program. Homework help was offered during each term, but all sites did not report that they offered this

service at every time point. Understandably, sites reported higher homework help activities in the spring and fall and less in the summer (Figure 5). In addition to program activities, youth were asked to report on levels of homework completion. Of youth who responded to the survey, **54% reported that they “almost always” get their homework done when they come to the afterschool program, 56% reported that staff at the afterschool program “almost always” understand their homework and can provide help when they get stuck, and 51% reported that they “almost always” learn things that help them in school at the afterschool program** (See 2017-2018 Leading Indicator Survey Memo, Homework Completion).

Figure 5. Percent of Sites Reporting Homework Help Time



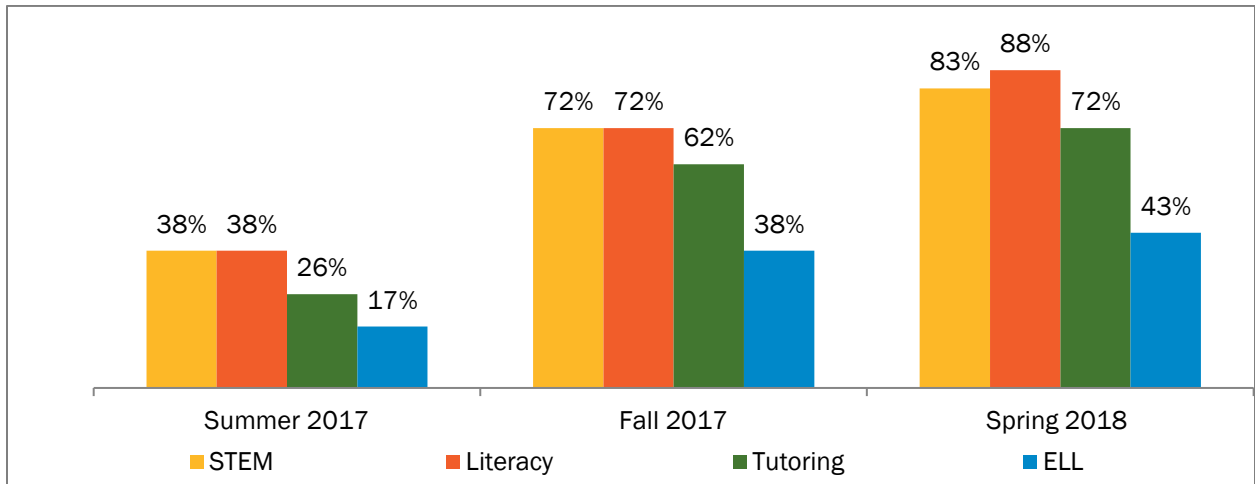
Source: APR 2017-2018 (N = 58)

In addition to youth reports, staff **commented “Many of my students who don't usually complete their homework were suddenly completing it in after school and were showing improvement on those skills in class.”** These positive observations may also be attributed to the fact that 48% of staff responded “always true” when asked if they combined academic content with the expressed interests of the students. Over the past four years, staff and managers have consistently reported being intentional around aligning program activities to youth interests and school day content and youth interests to engagement and academic success (See 2017-2018 Leading Indicator Survey Memo, Academic Planning)

