

# Arkansas 21st Century Community Learning Centers

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*Statewide Evaluation and Key Findings from the  
2023–2024 Program Year*

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....I–XII

Program Background- Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers .....1

Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and Weikart Center- Overview..... 2

Continuous Quality Improvement Systems and Out-of-School Time Programs ..... 2

Youth Program Quality Improvement Approach ..... 3

Evaluation Design..... 5

Performance Measures and Assessment Tools..... 9

2023–2024 Activities: Overview.....12

Evaluation Sample.....13

Program Demographics, Geographic Access, and Workforce Characteristics.....14

Findings by Statewide Goals and Objectives.....18

Summary of Progress Toward Statewide Goals and Objectives.....28

Advanced Analytic Findings: Participation, Dosage, and Student Outcomes ..... 28

Overall Summary and Recommendations.....36

Appendix A. Statewide Goals, Objectives, and Indicators ..... 38

Appendix B. Analytic Technical Tables..... 42



## Executive Summary

This report presents findings from the 2023–2024 statewide evaluation of the Arkansas 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program. The evaluation is anchored in a performance accountability framework designed to assess statewide progress toward four primary goals: (1) strengthening organizational capacity, (2) delivering high-quality programming aligned with 21st CCLC principles, (3) maintaining high levels of student engagement, and (4) improving academic outcomes for regularly attending participants.

Each goal is supported by a set of measurable objectives that reflect the state's expectations for grantee performance. These objectives span areas such as program quality assessment, staff professional development, student academic and behavioral outcomes, and family and community engagement. The evaluation compares actual program performance against these targets to determine statewide progress.

Arkansas's statewide continuous quality improvement (CQI) system, grounded in the Youth Program Quality Improvement (YPQI) approach, plays a key role in supporting programs to meet these objectives. Through structured tools such as the Program Quality Assessment (PQA), grantees engage in a process of self-assessment, goal-setting, and improvement planning. This model operates across a cascade of setting effects, from policy level expectations and supports set by the state, to grantee leadership, to frontline staff which ultimately influence student experiences. This evaluation aligns with this framework by examining how site-level quality practices relate to student engagement, retention, and academic outcomes.

The evaluation is guided by four key questions aligned with Arkansas's 21st CCLC statewide goals:

1. To what degree do AR 21st CCLC grantees have the organizational capacity to deliver high-quality programming?
2. In the 2023–2024 program year, did AR 21st CCLC programs consistently deliver high-quality programming aligned to 21st CCLC principles?
3. Were AR 21st CCLC programs able to maintain high levels of student engagement in 21st CCLC program offerings?
4. Was there an improvement in 2023–2024 AR 21st CCLC students' academic outcomes for regularly attending participants?



The evaluation draws on a comprehensive dataset representing 11,623 students participating in 21st CCLC programs across Arkansas, with a focused analytic sample of approximately 3,000 students in grades 4–8. Key variables include program attendance (dosage), student demographics, participation in academic and enrichment activities, academic achievement (standardized reading and math scores), school-day attendance, and afterschool program quality scores.

This evaluation uses a goal-based quasi-experimental design to assess program implementation and impact. Performance was assessed by comparing actual results to state defined targets across all four goals. To support the statewide goal-based analysis, the evaluation employs a rigorous quantitative approach that includes multiple regression, generalized propensity score analysis (GPSA), and hierarchical linear modeling (HLM):

- Multiple regression was used to examine associations between program dosage, student characteristics, and outcomes while adjusting for baseline differences.
- Generalized propensity score analysis (GPSA) estimated the causal effects of varying levels of program attendance on academic outcomes, adjusting for selection bias across dosage levels.
- Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) accounted for the nested structure of the data (students within sites) and explored the influence of site-level program quality on student outcomes.

These methods complement the primary analysis of performance against statewide objectives, offering additional insights into the conditions under which success was more likely to occur.

By combining a goal-based accountability framework with rigorous causal and contextual methods, this evaluation provides actionable findings for stakeholders to support continuous improvement, strategic planning, and expanded access to high-quality afterschool programming across Arkansas.



## Statewide Goals and Objectives: Progress

The following section summarizes performance across Arkansas's four statewide goals, comparing actual results to predefined benchmarks (see **Table ES.1**).

**Table ES.1 Summary of ADE Statewide Goals & Objectives**

<b>Goal 1: Support organizational capacity amongst grantees to deliver high-quality programming to all participants attending 21st CCLC programming.</b>
<p>Overall progress towards capacity building with 21st CCLC grantees for program delivery in sites is reflected in many of the indicators identified. The data reveal strengths in self-assessment, leadership development, and supervisory support with areas for growth in staff training participation and retention. Under <b>Objective 1.1</b>, with a focus on assessing program quality, 100% of programs completed self-assessments with the PQA and 60% of programs had staff engage in consensus meetings to score practices. However, data were not available for two indicators focused on director observations of offerings and programs that were assessed by external assessors. All programs, (100%) participated in completing Program Improvement Plans (Comprehensive Goals) outlined in <b>Objective 1.2</b> which is a core component of the CQI process. <b>Objective 1.3</b>, with an emphasis on professional development, shows high engagement at the leadership level with 100% of programs with directors that attended Planning with Data.</p> <p>Conversely, only 46% of programs had staff that participated in at least one Youth Work Methods training. This difference is likely due to training attendance requirements (mandatory versus optional), online versus in-person, etc. However, this does suggest a gap between the engagement in professional learning opportunities for staff versus directors. Data were not available for coaching visits since the implementation of quality coaches began after the 2023–2024 program year. <b>Objective 1.4</b> data indicate promising results with 98% of staff in agreement they receive feedback and support from supervisors. With a focus on the support of program directors, <b>Objective 1.5</b> indicates nearly all directors (98%) report having access to supports to succeed, which is above the target. Additionally, all directors expressed enthusiasm about their work and 68% have worked at their program for at least two years. This suggests high morale amongst directors and stability in leadership. <b>Objective 1.6</b> indicators highlight management practices that promote staff retention. The majority of staff reported positive perceptions of their supervisors and felt encouraged to participate, agreed priorities and goals are clearly communicated, and their supervisor is regularly available. This demonstrates consistent and effective leadership practices that contribute to a positive workplace culture and staff satisfaction. Lastly, <b>Objective 1.7</b> data suggest efforts to improve long-term retention are needed with only 54% of staff reporting they have been with the program at least two years.</p>

<b>Objective 1.1 Programs will assess program quality on an ongoing basis to support program improvement.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs that self-assess using the Program Quality Assessment.	>90%	100%
Indicator 2. Percent of programs with staff who report participating in the consensus meeting to score the Program Quality (self) Assessment.	>90%	60%
Indicator 3. Percent of programs with directors who report observing offerings to assess program quality.	>90%	N/A
Indicator 4. Percent of programs that participate in a PQA conducted by an external assessor.	>90%	N/A
<b>Objective 1.2 Programs will use data to set actionable goals that support program quality.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs that submit a Program Improvement Plan-Comprehensive Goals.	>90%	100%
<b>Objective 1.3 Programs will participate in professional development opportunities that promote evidence-based instructional practices.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs with directors who attended Planning with Data.	>90%	100%
Indicator 2. Percent of programs with staff who attended at least one Youth Work Methods.	>90%	46%
Indicator 3. Percent of second and third year programs who are visited by a quality coach at least twice during the program year.	>90%	N/A
<b>Objective 1.4 Program staff will receive performance feedback from their managers.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs with staff who agree that they get the feedback and support needed from their supervisor to be successful.	>90%	98%
<b>Objective 1.5 Program directors are supported to lead high-quality programs for youth.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of directors who agreed they have access to supports they need to be successful.	>=75%	98%



Indicator 2. Percent of directors who agree they look forward to coming to work each day.	>=75%	100%
Indicator 3. Percent of directors who have been working for this program for at least 2 years.	>=50%	68%
<b>Objective 1.6 Program directors demonstrate high-quality management practices that support staff retention.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of staff agree their supervisor makes sure program goals and priorities are clear.	>=75%	98%
Indicator 2. Percent of staff agree their supervisor encourages them to innovate and try new ideas.	>=75%	97%
Indicator 3. Percent of staff agree their supervisor is available during regular program hours.	>=75%	99%
<b>Objective 1.7 Staff demonstrate interest in their work as a youth-serving professional.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of surveyed staff agree they look forward to coming to work each day.	>=75%	98%
Indicator 2. Percent of staff who have been working for this program for at least 2 years.	>=75%	54%

### Goal 2: Consistently deliver high-quality programming aligned to 21st CCLC principles.

The data associated with this goal provide understanding into how well Arkansas 21st CCLC program sites deliver quality programming that align with principles of the federal initiative. Programs are succeeding in reaching high-need students and providing a breadth of enrichment activities. Key areas for attention include targeting chronically absent students and increasing family engagement quality. Under **Objective 2.1**, programs are generally reaching the high need students who would benefit most from enrichment services. A majority of participants (83%) qualify for free and/or reduced price lunch, exceeding the 75% or greater target. Furthermore, a high percentage of students fall below proficiency in reading (72%) and math (68%), which is near the target threshold.

However, only 13% of students had low prior school-year attendance (<90%), which suggest the programs may not be fully targeting or enrolling chronically absent students. **Objective 2.2** shows that 77% of programs in 2023-2024 offered academic enrichment, literacy, and STEM activities- which is lower than the 90% target. While only 77% of programs offered all three



academic offerings, 93% of programs offered academic enrichment, 58% offered literacy education, and 85% offered STEM. **Objective 2.3** indicates 93% of programs offered a variety of activities in at least three non-academic areas. This demonstrates that while academic offerings could be more widespread, programs are effectively providing an array of enrichment activities.

Student perceptions under **Objective 2.4** are positive, with 89% of surveyed students reporting that program participation helps them do better in school. Because no external assessment data for 2023–2024 are available, insight on **Objective 2.5** related to high-quality instruction is limited. However, sites did internally assess their program offerings and rate their perceptions of quality with the majority (91%) of self ITS scores above 2.90. Community and school collaboration efforts under **Objective 2.6** appear to be progressing well. Seventy-four percent of programs exceeded the benchmark on staff ratings of community relationships, and 66% met the target for school partnerships.

**Objective 2.7** related to programs that provide parent education offerings is less than ten percent. While family engagement is taking place within programs as indicated by family survey responses, additional technical assistance and coaching by Transact and ADE staff on capturing parent education data in the Cayen system may be beneficial to broaden understanding of these services. Lastly, **Objective 2.8**, which addresses the quality of family engagement as reported by caregivers in programs indicates opportunities for growth to reach the target of 90%. While 79% of programs achieved the standard for a safe environment, a smaller percentage achieved the standard for supportive environment (52%), interactive environment (52%), and engaging environment (66%). These data suggest that although basic practices are used with families such as greeting and communication about students, more intentional efforts are needed to create environments for caregivers to be meaningfully involved.