Objective 3.2

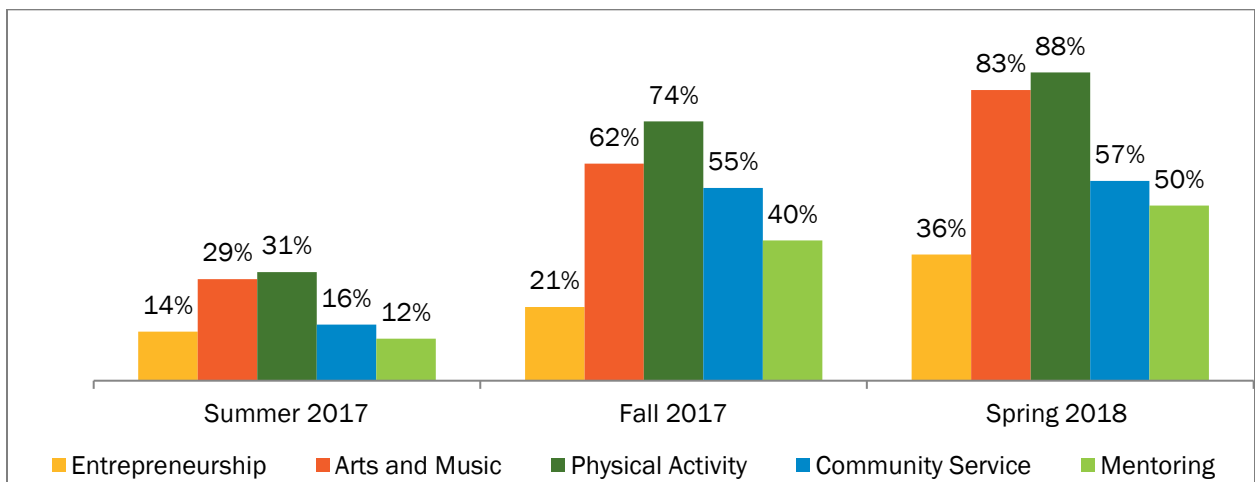
Each term, grantees reported via APR if they offered academic (beyond homework help) and enrichment activities. Grantees reported on the following academic activities: STEM, literacy, tutoring, and English language learners (ELL) support. Grantees also reported their offering of the following enrichment activities at each term: entrepreneurship, arts and music, physical activity, community service/learning, and mentoring. Sites reported that they offered academic and enrichment opportunities most frequently in spring, followed by fall and then summer. The academic opportunities that were offered most frequently across all time points were STEM and Literacy (Figure 6) and the enrichment opportunities offered most frequently were physical activity and arts and music (Figure 7).

Figure 6. Percentage of Sites Offering Academic Opportunities



Source: APR 2017-2018 (N = 58)

Figure 7. Percentage of Sites Offering Enrichment Activities

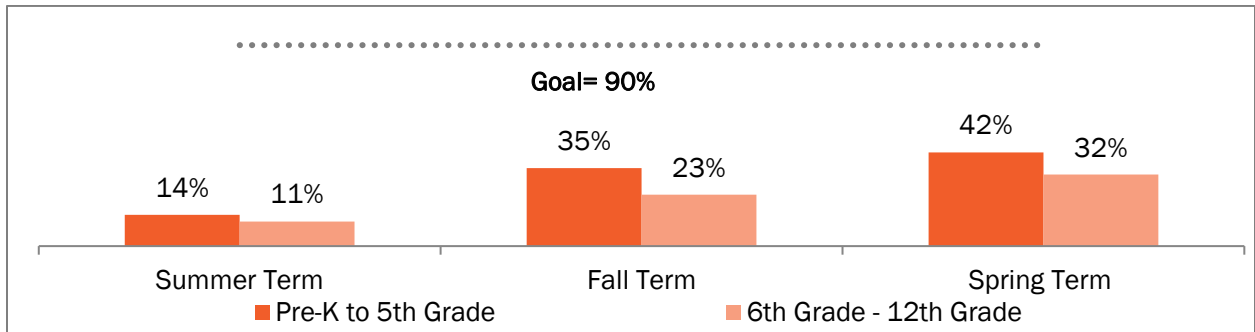


Source: APR 2017-2018 (N = 58)

Objective 3.3

One element of quality youth services is including opportunities for families to be involved. For the 2017-2018 program year, Arkansas 21st CCLC set the objective of 90% of sites offering quality services to families at every data collection term (fall, spring, and summer). According to data collected, sites did not meet this objective for any of the terms with the most services provided in the spring term. When examined by age group, **families with youth who were in Pre-K to 5th Grade reported more opportunities for families to engage in quality activities than students in 6th – 12th grade**, shown in Figure 8.