<b>Objective 2.1 Programs will serve communities who can most benefit from enrichment programming.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of students who qualify for Free and/or Reduced Price Lunch	>=75%	83%
Indicator 2. Percent of students scoring below proficiency on the state assessment in math	>=75%	68%
Indicator 3. Percent of students scoring below proficiency on the state assessment in reading	>=75%	72%
Indicator 4. Percent of students with an attendance rate during the previous school year <90%	>=75%	13%

<b>Objective 2.2 Programs offer activities in core academic subjects, including literacy, math, and science.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs offering activities that fall into Academic Enrichment, Literacy, and STEM 21st CCLC activity groupings.	>=90%	77%
<b>Objective 2.3 Programs offer activities in a variety of enrichment areas that complement a student's academic experience.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs that offer activities in at least three 21st CCLC activity categories outside of core academics.	>=90%	93%
<b>Objective 2.4 Students agree that programs support their school success.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of surveyed students that agree things they learn in the program help them do better in school.	>=75%	89%
<b>Objective 2.5 Programs will offer high-quality youth programming that promotes high youth engagement.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of second and third year programs with Instructional Total Scores (ITS) above high-engagement threshold of 3.9 on external PQA assessments. No programs score below 2.9, low engagement threshold.	>=75%	N/A
<b>Objective 2.6 Programs will maintain strong partnerships with communities and schools.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs with scores >=2 on the staff survey scale of community relationships.	>=50%	74%
Indicator 2. Percent of programs with scores >=2 on the staff survey scale of school partnerships.	>=50%	66%
<b>Objective 2.7 Programs will host educational opportunities for students' families.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs offering Parent Education 21st CCLC activities.	>=90%	5%
<b>Objective 2.8 Caregivers will report high levels of family engagement to ensure better outcomes for students.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs with a Safe Environment score >=3	>=90%	79%
Indicator 2. Percent of programs with a Supportive Environment score >=3	>=90%	52%



Indicator 3. Percent of programs with an Interactive Environment score $\geq 3$	$\geq 90\%$	52%
Indicator 4. Percent of programs with an Engaging Environment score $\geq 3$	$\geq 90\%$	66%
<b>Goal 3: Maintain high levels of student engagement in 21st CCLC program offerings.</b>		
<p>The data related to this goal indicate strong performance in fostering and maintaining student engagement across Arkansas 21st CCLC programs. Under <b>Objective 3.1</b>, which emphasizes consistent participation, all programs (100%) met or exceeded the benchmark of students attending five or more hours per week during both the school year and summer. This suggests that programs are successfully providing accessible, regular opportunities for students and they are consistently participating, a key indicator of engagement and program relevance.</p> <p><b>Objective 3.2</b> focuses on student-reported excitement and enthusiasm for attending the program. Survey results show that 87% of students reported feeling excited to attend, surpassing the 75% target. This high level of self-reported engagement reflects positively on the quality and appeal of program offerings, suggesting that students find the environment and activities enjoyable.</p>		
<b>Objective 3.1 Programs will demonstrate high attendance rates amongst participating students.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs with an average number of attended hours per week greater than or equal to five during the school year.	$\geq 75\%$	100%
Indicator 2. Percent of programs with an average number of attended hours per week greater than or equal to five during the summer.	$\geq 75\%$	100%
<b>Objective 3.2 Students will report high engagement with the program offerings.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of students that report they are excited to attend the program.	$\geq 75\%$	87%

#### Goal 4: Improve academic outcomes for regularly attending participants.

The data for this goal demonstrate positive academic trends among regularly attending students in Arkansas 21st CCLC programs, with most indicators meeting or nearing their respective performance targets. Under **Objective 4.1**, which focuses on year-over-year academic improvement, the majority of students in grades 4–8 performed above the lowest proficiency level on state assessments. Specifically, 66% scored above Level 1 in math and 68% in English Language Arts (ELA), both exceeding the 50% target.

These results suggest that regular participation in the program may contribute to improved academic performance in core subjects. Another area of strength is student attendance. Among regularly attending students in grades 1–12 who had poor attendance in the prior school year ( $\leq 90\%$ ), 53% showed improvement in the current year, surpassing the 50% benchmark. This improvement indicates that program participation may be influencing better school-day attendance habits, which is often associated with improved academic outcomes. For students in grades 1–5, 90% were reported by teachers to have improved in engagement with learning, which exceeds the target. Finally, the small sample size for regularly attending high school students (grades 10–12) with low GPAs limits the ability to report on older students' academic improvement.

<b>Objective 4.1 Participants in the program will demonstrate academic improvements over the previous year.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percentage of regularly attending students in grades 4–8 who score above Level 1 for math state assessments.	$\geq 50\%$	66%
Indicator 2. Percentage of regularly attending students in grades 4–8 who score above Level 1 for ELA state assessments.	$\geq 50\%$	68%
Indicator 3. Percentage of regularly attending students in grades 10–12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer with a prior year unweighted GPA of less than 3.0 who demonstrated an improved GPA.	$\geq 50\%$	N/A
Indicator 4. Percentage of regularly attending 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.	$\geq 50\%$	53%
Indicator 5. Percentage of regularly students in grades 1–5 participating in 21st CCLC programming in the school year and summer who demonstrated an improvement in teacher-reported engagement in learning.	$\geq 75\%$	90%

While the summary table demonstrate how Arkansas 21st CCLC programs performed relative to predefined statewide objectives, the evaluation also applied statistical modeling to examine factors associated with student outcomes in greater depth. The following analyses explore the relationships between program participation, student characteristics, and academic achievement using multiple regression, generalized propensity score analysis (GPSA), and hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). These methods offer additional insight into the conditions under which progress toward statewide goals, particularly academic improvement, is most likely to occur.

## Advanced Analytic Findings: Participation, Dosage, and Student Outcomes

### Multiple Linear Regression

Multiple linear regression was used to assess the association between program attendance (dosage) and student academic outcomes while adjusting for demographics and school-day attendance. Total program hours were significantly associated with higher math scores ( $b = 0.0084$ ,  $p = .002$ ). No significant association between dosage and reading performance was found. Across both models, English Language Learner status, special needs designation, low school attendance, and economic disadvantage were significantly associated with lower academic outcomes. The sample size included 3,050 cases for reading and 3,052 for math.

### Generalized Propensity Score Analysis (GPSA)

Generalized propensity score analysis was conducted to estimate the causal effects of program dosage on academic achievement while accounting for selection bias across varying levels of student participation. In the reading model, program dosage was significantly associated with higher reading scores ( $b = 0.0202$ ,  $p = .002$ ). A statistically significant interaction with the GPS term ( $b = -10.57$ ,  $p < .001$ ) indicated diminishing returns at higher predicted probabilities of attendance. In the math model, the association between dosage and outcomes was positive but did not reach statistical significance ( $b = 0.0137$ ,  $p = .067$ ). The sample size included 3,050 cases for reading and 3,052 for math.

### Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM)

Hierarchical linear models were used to account for the nested structure of the data, students nested within program sites and to examine whether self-assessed site-level program quality predicted student academic outcomes. Similar to prior analyses, the sample size included 3,050 cases for reading and 3,052 for math. In the reading model,

program dosage and site level quality (measured by the Program Quality Assessment Instructional Total Score ITS) were not significantly associated with student academic performance. However, individual-level predictors such as English Language Learner status, special needs identification, and attendance below 90% remained statistically significant. In the math model, total program hours continued to be a significant predictor of academic performance ( $b = 0.011, p = .001$ ), although site level quality was again not significantly related to outcomes ( $p = .848$ ). The intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC) indicated that 4.8% of the variance in reading scores and 9.2% of the variance in math scores was attributable to differences between sites.

### Limitations

This evaluation provides valuable insights into Arkansas's 21st CCLC programs, though several limitations should be noted. The analyses relied on quasi-experimental methods rather than random assignment and focused primarily on Grades 4–8 in alignment with federal reporting requirements. Incomplete data and small sample sizes for some student groups—particularly high school students—limited certain analyses. Additionally, variations in local program implementation may affect the generalizability of findings. These limitations highlight areas for ongoing data improvement and future evaluation focus.

### Summary and Recommendations

Findings show strong progress in many areas, including program self-assessment practices, leadership development, student engagement, and participation consistency. Math outcomes were significantly associated with greater participation in programming, and positive trends were observed in reading under the GPSA model. While site-level program quality scores did not significantly predict academic performance, student-level factors such as English Learner status, economic disadvantage, and prior chronic absenteeism remained consistently associated with outcomes across all models.

Drawing from both statewide performance data and analytic modeling results, the following recommendations are offered to inform future planning, technical assistance, and strategic investment:



### **Prioritize Support for Underserved Students and Regions**

Students eligible for free/reduced lunch, with special needs, or with low prior attendance showed lower academic outcomes and should remain a central focus for targeted supports. Geographic gaps in 21st CCLC access—particularly in parts of southwestern Arkansas—also warrant attention through expanded funding and local partnerships.

### **Enhance Math-Focused Academic Enrichment**

Higher program dosage was linked to stronger math performance, indicating the value of increasing access to sustained, math-focused learning opportunities.

### **Strengthen Staff Training Participation**

While leadership participation in professional development was strong, frontline staff engagement in quality training was limited. Incentivizing staff training can help elevate program quality across sites.

### **Increase Engagement of Chronically Absent Students**

Most participants had relatively strong school-day attendance, highlighting an opportunity to better engage students with chronic absenteeism who could benefit most from afterschool support.

### **Implement Data Collection Best Practices Statewide**

Incomplete or inconsistent data—especially on program offerings—limited the evaluation’s scope. Strengthening network-wide data practices will enhance future assessment and accountability.





## Program Background– Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

The Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) program was first established by federal legislation in 1994 through reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) by the Improving America's Schools Act. In 2002, the program was expanded through the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and then reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. For over two decades, states across the country have been responsible for the distribution of federal funds to support afterschool and summer programs in high need areas and low-achieving schools.

Programs awarded grants are charged with several main goals that are designed to:

1. Provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including tutoring services to help students meet state academic standards.
2. Offer students a broad array of additional services, programs and activities designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program.
3. Afford families of participating students' opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

In accordance with the federal Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), each State Education Agency (SEA) must report on specific indicators designed to measure the effectiveness and quality of each funded program. This data is reported using the 21APR online portal monitored by the U.S. Department of Education. Additionally, SEAs must conduct comprehensive annual evaluations of their 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs that are made available for public consumption.

For the 2023–2024 program year, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) distributed 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding to 48 unique grantees (e.g., school districts, community-based organizations) who were responsible for the grant management of 71 unique sites (e.g., elementary school program, local clubhouse). Through these programs, 11,623 young people were served. ADE provides guidance, supportive resources, and technical assistance throughout the year to support high-quality programming across the state and ensure compliance with federal requirements.





## Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and Weikart Center– Overview

In 2008, the Arkansas Governor's Task Force on Best Practices for Afterschool and Summer Programs released a final report that emphasized the importance of high-quality out-of-school time activities that support academic achievement, ensure safety, and offer developmentally engaging experiences for young people across the state.<sup>1</sup> Recommendations from this report included improving and evaluating program quality, increasing access to programs, enhancing staff training, and securing sustainable funding to better serve Arkansas children and families through expanded learning opportunities.

In alignment with these recommendations, ADE's Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has provided 21st CCLC grant awards to out-of-school time programs focused on providing high-quality experiences for young people in the state for nearly 20 years. These programs are designed to offer a wide array of enrichment activities that are consistent with both Arkansas and local academic standards. Moreover, ADE has partnered with the Forum for Youth Investment's Weikart Center since 2010 to design, implement, and evaluate a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), system, an ongoing process of assessment and reflection to improve practice. Through this work, the Weikart Center has provided ADE with data insights through reports on program strengths, areas of growth, and fidelity to the program improvement model.

## Continuous Quality Improvement Systems and Out-of-School Time Programs

According to research, CQI systems are instrumental in creating standards and processes that promote consistency and quality across varied activities, programs, and sites in out-of-school time environments.<sup>2</sup> These systems establish uniformity by facilitating structured assessments, targeted improvements, and ongoing staff development. Furthermore, the alignment of staff training with CQI processes improves program stability and quality across sites.<sup>3</sup> By using real-time data to drive decisions, CQI systems foster a responsive, iterative approach to improvement that enhances both organizational performance and youth outcomes—particularly in areas such as engagement, skill-building, and academic achievement.

<sup>1</sup> Beebe, M. (2008). Enriching Arkansas children's lives through high-quality out-of-school activities. Little Rock, AR: Final report of the Governor's Task Force on Best Practices for After-school and Summer Programs.

<sup>2</sup> Yohalem, N., & Wilson-Ahlstrom, A. with Fischer, S. & Shinn, M. (2009). Measuring youth program quality: A guide to assessment tools.

<sup>3</sup> Berry, T., Sloper, M., Pickar, H., & Talbot, H. (2016). Aligning professional development to continuous quality improvement: A case study of Los Angeles Unified School District's Beyond the Bell Branch. *IJREE—International Journal for Research on Extended Education*, 4(1), 13–14.

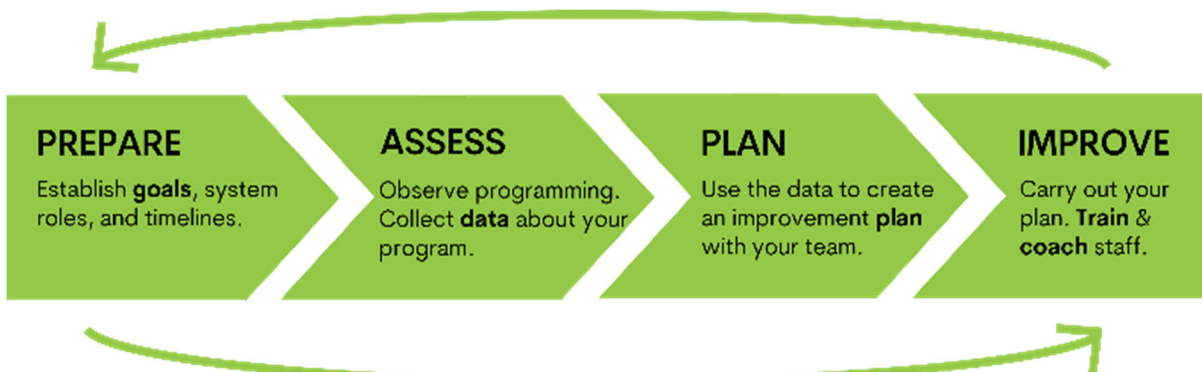


## Youth Program Quality Improvement Approach

The Youth Program Quality Improvement (YPQI) approach (**Figure 1**), is a research validated CQI model designed to improve the quality of youth experiences in out-of-school time programs. The YPQI is built on the principle that intentional improvement of organizational and staff practices leads to stronger youth outcomes. YPQI provides a structured roadmap for improvement by guiding programs through four key phases:

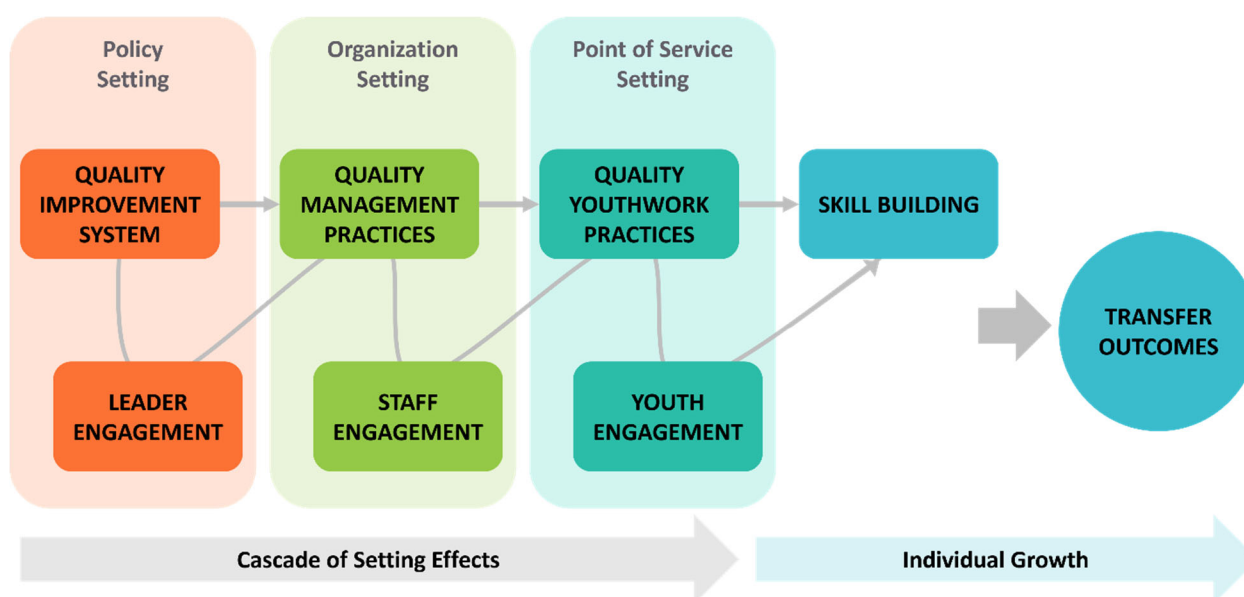
- **Prepare** – Programs begin by establishing clear goals, defining system roles, and setting timelines for implementation. This phase ensures that teams are aligned and ready to engage in intentional quality improvement work.
- **Assess** – Site teams observe programming and collect data on staff practices and youth experiences using validated tools such as the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) and stakeholder surveys. This data provides an objective foundation for understanding current program quality.
- **Plan** – Using the collected data, site teams identify strengths and areas for growth. They then develop targeted improvement plans that outline actionable strategies, timelines, and resource needs.
- **Improve** – Teams carry out their plans through training, coaching, and practice refinement, with support from technical assistance providers and the broader CQI system. This phase emphasizes skill-building and the application of high-quality practices to strengthen youth experiences.

**Figure 1. Youth Program Quality Improvement Approach**



YPQI's theory of change is further illustrated by a cascade of setting effects (**Figure 2**), a model grounded in organizational and educational research on how systems influence youth outcomes. This framework underscores that high-quality programming for youth is not isolated to the classroom or activity space, but the result of aligned actions across multiple levels of the system.

**Figure 2: Cascade of Setting Effects**



At the policy setting, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) provides the infrastructure for quality improvement by establishing expectations, delivering resources, and coordinating training and technical assistance. This quality improvement system fosters leader engagement, ensuring that grantee and site leaders are empowered to model best practices, communicate clear goals, and support implementation.

These system level inputs flow into the organization setting, where grantee directors and site leaders enact quality management practices, such as supervising staff, allocating resources, and setting professional learning priorities. When these practices are consistent and supportive, they promote staff engagement, which is essential for sustaining high-quality programming.

At the point of service setting, frontline staff apply quality youthwork practices that foster supportive relationships, interactive learning, and engaging environments. These practices directly influence youth engagement, which is critical for keeping students involved, motivated, and open to new learning experiences.

When youth are consistently engaged in high-quality programming, they have more opportunities for skill building which includes academic, leadership, and life skills that serve as precursors to the transfer of positive developmental and academic outcomes.

### Evaluation Design

The evaluation team worked closely with ADE to review and refine the statewide 21st CCLC goals, objectives, and performance indicators in the fall of 2024. This collaborative process ensured that the evaluation framework aligned with current state and federal priorities and remained responsive to the evolving needs of Arkansas students, families, and grantees.

The resulting statewide evaluation employs a goal-focused, quasi-experimental design that examines statewide progress toward four strategic goals established by ADE:

1. Strengthening organizational capacity among grantees to support high-quality program delivery;
2. Delivering high-quality programming aligned with 21st CCLC principles, including academic enrichment, youth development, and family engagement;
3. Maintaining high levels of student engagement in program offerings; and
4. Improving academic outcomes for regularly attending participants.

Each evaluation question (EQ) is directly aligned to one of these statewide goals, forming a coherent framework for assessing program effectiveness:

1. To what extent do Arkansas 21st CCLC grantees demonstrate the organizational capacity to deliver high-quality programming?  
(Goal 1: Organizational Capacity)
2. During the 2023–2024 program year, did grantees implement consistent, high-quality programming aligned with 21st CCLC principles?  
(Goal 2: Program Quality)
3. Were grantees successful in maintaining high levels of student engagement in academic, enrichment, and youth development offerings?  
(Goal 3: Student Engagement)



4. Did regularly attending students demonstrate improvement in academic outcomes?  
(Goal 4: Academic Outcomes)

The evaluation draws on a range of data sources to assess both implementation fidelity and participant outcomes:

- Program Quality Assessment (PQA) data collected through structured site-level observations;
- Leading Indicators Surveys completed by grantee directors, site staff, students, and families;
- AS21 (Cayen) data on program attendance, participation, staffing, and activities;
- School attendance and participation reflecting student dosage and consistency; and
- Academic achievement data, particularly in reading and math for Grades 4–8.

Academic achievement data were drawn from the Arkansas Teaching, Learning & Assessment System (ATLAS), which became the statewide assessment system in spring 2024. ATLAS summative assessments in reading and math are administered in Grades 3–10; however, for this evaluation, advanced analyses focused on Grades 4–8 to align with U.S. Department of Education GPRA reporting requirements and to ensure consistency across academic outcome measures. This grade band also represents the largest proportion of students with complete program participation and outcome data, making it the most analytically viable subset for examining program impact.

To assess the impact of program participation and dosage on academic and engagement outcomes, the evaluation applies a range of advanced statistical methods including:

- Multiple regression models to examine relationships between participation levels and outcomes;
- Generalized propensity score analysis (GPSA) to estimate dosage effects while controlling for baseline differences among students;
- Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) to account for the nested structure of the data (students within sites) and to assess how site-level factors, such as program quality, affect individual outcomes.



All findings are interpreted within the context of Arkansas's statewide performance goals and objectives, providing actionable insights to inform decision-making, resource allocation, and continuous quality improvement efforts across the 21st CCLC network.

The full set of Arkansas's 2023–2024 21st CCLC statewide goals, objectives, and their alignment with evaluation questions are presented in **Table 2**.

**Table 2: ADE Statewide Goals & Objectives**

<b>Goal 1: Organizational Capacity</b>	
EQ1: To what extent do Arkansas 21st CCLC grantees demonstrate the organizational capacity to deliver high-quality programming?	
<b>Objective 1.1 Programs will assess program quality on an ongoing basis to support program improvement.</b>	
<b>Objective 1.2 Programs will use data to set actionable goals that support program quality.</b>	
<b>Objective 1.3 Programs will participate in professional development opportunities that promote evidence-based instructional practices.</b>	
<b>Objective 1.4 Program staff will receive performance feedback from their managers.</b>	
<b>Objective 1.5 Program directors are supported to lead high-quality programs for youth.</b>	
<b>Objective 1.6 Program directors demonstrate high-quality management practices that support staff retention.</b>	
<b>Objective 1.7 Staff demonstrate interest in their work as a youth-serving professional.</b>	
<b>Goal 2: Program Quality</b>	
EQ2: During the 2023–2024 program year, did grantees implement consistent, high-quality programming aligned with 21st CCLC principles?	
<b>Objective 2.1 Programs will serve communities who can most benefit from enrichment programming.</b>	
<b>Objective 2.2 Programs offer activities in core academic subjects, including literacy, math, and science.</b>	
<b>Objective 2.3 Programs offer activities in a variety of enrichment areas that complement a student's academic experience.</b>	

**Objective 2.4 Students agree that programs support their school success.**

**Objective 2.5 Programs will offer high-quality youth programming that promotes high youth engagement.**

**Objective 2.6 Programs will maintain strong partnerships with communities and schools.**

**Objective 2.7 Programs will host educational opportunities for students' families.**

**Objective 2.8 Caregivers will report high levels of family engagement to ensure better outcomes for students.**

### **Goal 3: Student Engagement**

EQ3: Were grantees successful in maintaining high levels of student engagement in academic, enrichment, and youth development offerings?

**Objective 3.1 Programs will demonstrate high attendance rates amongst participating students.**

**Objective 3.2 Students will report high engagement with the program offerings.**

### **Goal 4: Academic Outcomes**

EQ4: Did regularly attending students demonstrate improvement in academic outcomes?

**Objective 4.1 Participants in the program will demonstrate academic improvements over the previous year.**



## Performance Measures and Assessment Tools

To assess progress toward statewide goals and objectives, the evaluation relied on multiple validated instruments and reporting systems. Each tool was selected for its alignment with key performance indicators related to program quality, implementation, engagement, and outcomes.

### Program Quality Assessment

The PQA is a validated, observation-based instrument designed to evaluate the quality of K-12 youth programs and identify staff training needs. PQA data spans four domains of program quality: Safe Supportive, Interactive, and Engaging Environments (**Figure 3**). Arkansas 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs used both the School-Age PQA and the Youth PQA to collect site performance data in the fall.

**Figure 3. Pyramid of Program Quality**



**Youth PQA (YPQA)** includes 63 items comprising 18 scales and is appropriate for observing programs that serve youth in 4<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

**School-Age PQA** includes 70 items comprising 19 scales. The School-Age PQA is appropriate for observing programs that serve youth in Kindergarten – 6<sup>th</sup> grades.

To collect self-assessment data, an internal team was selected at each site to observe staff practices using the PQA. After observations, teams have a scoring meeting to discuss their notes and come to a consensus on the score for each item on the tool. Each item is scored using a 1-3-5 measurement scale, where 1 generally represents the absence of a practice or the presence of a poor practice, 3 represents the informal presence of the practice or availability of the practice to only some youth, and 5 represents intentional delivery of the highest quality practices. Final scores are entered into Scores Reporter, a Weikart Center online data collection platform.