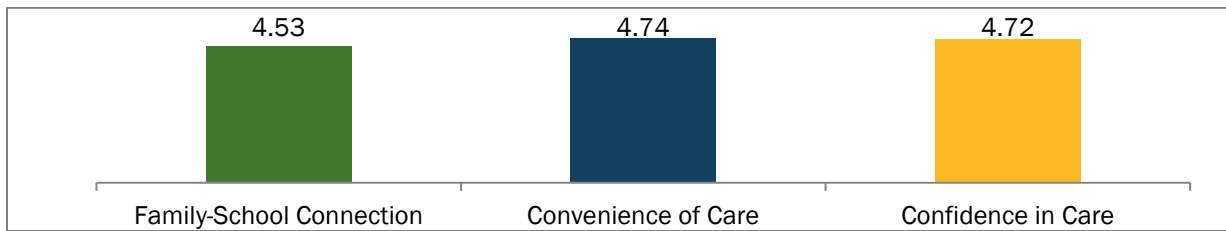
Figure 8. Sites Offering Quality Family Services



Source: APR Data 2017-2018 (N = 70)

While the number of sites offering quality family services may be lower than desired, parents have been very satisfied with the program over the past four years. Looking at Figure 9, parents reported high levels of confidence in the programs, that afterschool programs are convenient and that programs support family-school connection. Parents have consistently reported the highest levels of satisfaction with being able to rely on the program to provide care and the positive experiences programs create for their children (See 2017-2018 Leading Indicator Survey Memo, Family Satisfaction). Staff also noted the benefits of family engagement, with on staff sharing that **“It was great to have parents getting involved with what their kids were building. Parents actually came in early to pick up their kids so that they could see the progress they were making.”**

Figure 9. Family Satisfaction Scales



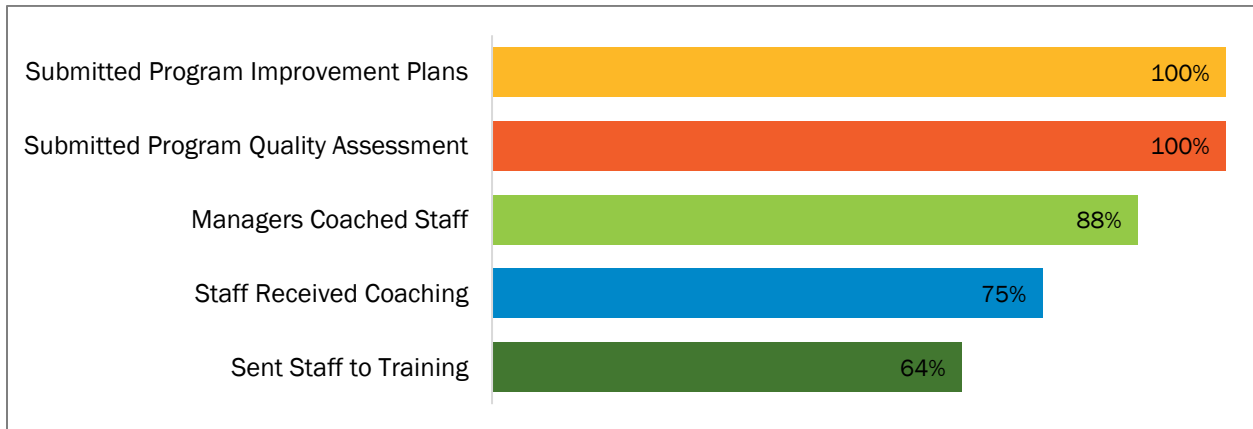
Source: Parent Survey 2017-2018 (N = 66)

Objective 3.4

Full engagement in the YPQI has been shown to lead to higher-quality instruction (Smith et al., 2012). The four elements that indicate fidelity to the YPQI model are: program assessment, data-driven planning, professional development/training opportunities and continuous quality feedback loops, as measured by staff and manager engagement in coaching conversations. **Arkansas 21st CCLC sites fully engaged⁸ in two of the four elements of the YPQI as all sites submitted program assessment data and program improvement plans.** Partial engagement was reported for the other two YPQI components (see Figure 10).