### Annual Performance Measures

The online federal data collection system (21APR) was designed to collect required site operations data across seven key program areas including: centers, activities, attendance, staffing, families, participation, and outcomes, aligned with the GPRA Indicators. The Weikart Center collected data

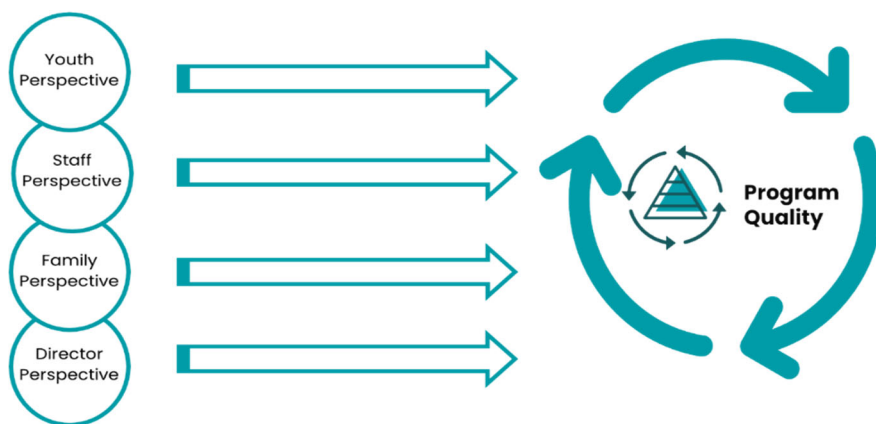


at three timepoints throughout the program year (summer, fall, and spring) for input into the online 21APR platform in accordance with federally mandated deadlines. To complete data collection tied to activities, staffing and family engagement, grantees submitted tracking forms to the Weikart Center. Program attendance and outcomes monitoring were completed using Arkansas' AS21 website, which utilizes Cayen program management software.

### **Leading Indicators Surveys**

Grantee directors/site coordinators, afterschool teachers/youth workers, students, and families were invited to complete surveys to provide feedback on their experiences during the 2023-2024 program year. These surveys were designed to gather input across four key stakeholder groups and provide a holistic view of program implementation and impact (see **Figure 4**).

**Figure 4. Stakeholder Perspectives Informing Program Quality**



The surveys informed our understanding of five core domains: Organizational Context, Instructional Context, External Relationships, Youth Skills, and Family Satisfaction. The results of these surveys contribute directly to site-level continuous improvement efforts by offering actionable feedback from those most directly involved in program delivery and participation. When analyzed across sites, they also provide system-level insights to inform training, technical assistance, and statewide planning. Online surveys were administered via Survey Monkey, and The Weikart Center provided weekly completion audits to grantees to monitor response rates and support full participation. **Table 3** provides an overview of each survey's intended audience and number of items.

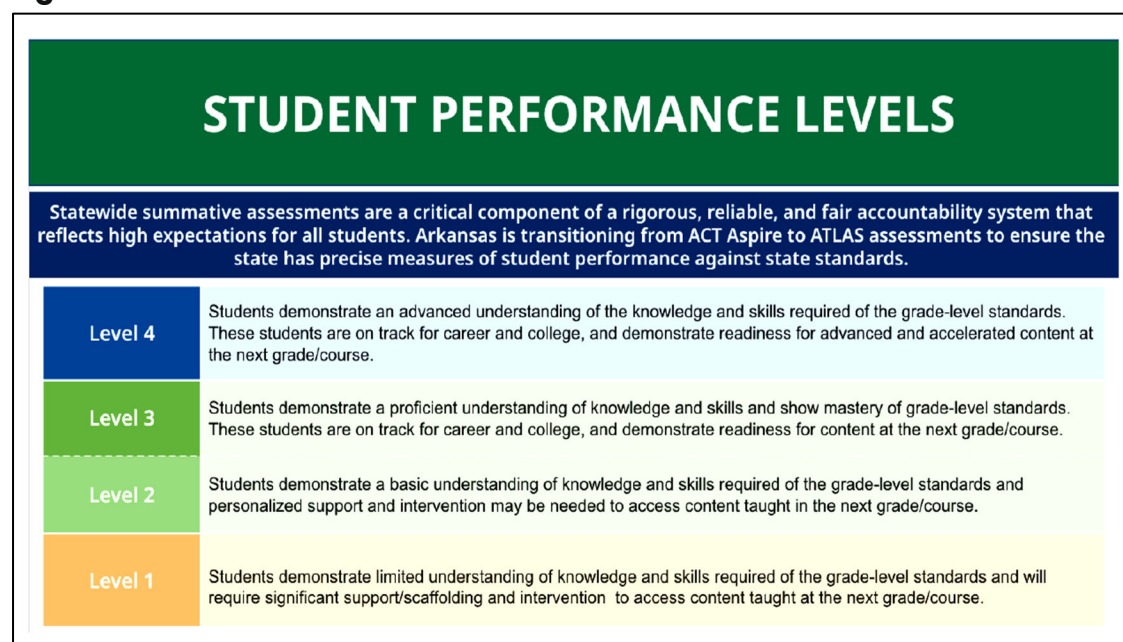
**Table 3. 2023–2024 Leading Indicator Surveys**

Survey	Intended Audience	Length
Grantee Director/Site Coordinator	Individual(s) responsible for site operations.	108 items
Afterschool Teacher/ Youth Worker	Staff responsible for providing direct programming	120 items
Family	All parents/guardians of students attending the afterschool programs	34 items
Youth	Youth in grades 4 through 12*	41 items

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

### Academic Proficiency Measures

In the spring of 2024, the Arkansas Teaching, Learning & Assessment System (ATLAS) became the statewide assessment system. Through this system, a range of assessments are used to measure student progress against state standards. Summative assessments are used for English/Language Arts (Grades 3–10) and Math (Grades 3–8). Student performance levels range from Level 1 to Level 4. Level 1 represents a demonstration of limited knowledge aligned with grade-level standards, Level 2 is a basic demonstration of knowledge and skills required of the grade-level standards, Level 3 is a demonstration of proficient understanding of knowledge and skills and mastery of grade-level standards, and Level 4 represents an advanced understanding of knowledge and skills required of the grade-level standards (see **Figure 5**).

**Figure 5. ATLAS Student Performance Levels**

## 2023–2024 Activities: Overview

The 2023–2024 program year began with an orientation in June for new grantees followed by the Summer Institute with both new and returning grantees that established expectations and timelines for the year and provided the opportunity to reflect on and celebrate successes from the previous year (**Table 4**). In August, grantees participated in a Leading with Data workshop that focused on the importance of quality in programming and learned about the role of local evaluation in supporting the achievement of their grant goals. In October, new staff participated in PQA Basics while returning staff completed Beyond PQA Basics. From September through November, all sites were expected to complete a self-assessment using the Youth or School-Age PQA to collect objective data about staff–youth interactions within programs at each site. In January 2024, grantees and sites participated in a Planning with Data workshop to review their program strengths and growth opportunities and subsequently submit a Program Improvement Plan– Comprehensive Goal Forms detailing objectives, timelines, necessary resources, and staffing supports to achieve desired improvements.

To support these goals, grantee directors and staff had access to ongoing training opportunities throughout the year to improve targeted instructional skills. Additionally, all staff also had access to online self-paced Youth Work Methods throughout the year to support identified program improvements. Supplemented by ongoing technical assistance and embedded coaching supports provided by ADE, these opportunities were made available to all participating programs to reinforce continuous improvement practices.

**Table 4. 2023–2024 ADE 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Project Timeline**

Activity	Timeline	Aligned Data Collection
Afterschool Programming	June 2023– May 2024	
New Grantee Training (Orientation)	June 12–13, 2023	
Summer Institute	June 14–15, 2023	
Ongoing TA and Coaching	June 2023– May 2024	
Annual Performance Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer: June – August 2023</li> <li>Fall: September – December 2023</li> <li>Spring: January – May 2024</li> </ul>	Attendance Staffing Academic, Enrichment & Family Activities
Program Quality Assessments	September – November 2024	SAPQA and YPQA (self)
Professional Development Leading with Data PQA Basics/Beyond Basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August 30–31, 2023</li> <li>October 11–12, 2023</li> </ul>	

Scores Reporter Demo Planning with Data Youth Work Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• November 1, 2023</li> <li>• January 16–17, 2024</li> <li>• Online self-paced courses available all year</li> </ul>	
Leading Indicator Surveys	February 19 – April 5, 2024 *Training webinar February 21, 2024	Grantee Director/Site Coordinator Afterschool Teacher/Youth Worker Student Family

### Evaluation Sample

Each year, all participating sites are expected to submit the required data for each term they were approved to operate. These submissions include annual performance data on program activities, attendance, and academic outcomes reported to the U.S. Department of Education in addition to PQA and stakeholder surveys. During the 2023–2024 program year, ADE awarded grants to 48 grantees, who operated 71 program sites, and served more than 11,000 students. As shown in **Table 5**, the Arkansas 21st CCLC network has steadily grown in reach and stability following pandemic-related disruptions.

**Table 5. Participation by Calendar Year, 2019–2024**

	2019–2020	2020–2021	2021–2022	2022–2023	2023–2024
Grantees	49	43	26	46	48
Sites	75	68	59	67	71
<b>PQA</b>					
External	N/A	40% of sites	27% of sites	31% of sites	N/A***
Self	100% of sites	100% of sites	99% of sites	99% of sites	100% of sites
<b>Surveys</b>					
Grantee Director/Site Coordinator	132 (96% of sites)	110 (86% of sites)	120 (100% of sites)	144 (99% of sites)	133 (93% of grantees) **
Staff	657 (96% of sites)	473 (94% of sites)	591 (100% of sites)	727 (100% of sites)	705 (96% of sites)
Student	945 (36% of sites)	1,496 (92% of sites)	2,587 (99% of sites)	2,718 (100% of sites)	3,018 (93% of sites)
Family	545 (33% of sites)	550 (71% of sites)	1,006 (97% of sites)	1,287 (100% of sites)	1,497 (96% of sites)
<b>Program Attendance and Academic Measures</b>					

Program Attendance (fall + spring)	13,245 students (97% of sites)	7,548 students (100% of sites)	9,660 students (99% of sites)	11,164 students (100% of sites)	11,623 students (100% of sites)
ELA Test Scores	N/A*	N/A*	6,401 students (99% of sites)	6,646 students (100% of sites)	6,493 students (95% of sites)
Math Test Scores	N/A*	N/A*	6,401 students (99% of sites)	6,652 students (100% of sites)	6,452 students (95% of sites)

\*State testing was disrupted in 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

\*\*Grantee Director/Site Coordinator surveys only available at the grantee level in 2023–2024.

\*\*\*External PQA data not available due to issues with completeness.

From 2020–2021 to 2023–2024, the number of grantees increased from 43 to 48, and the number of participating students rose by over 4,000—reaching 11,623 in the most recent year. Self-assessment data were submitted by 100% of sites, reflecting strong implementation of the state’s continuous quality improvement process. Stakeholder survey response rates also remained high across most audiences, particularly among students and families. While state academic assessment data were unavailable in 2019–2021 due to testing disruptions, recent years have shown robust academic reporting. External program quality data were not available for analysis in 2023–2024 due to issues with submission completeness (see Limitations).

### Program Demographics, Geographic Access, and Workforce Characteristics

To better understand the scope and implementation capacity of Arkansas’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs, this section presents data on student demographics, geographic distribution of program sites, and characteristics of the out-of-school time workforce. These contextual data support the evaluation of statewide progress on key goals: reaching high-need student populations in alignment with federal priorities (Goal 2: High-Quality Programming), ensuring programs are staffed by qualified and supported professionals (Goal 1: Organizational Capacity), and examining the conditions that may influence student engagement and retention (Goal 3: Student Engagement).

#### Student Demographics

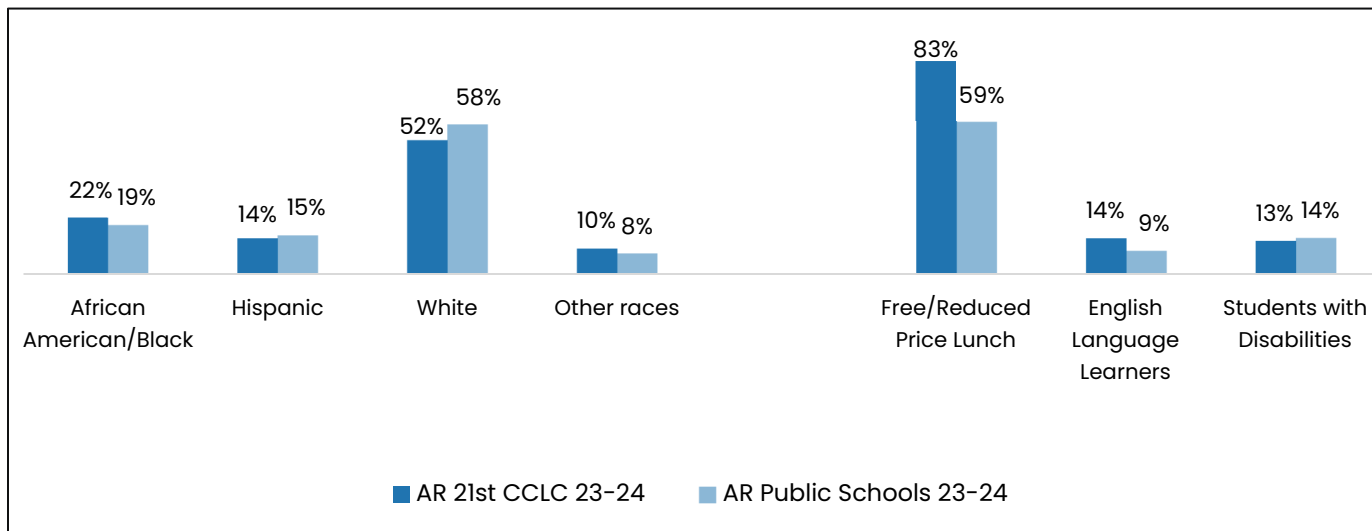
In alignment with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC federal requirements, programs continued to serve the most vulnerable students each year. For example, 83% of students served received a free and/or reduced-price lunch as compared to 59% across the state; 13% required English Language



Learning supports as compared to 9%; similar rates of students served in these programs have reported disabilities (13%) as those across the state (14%)<sup>4</sup>.

Participating program students were identified as African American/Black (22%), Hispanic (14%), White (52%), and other races (10%) (**Figure 6**).

**Figure 6. AR 21st CCLC Student Characteristics Compared to AR Public Schools, 2023–2024**

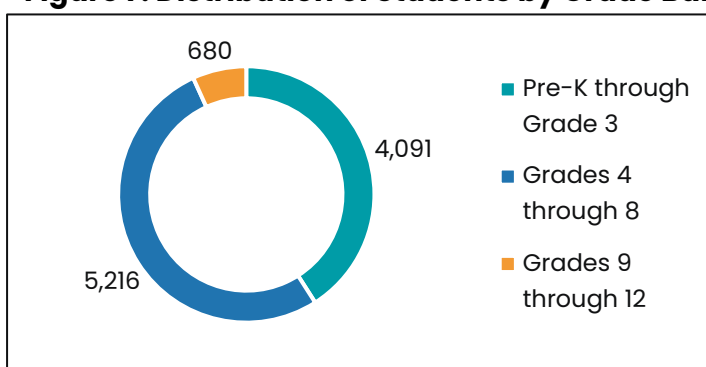


To better understand grade level participation across Arkansas 21st CCLC programs, **Table 6** and **Figure 7** display student enrollment by grade band for the 2023–2024 program year. Among the 11,623 students served, grade-level data were available for 9,987 students (86%). Of those, nearly 45% were in Grades 4 through 8, which aligns with the program’s emphasis on supporting upper elementary and middle school students. Approximately 35% were in Pre-K through Grade 3, while just under 6% of students were in high school (Grades 9–12). The remaining 14% of student records did not include grade level information and are excluded from this breakdown.

**Table 6. Students Served by Grade Band**

Grade Band	Students Served	Percent of Total
Pre-K through Grade 3	4,091	35.2
Grades 4 through 8	5,216	44.9
Grades 9 through 12	680	5.9

**Figure 7. Distribution of Students by Grade Band**



<sup>4</sup> University of Arkansas, Office of Education Policy. <https://oep.uark.edu/2023-2024-demographic-data/>

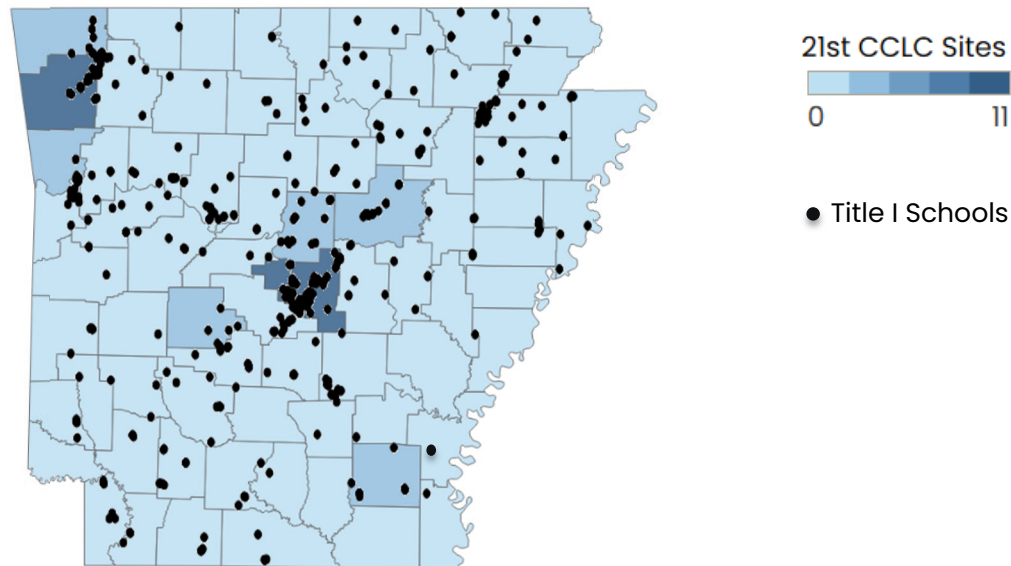


The distribution of students by grade band provides important context for interpreting evaluation findings. The fact that nearly half of all students with valid grade-level data were in Grades 4–8 supports the decision to focus advanced analyses, including academic outcome comparisons, generalized propensity score modeling, and hierarchical linear modeling—on this group. These grades are also prioritized by the U.S. Department of Education for reporting under GPRA academic measures. While early and high school grades remain part of the broader 21st CCLC program, Grades 4–8 represent the largest and most analytically viable subgroup for outcome analysis.

### Geographic Access

To explore access to programs in high-need areas, **Figure 8** displays the distribution of 21st CCLC sites by county, overlaid with Title I school locations. Counties are shaded by the number of funded sites, with the highest concentrations in Washington (11), Pulaski (10), Garland (4), and Drew (4).

**Figure 8: Distribution of AR 21st CCLC Programs by County, 2023–2024**



The map reveals that many programs are situated in areas with dense clusters of Title I schools, indicating strong alignment between program placement and school-identified need.

However, some counties in the Southwest region of the state, including Sevier, Miller, and Columbia—have clusters of Title I schools with limited or no 21st CCLC coverage. These patterns

suggest potential geographic gaps in afterschool access and may inform future expansion efforts.

### Workforce Characteristics

While the map highlights geographic distribution of programs relative to school need, understanding staff demographic characteristics provides further insight on the composition of 21st CCLC programs in Arkansas. Approximately three of four staff members identified as female (78%), and staff had varied educational attainment including some college (18%), an associate's (5%) a bachelor's (17%) a master's (35%) degree, or other training (9%) in 2024 (**Table 7**). Directors and staff identified as African American/Black (18%), Hispanic/Latino (4%), other races (1%), and White (68%)– see **Table 7**.

**Table 7. Staff Demographic Characteristics, 2023–2024**

Staff Demographics		
Education Level	Some college	18%
	Associate's	5%
	Bachelor's	17%
	Master's	35%
	Other	9%
Race/Ethnicity	African American/Black	18%
	Hispanic or Latino	4%
	Other races	1%
	White	68%
Gender	Female	78%
	Male	13%

Compared to national out-of-school time workforce trends, Arkansas 21st CCLC staff report higher levels of formal education and certification with over half of staff (55%) report having a teacher certification and/or credentials. Despite strong qualifications, retention remains a challenge with 35% of 21st CCLC staff indicating plans to stay in the field for only a few more years. This parallels national OST workforce challenges and statewide teacher turnover concerns, particularly in limited resourced counties where program access is limited.<sup>5,6</sup> Continuing to address both staff

<sup>5</sup> Moroney, D.A., Brown, M.E.M., Diffenderffer, A.E., Vasudevan, D.S., Richter, J.Y., Carrol, R., Syvertsen, A.K., & Tasayco Prado, G.N. (2025). The Power of Us: The Youth Fields Workforce. Findings From the National Power of Us Workforce Survey. Washington, DC.: American Institutes for Research.

<sup>6</sup> Camp, A. (2024). Arkansas Teacher Retention Entering the 2023–24 School Year. Research Brief. University of Arkansas. [https://edre.uark.edu/\\_resources/pdf/rb2023-03\\_teacher\\_turnover\\_brief\\_Dec14\\_2023\\_Final.pdf](https://edre.uark.edu/_resources/pdf/rb2023-03_teacher_turnover_brief_Dec14_2023_Final.pdf)



retention and program expansion will be essential for tenable, high-quality services across the state.

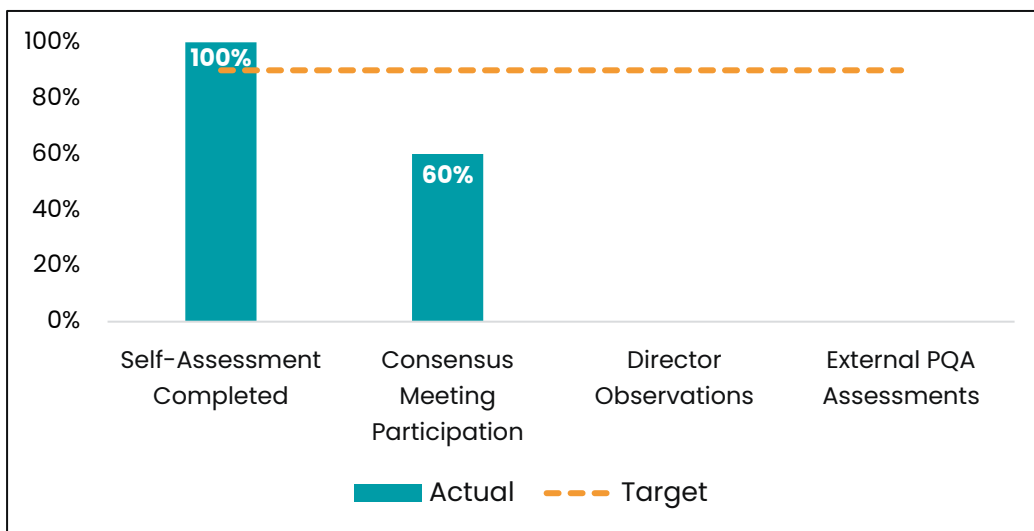
### Findings by Statewide Goals and Objectives

The demographic, geographic, and staffing characteristics presented above offer essential context for interpreting the effectiveness of Arkansas's 21st CCLC programs. Building on this foundation, the following section presents evaluation results organized by the four statewide goals- focusing on organizational capacity, program quality, student engagement, and academic outcomes for regularly attending participants.

***EQ1: To what degree do AR 21st CCLC grantees have the organizational capacity to deliver high-quality programming?***

**Objective 1.1** indicators, with a focus on assessing program quality, reveal 100% of programs completed self-assessments with the PQA and 60% of programs had staff engage in consensus meetings to score practices. However, data were not available for two indicators focused on director observations of offerings and programs that were assessed by external assessors (see **Figure 9**).