⁸ Data excludes two summer-only sites

Figure 10. Percentage of Sites Engaged with YPQI Elements



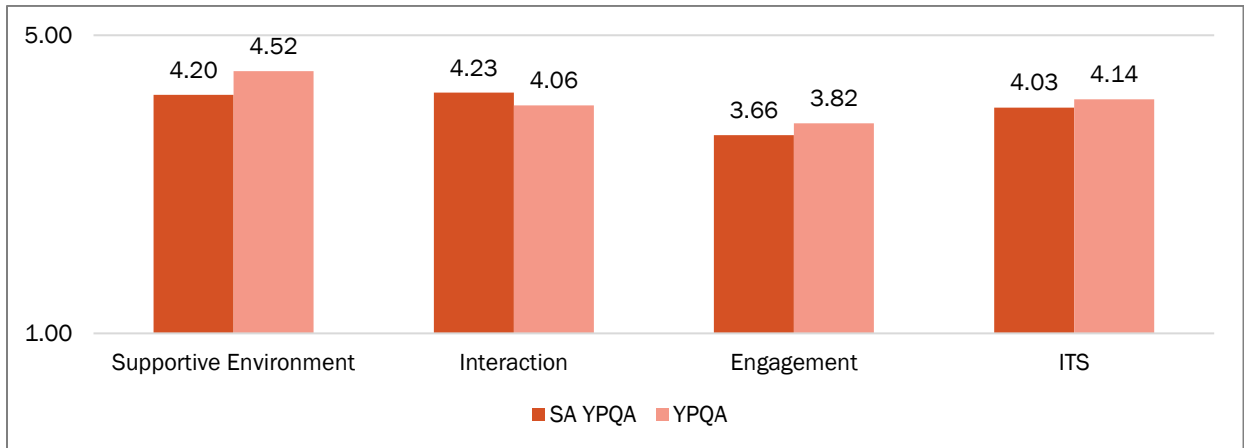
Source: Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey & Direct Staff/Youth Worker Survey 2017-2018 (N = 72)

Despite Arkansas 21st CCLC not reaching full fidelity on the coaching and training components of the YPQI, there was a high level of satisfaction with management and supervision support present in the open ended survey responses. One staff reported, **“I am incredibly supported by our supervisors and every time I need assistance with anything I know I can rely on them to help whenever necessary.”**

Objective 3.5

While the PQA is an assessment of the full program quality, the quality of instructional practices, also referred to as the Instructional Total Score (ITS), can be isolated from the measure. The ITS is composed of three of the four PQA domains: a structured environment facilitated through guidance and encouragement (i.e., Supportive Environment), opportunities for leadership and collaboration (i.e., Interaction), and the capacity to promote planning and reflection (i.e., Engagement). Analysis of both School-Age PQA and Youth PQA show that **Arkansas 21st CCLC sites are being implemented with very high levels of program quality** (See Figure 11). Analysis of similar Weikart Center data indicates that ITS above the “high-engagement” threshold (3.90) are strongly associated with youth reports of engagement in the form of interest, challenge, and belonging (Akiva, Cortina, Eccles, & Smith, 2013). **Within the Arkansas 21st CCLC network, 61% of sites using the School-Age PQA and 66% of sites using the Youth PQA scored above the high-engagement threshold.**