**Figure 9. Objective 1.1- Program Quality Assessment**

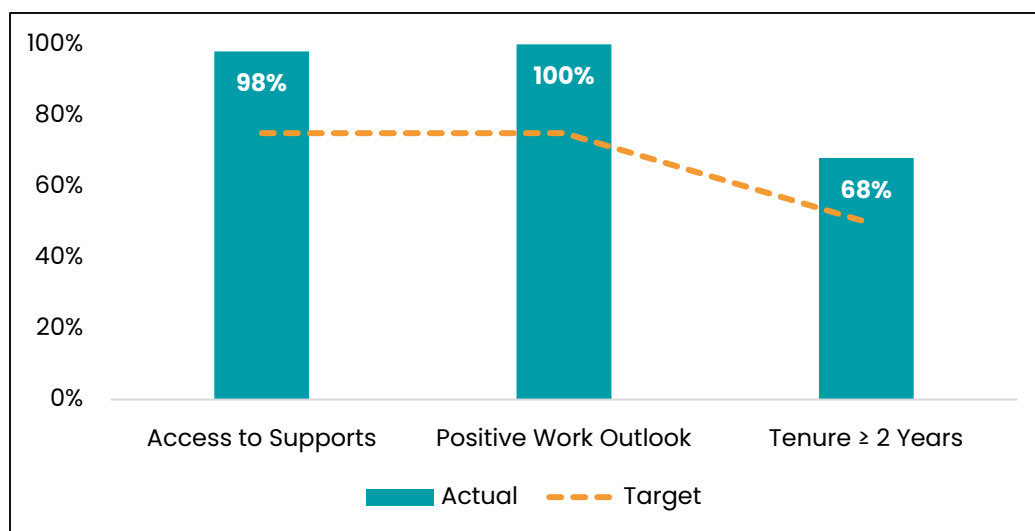


All programs, (100%) participated in completing Program Improvement Plans (Comprehensive Goals) outlined in **Objective 1.2** which is a core component of the CQI process. **Objective 1.3**, with an emphasis on professional development, shows high engagement at the leadership level with 100% of programs with directors that attended Planning with Data. Conversely, only 46% of programs had staff that participated in at least one Youth Work Methods training. This difference

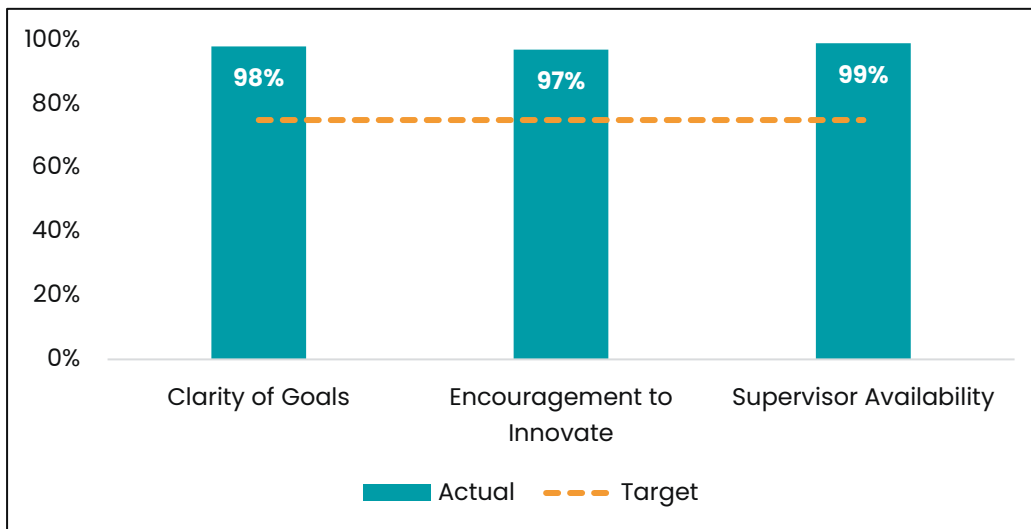
is likely due to training attendance requirements (mandatory versus optional), online versus in-person, etc. However, this does suggest a gap between the engagement in professional learning opportunities for staff versus directors. Data were not available for coaching visits since the implementation of quality coaches began after the 2023–2024 program year.

**Objective 1.4** data indicate promising results with 98% of staff in agreement they receive feedback and support from supervisors. With a focus on the support of program directors, **Objective 1.5** indicates nearly all directors (98%) report having access to supports to succeed, which is above the target. Additionally, all directors (100%) expressed enthusiasm about their work and 68% have worked at their program for at least two years. This suggests high morale amongst directors and stability in leadership (see **Figure 10**).

**Figure 10. Objective 1.5– Director Support & Tenure**



**Objective 1.6** indicators highlight management practices that promote staff retention. The majority of staff reported positive perceptions of their supervisors and felt encouraged to participate, agreed priorities and goals are clearly communicated, and their supervisor is regularly available. This demonstrates consistent and effective leadership practices that contribute to a positive workplace culture and staff satisfaction (see **Figure 11**).

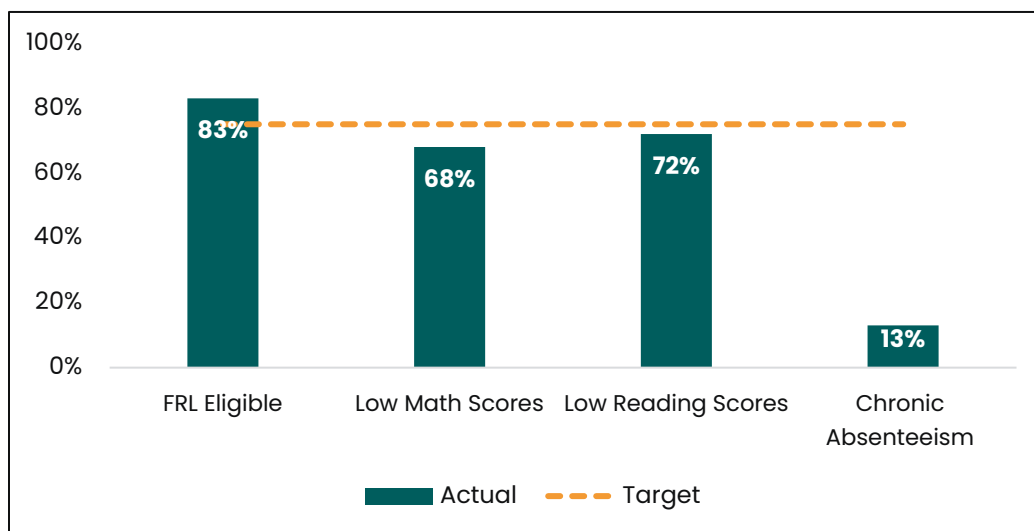
**Figure 11. Objective 1.6- High-Quality Management**

**Objective 1.7** data suggest efforts to improve long-term retention are needed with only 54% of staff reporting they have been with the program at least two years.

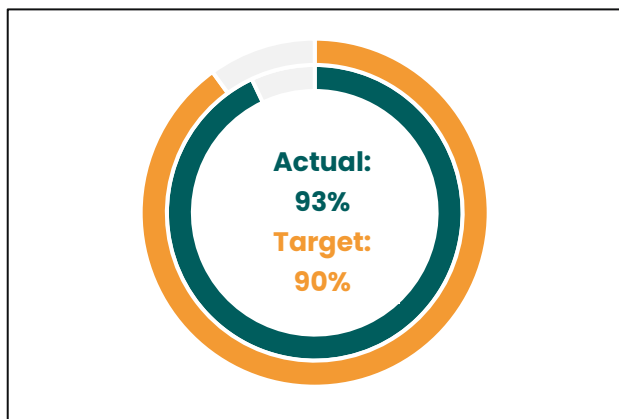
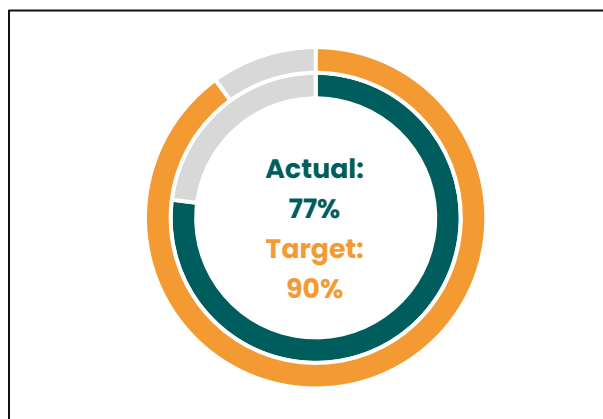
Overall progress towards capacity building with 21st CCLC grantees for program delivery in sites is reflected in many of the indicators identified. The data reveal strengths in self-assessment, leadership development, and supervisory support with areas for growth in staff training participation and retention.

**EQ2: In the 2023–2024 program year, did AR 21st CCLC programs consistently deliver high-quality programming aligned to 21st CCLC principles?**

Under **Objective 2.1**, programs are generally reaching the high need students who would benefit most from enrichment services. A majority of participants (83%) qualify for free and/or reduced price lunch, exceeding the 75% or greater target. Furthermore, a high percentage of students fall below proficiency in reading (72%) and math (68%), which is near the target threshold. However, only 13% of students had low prior school-year attendance (<90%), which suggest the programs may not be fully targeting or enrolling chronically absent students (see **Figure 12**).

**Figure 12. Objective 2.1- Indicators of Student Need**

**Objective 2.2** shows that 77% of programs in 2023–2024 offered academic enrichment, literacy, and STEM activities– which is lower than the 90% target (**Figure 13**). While only 77% of programs offered all three academic offerings, 93% of programs offered academic enrichment, 58% offered literacy education, and 85% offered STEM. **Objective 2.3** indicates 93% of programs offered a variety of activities in at least three non-academic areas (**Figure 14**). This demonstrates that while academic offerings could be more widespread, programs are effectively providing an array of enrichment activities.

**Figure 13. Objective 2.2- Academic Offerings\*** **Figure 14. Objective 2.3- Enrichment**

\*Academic offerings for this objective consist of programs that offer all three: Academic Enrichment, Literacy, and STEM.

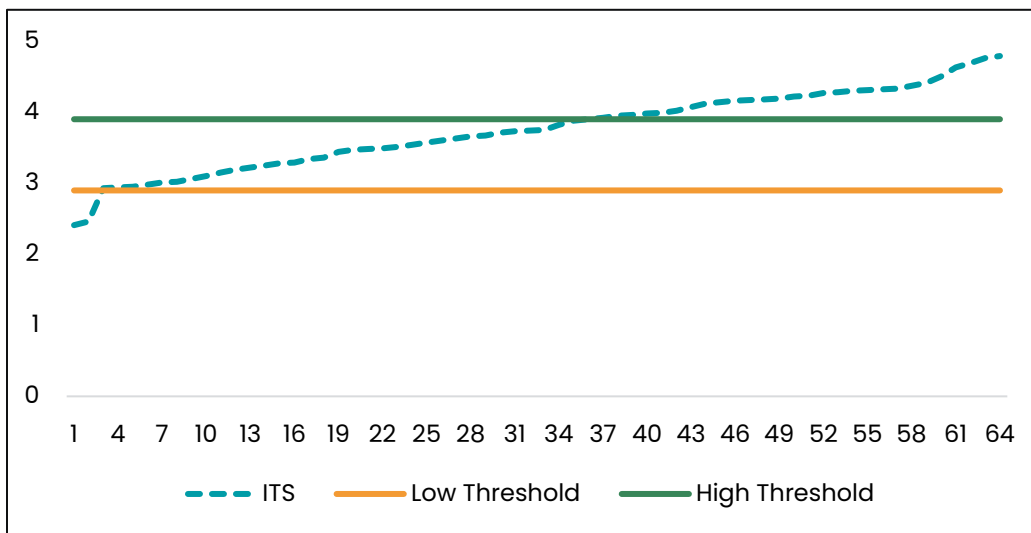
**Table 8** provides a term-by-term breakdown of student participation in each activity category, offering a more detailed view of how programs met academic and enrichment goals throughout the year. Participation was highest in the fall (9,804 students) and spring (9,495 students), with more limited attendance in the summer (1,362 students). Across all terms, the most frequently offered and highly attended activities included Healthy & Active Lifestyle, Academic Enrichment, Literacy Education, and STEM, each serving thousands of students and totaling thousands of instructional hours. In contrast, specialized supports such as Disability Services, ELL Supports, and Parent Education were offered less frequently, with smaller numbers of students served. These trends suggest a strong emphasis on academic and enrichment programming throughout the year, with additional opportunities for health, cultural, and career readiness activities. However, low participation in Disability Services and ELL Supports suggests that additional outreach or targeted programming may be needed to better meet the needs of students requiring specialized support.

**Table 8. Program Activities by Terms and Hours (2023–2024)**

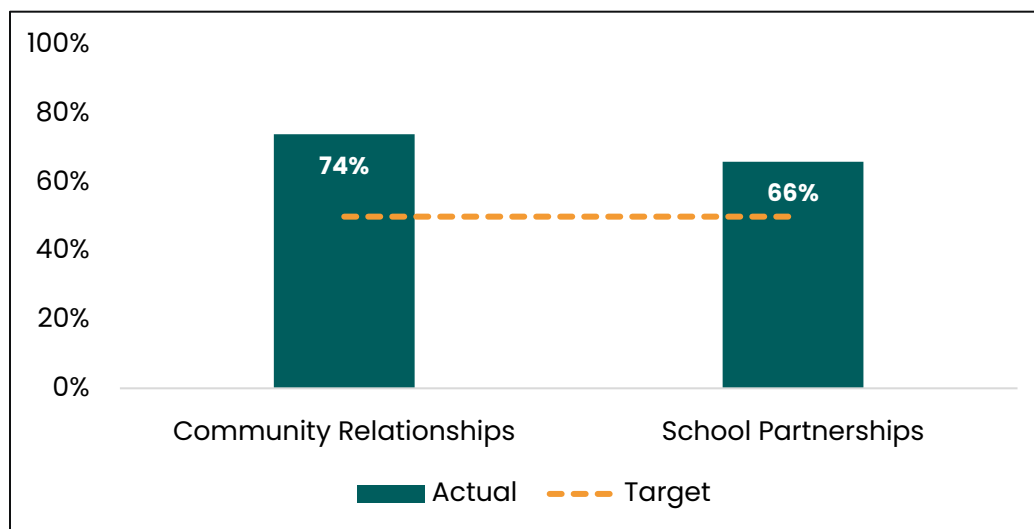
	Summer N= 1,362		Fall N= 9,804		Spring N= 9,495	
Activity type	Total hours	Total # of students	Total hours	Total # of students	Total hours	Total # of students
Academic Enrichment	763	997	10,824	7,922	12,147	7,483
Career Readiness	51	46	104	214	158	177
Counseling	161	131	82	99	83	75
Cultural Programs	281	264	1,523	2,306	1,585	1,998
Disability Services	0	0	2	4	0	0
ELL Supports	29	29	385	124	566	130
Expanded Library Hours	0	0	93	315	46	45
Healthy & Active Lifestyle	848	1,116	6,345	7,460	7,317	7,135
Literacy Education	535	703	3,105	3,339	3,520	3,195
Parent Education	23	72	10	81	0	0
STEM	925	1,024	5,455	5,209	5,708	4,812
Tech Education	0	0	490	438	246	551
Truancy Prevention	0	0	0	0	0	0
Well-Rounded Education	53	100	2,197	2,729	1,847	2,444

Student perceptions under **Objective 2.4** are positive, with 89% of surveyed students reporting that program participation helps them do better in school. Because no external assessment data for 2023–2024 are available, insight on **Objective 2.5** related to high-quality instruction measured through an Instructional Total Score (ITS) is limited. The ITS (comprised of the Supportive, Interactive, and Engaging Environment domains) is used as a measure of high-quality instructional practice. However, sites did internally assess their program offerings and rate their perceptions of quality with the majority (91%) of self ITS scores above 2.90 (see **Figure 15**).

**Figure 15. Objective 2.5– Instructional Total Scores (ITS)– Self-Assessment**

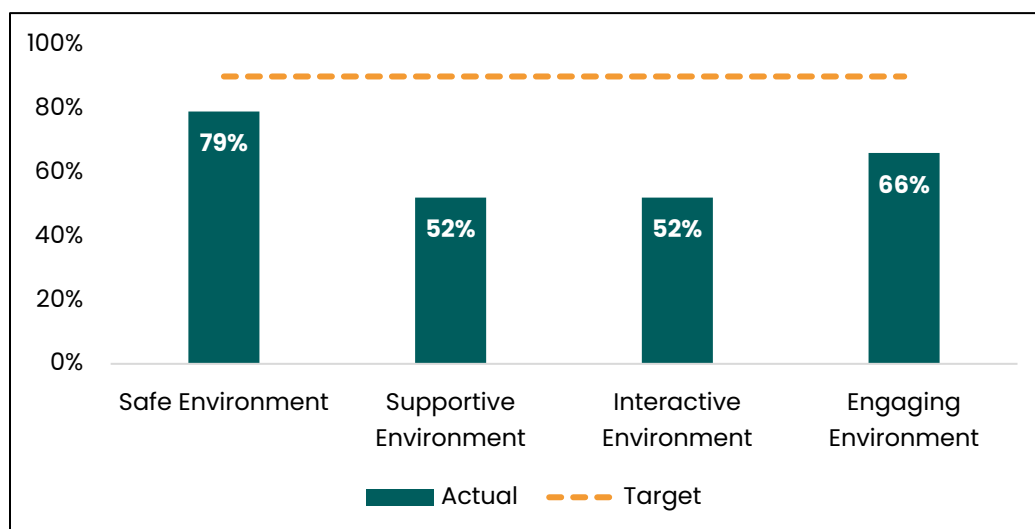


Community and school collaboration efforts under **Objective 2.6** appear to be progressing well. Seventy-four percent of programs exceeded the benchmark on staff ratings of community relationships, and 66% met the target for school partnerships (see **Figure 16**). These findings suggest that most programs are actively cultivating strong external relationships that support youth development. Strong community partnerships can enhance programming through access to local resources, volunteers, and enrichment activities, while strong school partnerships can improve alignment with academic goals, support student recruitment, and facilitate data-sharing.

**Figure 16. Objective 2.6- Community & School Partnerships**

Data for **Objective 2.7** related to parent education offerings is less than ten percent (5%). While family engagement is taking place within programs as indicated by family survey responses, additional technical assistance and coaching by Transact and ADE staff on capturing parent education data in the AS21 Cayen system may be beneficial to broaden understanding of family engagement services.

Lastly, **Objective 2.8**, which addresses the quality of family engagement as reported by caregivers in programs indicates opportunities for growth to reach the target of 90%. While 79% of programs achieved the standard for a safe environment, a smaller percentage achieved the standard for supportive environment (52%), interactive environment (52%), and engaging environment (66%) see **Figure 17**.

**Figure 17. Objective 2.8- Family Engagement**

These domains, supportive, interactive, and engaging—reflect the quality of caregiver experience within the program. Lower scores in these areas suggest that while families may feel welcomed, they are not consistently invited into collaborative, two-way relationships that build trust and empower them as partners in their child’s learning.

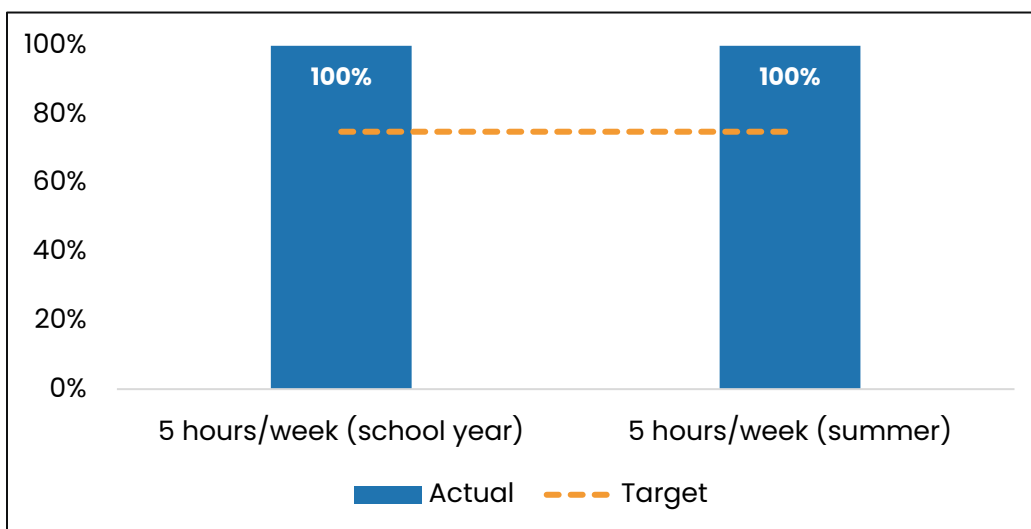
These data suggest that although basic practices are used with families such as greeting and communication about students, more intentional efforts are needed to create environments for caregivers to be meaningfully involved.

The data associated with this goal provide understanding into how well Arkansas 21st CCLC program sites deliver quality programming that align with principles of the federal initiative. Programs are succeeding in reaching high-need students and providing a breadth of enrichment activities. Key areas for attention include targeting students with chronic absenteeism and enhancing the quality of family engagement to ensure deeper, more meaningful partnerships with caregivers.

***EQ3: Were AR 21st CCLC programs able to maintain high levels of student engagement in 21st CCLC program offerings?***

Under **Objective 3.1**, which emphasizes consistent participation, all programs (100%) met or exceeded the benchmark of students attending five or more hours per week during both the school year and summer (**Figure 18**). This suggests that programs are successfully providing accessible, regular opportunities for students and they are consistently participating, a key indicator of engagement and program relevance.

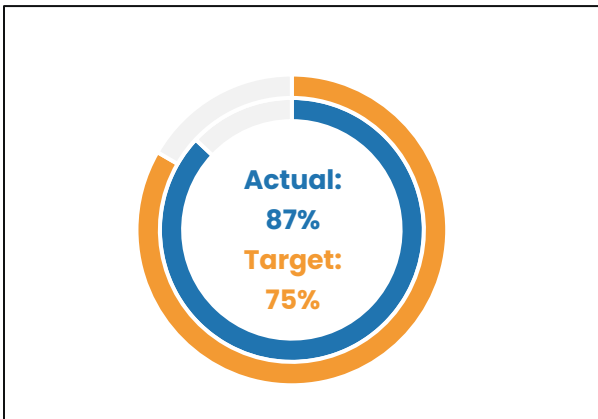
**Figure 18. Objective 3.1- Program Attendance**





**Objective 3.2** focuses on student-reported excitement and enthusiasm for attending the program. Survey results show that 87% of students reported feeling excited to attend, surpassing the 75% target. This high level of self-reported engagement reflects positively on the quality and appeal of program offerings, suggesting that students find the environment and activities meaningful and enjoyable (see **Figure 19**).

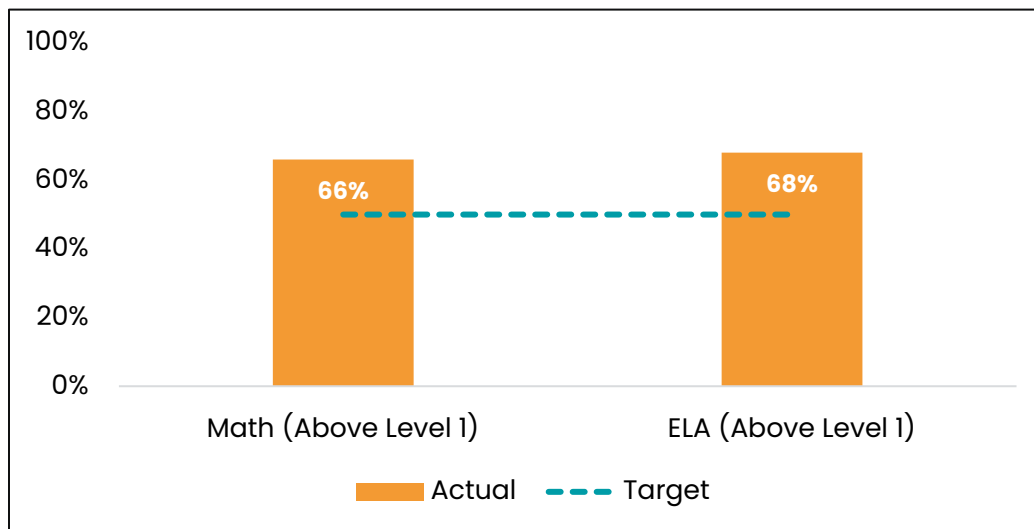
**Figure 19. Objective 3.2– Student Engagement**



Student enthusiasm is a critical driver of sustained participation and deeper learning. When students are genuinely excited to attend, they are more likely to show up consistently, build supportive relationships, and engage actively in both academic and enrichment activities. These results highlight strong performance in fostering student engagement across Arkansas 21st CCLC programs, while also underscoring the importance of maintaining student-centered, responsive programming as a foundation for long-term impact.

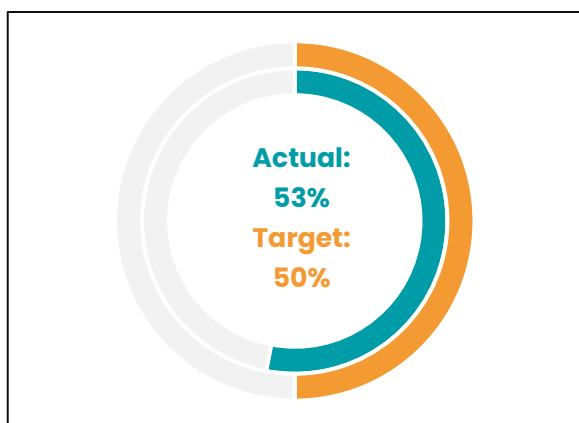
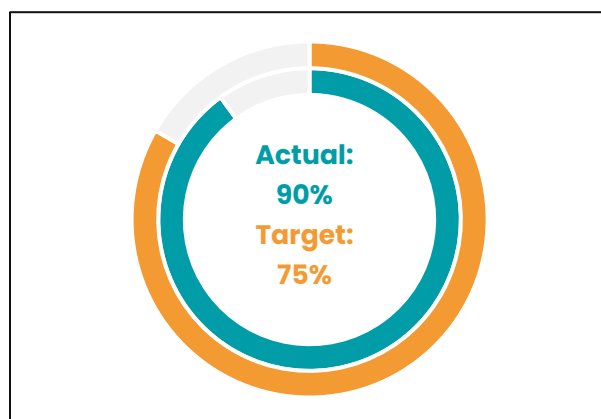
***EQ4: Did regularly attending students demonstrate improvement in academic outcomes?***

The data for this goal demonstrate positive academic trends among regularly attending students in Arkansas 21st CCLC programs, with most indicators meeting or nearing their respective performance targets. Regularly attending students is defined by ADE as attending the program upwards of 100 hours or more through the program year. Under **Objective 4.1**, which focuses on year-over-year academic improvement, the majority of students in grades 4–8 performed above the lowest proficiency level on ATLAS state assessments. Specifically, 66% scored above Level 1 in math and 68% in English Language Arts (ELA), both exceeding the 50% target (see **Figure 20**).