Figure 11. Program Quality Self Assessments

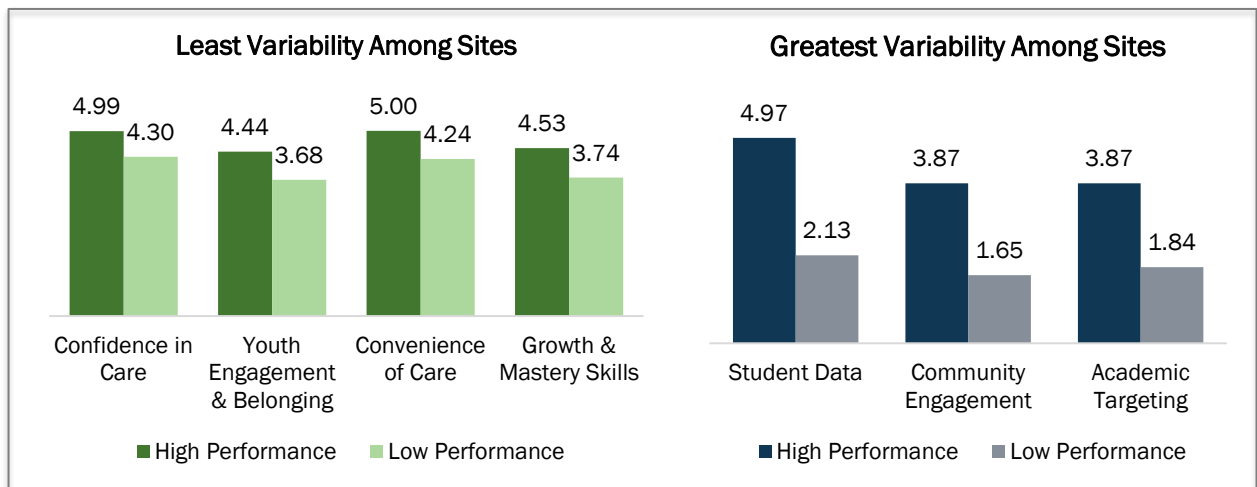


Source: School-Age PQA and Youth PQA 2017-2018 (N = 72)

Comparing High- and Low-Performing Sites

In this last section, notable differences between high and low performing sites were identified. As a first step we calculated high and low quartiles for each of the leading indicators and compared the mean score for each group by domain (See Appendix B for full results). Figure 12 below shows the scales where the least and greatest variability among Arkansas 21st CCLC sites was observed. The data show the most consistency across sites for Confidence in Care, Youth Engagement & Belonging, Convenience of Care, and Growth & Mastery Skills, and greatest variability among sites for Student Data, Community Engagement and Academic Targeting. The results of this analysis acknowledge that exemplary practices for all Leading Indicators are present among Arkansas sites. **Efforts to identify and showcase those high performing sites is one feasible next step to support continuous improvement.**

Figure 12. Notable High Performing and Low Performance Scale Comparisons



Conclusion

Since 2002, ADE has operated a quality improvement system for its afterschool programs with the explicit model that afterschool programs benefit from training and professional development, coaching, self-assessment activities, and data-driven planning. The purpose of the 2017-2018 evaluation report was to assess the extent to which Arkansas 21st CCLC sites implemented YPQI with fidelity, contributing to improvements in both the skills of afterschool staff and improvements in the structure of afterschool programs. Specifically, this evaluation addressed the following three network wide program goals for the 2017-2018 program year:

Goal 1: Increase academic achievement in participants who regularly attend 21st CCLC programs

- Just over 40% of regularly attending students increased OR stayed in the Advanced and Proficient levels of the English language/literacy (41%) and Math assessments (42%).
- Approximately half of participating students were identified as academically at-risk and in need of additional educational supports.
- Continued emphasis on aligning program activities with the individual needs of students will help Arkansas 21st CCLC sites achieve the goal of 60% of students achieving Advanced and Proficient levels on their English language/literacy and Math assessments.

Goal 2: Increase non-academic achievement in participants who regularly attend 21st CCLC programs;

- Consistent with the past four years, a strong majority of youth reported high levels of SEL skills. The following items identify the greatest strengths for the 2017-2018 program year:
 - Work well with other kids (91%)
 - Tell other kids what they thought, even if they disagreed (89%)
 - Talk with people they did not know (78%)
- More than 75% of youth also reported strong work habits that are predictive of positive outcomes:
 - Follow the rules in the classroom (95%)
 - Keep track of their things at school (92%)
 - Work well by themselves (89%)
- Intentional activities to support a sense of belonging and exposure to new experiences were identified as opportunities to improve non-academic outcomes.

Goal 3: Offer quality activities to all youth attending the program.

- ADE had full engagement in two of the four elements of the YPQI: program assessment and data-driven planning;
- 64% of staff reported attending training/methods workshops focused on improving the quality of instruction in their program and/or related to their program improvement plan; 75% of staff reported that they were coached by a manager or supervisor; and 88% of site managers reported coaching staff by observing their sessions, providing feedback, and using the PQA as a standard of performance

- More than 70% of sites offered homework time throughout the program year. Youth also shared the following experiences about homework support:
 - 54% almost always get their homework done when they come to the afterschool program
 - 56% reported that staff “almost always” understand their homework and can provide help when they get stuck
 - 51% “almost always” learn things that help them in school at the afterschool program
- Sites offered a range of academic and enrichment activities throughout the year.
 - STEM and Literacy were the most frequently offered academic activities.
 - Physical activity and Arts and Music were the most frequently offered enrichment activities.
- While only one-third of sites provided quality family services throughout the 2017-2018 program year, parents continue to report high levels of satisfaction with Arkansas 21st CCLC sites.
- All Arkansas 21st CCLC submitted program assessment data and program improvement plans, demonstrating full engagement in half of the YPQI process. Opportunities for improvement include staff participation in training and follow-up coaching.
- Analysis of both School-Age PQA and Youth PQA show that program quality scores for Arkansas 21st CCLC sites are greater than average; 61% of sites using the School-Age PQA and 66% of sites using the Youth PQA scored above the national high-engagement threshold of 3.90.
 - Intentional efforts around training and program activities to promote youth engagement would support greater program quality.

Comparing High- and Low-Performing Sites

- The data show a wide range of variability in staff practices among sites. Efforts to identify and showcase high performing sites is one feasible next step to support continuous improvement, especially in the areas of Student Data, Community Engagement and Academic Targeting.

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Appendix A. Survey Sample Characteristics

Table A.1. Staff Survey Respondent Demographics

	Project Directors/ Site Coordinators (n=104)	Direct Staff/ Youth Worker (n= 757)
Education Level		
Less than high school diploma/GED	-	3%
GED/High School diploma	<1%	5%
Some college, no degree	5%	16%
Associate's Degree	5%	5%
Bachelor's Degree	17%	27%
Graduate program but no degree yet	11%	8%
Master's Degree	56%	34%
Doctorate	3%	<1%
Other professional degree after BA	3%	<1%
Teaching Certification	66%	59%
Race (check all that apply)		
White	65%	69%
African American	33%	24%
Hispanic/Latino(a)	-	3%
Native American	<1%	1%
Two or More Races	<1%	1%
Other	-	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	-	<1%
Gender		
Female	85%	83%
Male	15%	17%
Other	-	<1%

Table A.2. Staff Survey Respondent Professional History

	Project Directors/ Site Coordinators (n=104)	Direct Staff/ Youth Worker (n= 757)
Average years of experience at site as project director/site coordinator	4.43	-
Average years of experience at site in any capacity	6.05	3.26
Average months worked per year	10.67	7.55
Average hours worked per week	23.14	10.84

Table A.3. Youth Survey Respondent Demographics

Characteristics	N = 3,219 Youth
Race	
White	35%
African American/Black	34%
Hispanic/Latino(a)	13%
Two or More Races	5%
Other Race	4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%
Native American and One or More Races	4%
Native American	1%
Middle Eastern/North African	<1%
Gender	
Female	52%
Male	47%
Other/No Response	2%
	Mean
Average Age	12.15
Average Grade	6.39

Source: Youth Survey 2017-2018 (N = 69 Sites)

Table A.4. Parent Survey Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	N = 1,236 Parents
Age	
25 or less years old	4%
26-30 years old	13%
31-35 years old	23%
36-40 years old	27%
41-45 years old	16%
46-50 years old	8%
51 or more years old	8%
Education	
Less than high school diploma/GED	9%
GED/ High School	29%
Some college, no degree	21%
Associate's Degree	13%
Bachelor's Degree	13%
Graduate program but no degree yet	3%
Master's Degree	10%
Doctorate	<1%
Other professional degree after BA	<1%
Race	
White	43%
African American/Black	40%
Hispanic	12%
Asian	3%
Other Race	1%
Two or More Races	<1%
Native American	<1%
Middle Eastern/North African	<1%
Gender	
Female	81%
Male	17%
Other	<1%
Income	
Less than \$10,000	8%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	14%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	20%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	16%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	9%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	5%
\$60,000 to \$69,999	5%
\$70,000 to \$79,999	3%
\$80,000 to \$89,999	3%
\$90,000 to \$100,000	2%
More than \$100,000	6%
If federal funding ... stopped	
would you be willing to pay a fee for afterschool services?	20%
would you be able to pay a fee for afterschool services?	34%

Source: Parent Survey 2017-2018 (N = 66 Sites)

Appendix B. Comparing High- and Low-Performing Sites

Aggregated site scores for 22 of the 29 Leading Indicator scales were split into four quartiles (the seven youth outcomes scales were not included). Mean scores for the highest and lowest scoring quartiles were calculated for each scale. A statistical significance test (an independent subjects *t*-test) of the difference between the high and low quartile was calculated. High and low quartile means showed statistically significant differences for all 22 scales. The results of these analyses (including *p*-values indicating the statistical significance of the differences) are described in Table B.1.

Table B.1 Comparison of Group Means for High and Low Quartiles

Scale	# Sites in High Quartile	High Quartile Mean	# Sites in Low Quartile	Low Quartile Mean	Mean Difference	<i>p</i> value
Student Data	13	4.97	12	2.13	2.84	.000
Community Engagement Targeting	18	3.87	19	1.65	2.22	.000
School Day Content	17	3.87	19	1.84	2.03	.000
Youth Governance	17	4.43	17	2.66	1.77	.000
Collaboration	10	3.80	11	2.05	1.75	.000
Horizontal Communication	25	5.00	19	3.30	1.70	.000
Communication	17	4.33	17	2.72	1.61	.000
Continuous Improvement	16	4.26	18	2.83	1.43	.000
Accountability	19	4.86	17	3.47	1.39	.000
Instructional Quality	20	5.00	20	3.65	1.35	.000
Vertical Communication	17	4.70	17	3.36	1.34	.000
Capacity	16	4.70	17	3.41	1.29	.000
Academic Planning	14	4.90	19	3.65	1.25	.000
Academic Efficacy - Parent Report	17	4.71	17	3.47	1.24	.000
Job Satisfaction	16	4.78	18	3.77	1.01	.000
Family-School Connection	17	4.68	17	3.73	0.95	.000
Growth & Mastery Skills	16	4.91	13	4.04	0.87	.000
Youth Engagement & Belonging	17	4.53	23	3.74	0.79	.000
Convenience of Care	17	4.44	17	3.68	0.76	.000
Confidence in Care	19	5.00	16	4.24	0.76	.000
	15	4.99	16	4.30	0.69	.000

Source: Parent Survey 2017-2018 (N = 66), Project Director/Site Coordinator Survey & Direct Staff/Youth Worker Survey 2017-2018 (N = 72)