**Figure 20. Objective 4.1- Grades 4–8 Above Level 1 (Math & ELA)**

These results show that a majority of regularly attending students in Grades 4–8 scored above Level 1 on statewide assessments in math and English language arts, indicating they demonstrated at least basic understanding of grade-level standards. While these descriptive results do not imply program impact, they provide important context for understanding the academic profiles of participants and help establish a foundation for more in-depth analysis.

Another area of strength is student attendance. Among regularly attending students in grades 1–12 who had poor attendance in the prior school year ( $\leq 90\%$ ), 53% showed improvement in the current year, surpassing the 50% benchmark (see **Figure 21**). For students in grades 1–5, 90% were reported by teachers to have improved in engagement with learning, which exceeds the target (see **Figure 22**).

**Figure 21. Objective 4.1- Attendance Improvement****Figure 22. Objective 4.1- Engagement Improvement**

Finally, the small sample size for regularly attending high school students (grades 10–12) with low GPAs (N=14) limits the ability to report on older students' academic improvement. This reflects a broader trend in the data: high school students make up a relatively small percentage of overall 21st CCLC participants statewide.

### Summary of Progress Toward Statewide Goals and Objectives

The 2023–2024 evaluation findings indicate that Arkansas 21st CCLC programs made meaningful progress toward achieving the statewide goals and objectives established by ADE. Across the four strategic goal areas: organizational capacity, program quality, student engagement, and academic outcomes, most indicators met or exceeded performance benchmarks. Programs demonstrated strong implementation of quality improvement processes, delivered an array of academic and enrichment offerings, and demonstrated success in sustaining student interest and attendance. While family engagement and targeted recruitment of high need students remain areas for continued focus, the overall results reflect a statewide network of programs that is successfully advancing youth development and educational achievement. These descriptive findings offer a strong foundation for deeper analyses that explore how program participation is related to student outcomes.

### Advanced Analytic Findings: Participation, Dosage, and Student Outcomes

This section presents advanced analyses examining how student participation in Arkansas 21st CCLC programs, particularly the amount of time students spent in programming (dosage), is associated with key academic and engagement outcomes. Building on the descriptive findings aligned to statewide goals and objectives, these analyses apply more rigorous statistical methods to account for differences in student background characteristics, participation levels, and the nested nature of the data across program sites. Using multiple regression, generalized propensity score analysis (GPSA), and hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), this portion of the evaluation focuses on students in Grades 4–8 who have attended the program (90 hours or more). These methods allow for a more precise understanding of the extent to which program participation is linked to improved student outcomes.



## Multiple Linear Regression

Multiple linear regression was used to examine whether student participation in 21st CCLC programming, as measured by total program hours, was associated with academic performance in reading and math. This method allowed the evaluation team to estimate the unique contribution of dosage while controlling for key student-level characteristics that may independently influence achievement. This approach supports a more accurate understanding of the extent to which participation is related to student outcomes.

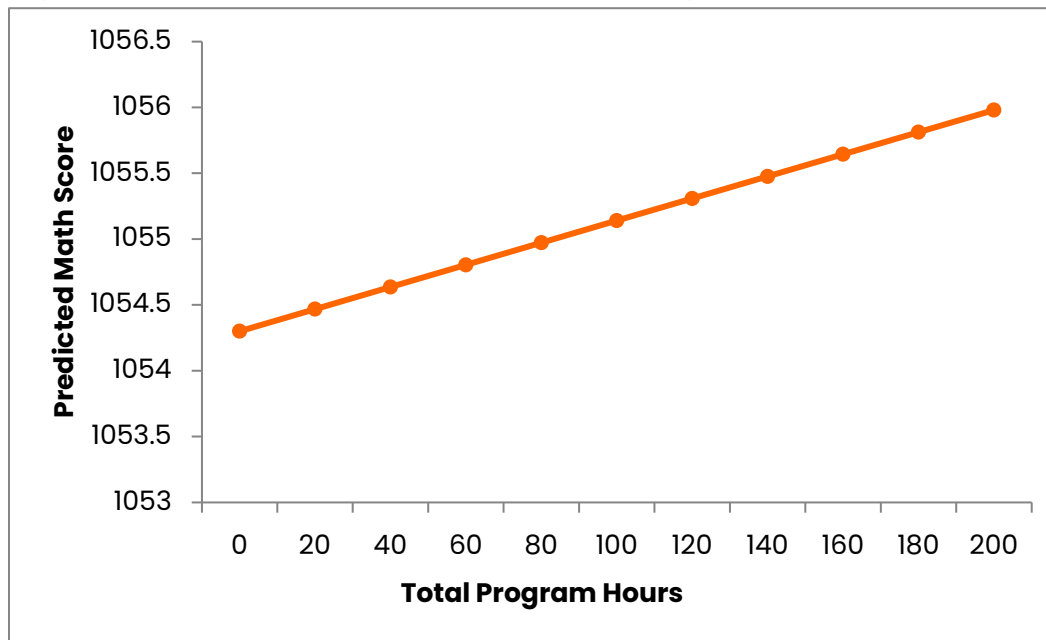
Separate models were estimated for reading and math standardized test scores in 2024. The primary independent variable of interest was total program hours representing the cumulative hours each student attended programming across the school year and summer. Control variables included: gender, race/ethnicity (modeled with indicator variables), English language learner (ELL) status, free or reduced price lunch eligibility (FRPL), special needs designation, and prior school year attendance below 90%. These covariates were selected to account for demographic and contextual factors associated with opportunity gaps in academic performance.

Prior to interpreting model results, diagnostic tests were conducted to assess key regression assumptions including linearity, homoscedasticity and normality, and multicollinearity.

## Findings from Multiple Regression

Analyses were based on 3,050 students for reading and 3,052 students for math. A statistically significant positive association was found between program dosage and math performance ( $b = 0.0084, p = .002$ ), suggesting that greater participation was associated with higher math scores. In particular, for each additional hour a student spent in the program, their math assessment score increased by 0.0084 points on average (see **Figure 23**). While the effect size is modest, this result supports the premise that more frequent engagement with academic enrichment activities may positively influence math achievement.



**Figure 23. Predicted Math Scores by Total Program Attendance Hours**

Conversely, the association between dosage and reading scores was not statistically significant ( $b = 0.0024, p = .325$ ), indicating that increased hours of participation did not correspond to measurable gains in reading performance in the regression model. Across both models, students who were ELL, eligible for FRPL, had a special needs designation, or exhibited poor prior-year attendance demonstrated significantly lower academic performance (see **Table 9**).

**Table 9. Multiple Regression Results for Reading and Math Outcomes**

Predictor	$\beta$ (Reading)	SE (Reading)	$\beta$ (Math)	SE (Math)
Total Program Hours	0.0024	0.0024	0.0084**	0.0027
Gender (Male = 1)	-3.08**	0.47	1.92***	0.51
Black/African American	-6.15	3.86	-1.45	5.36
Hispanic	2.54	3.85	11.21*	5.33
Native American/Alaskan	6.79	6.29	12.45	7.66
Native Hawaiian/Pacific	-0.59	3.88	9.21	5.33
White	0.58	3.86	9.14	5.37
Two or More Races	-0.40	4.15	5.25	5.63
Attendance <90% (Prior Yr)	-3.03***	0.73	-6.21***	0.87
ELL Status	-13.93***	0.83	-13.64***	1.0
Free/Reduced Lunch	-7.79***	0.65	-7.33***	0.72
Special Needs Status	-16.25***	0.7	-18.94***	0.89
Constant	1062.95***	3.9	1054.33***	5.45

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

The results suggest that dosage may be a more effective lever for influencing math outcomes than reading, possibly reflecting the nature or intensity of programming content. The strong effects of demographic covariates highlight the continued need to differentiate support for various groups of students. These findings emphasize the importance of dosage monitoring and intentional academic alignment to support programming strategies across sites.



### Generalized Propensity Score Analysis (GPSA)

While multiple regression provided initial insight into the association between participation and academic outcomes, the generalized propensity score analysis (GPSA) builds on this by offering a more rigorous approach to estimating causal effects across varying levels of program dosage, adjusting for selection bias related to student characteristics that may influence both participation and achievement.

Unlike traditional binary propensity score matching, GPSA is designed for continuous treatment variables, making it appropriate for modeling the effects of varying levels of participation. This method helps address selection bias by adjusting for systematic differences in student characteristics that may influence both their likelihood of attending more hours and their academic outcomes. The GPS analysis used the same analytic sample as the multiple regression models (3,050 students for reading and 3,052 for math). It was also limited to students in grades 4–8 who attended the program 90 hours or more. The GPS analysis was conducted in two stages: treatment model (stage 1) and outcome model (stage 2). A linear regression model predicted dosage using several covariates including race/ethnicity, gender, ELL status, FRPL eligibility, special needs designation, and prior year school day attendance below 90%. This model produced predicted values and residuals, which were used to calculate each student's generalized propensity score. The model accounts for potential non-linear effects and different impact at varied dosage levels (i.e., attending a program 60 hours in a program year versus 150 hours). Several diagnostics were used to validate the GPS approach including examining distribution of dosage, covariate balance across quintiles, and overlap.

### Generalized Propensity Score Analysis (GPSA) Results

**Table 10. GPSA Results for Reading and Math**

Predictor	$\beta$ (Reading)	SE (Reading)	p (Reading)	$\beta$ (Math)	SE (Math)	p (Math)
Total Program Hours	0.0202**	0.0067	.002	0.0137	0.0075	.067
GPS	2002.95**	588.63	.001	876.39	647.44	.176
Interaction: Hours × GPS	-10.57***	2.92	<.001	-3.36	3.29	.307
Constant	1044.54***	1.79	<.001	1054.35***	1.97	<.001

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Table 10** summarizes the GPS model results for reading and math outcomes. For reading, total program hours were significantly associated with higher performance ( $\beta = 0.0202$ ,  $p = .002$ ), even after adjusting for selection bias using the GPS and accounting for non-linear relationships via the interaction term. The significant negative interaction ( $\beta = -10.57$ ,  $p < .001$ ) suggests diminishing returns at higher levels of predicted attendance—indicating that while moderate participation is beneficial, additional hours beyond a certain point may yield smaller marginal gains.

Conversely, the math model showed a positive but non-significant association between dosage and achievement ( $\beta = 0.0137$ ,  $p = .067$ ). The interaction and GPS terms were also not statistically significant, which suggests less consistent impact across dosage levels for math. These results highlight the potential of targeted and sustained participation in supporting literacy gains but also illustrates the nuanced relationship between program dosage and math achievement.

### Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM)

To further examine the data and account for students within groups of program sites, a hierarchical linear modeling approach was utilized. This method enables the inclusion of site level predictors such as program quality scores, to investigate whether site level conditions influence student outcomes. The intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC) indicated that 4.8% of the variance in reading scores and 9.2% of the variance in math scores was attributable to differences between sites.

Two models were estimated: one for reading and math. Both included the same set of student level covariates used in prior analyses (e.g., total hours attended, race/ethnicity, gender, ELL status, special needs status, economic disadvantage, and prior year attendance below 90%). Additionally, each model incorporated a continuous site level indicator, the Program Quality Assessment Instructional Total Score (ITS) to assess whether site quality influenced outcomes beyond individual level predictors (see **Table 11**).





**Table 11. Hierarchical Linear Modeling Results for Reading and Math**

Predictor	$\beta$ (Reading)	SE (Reading)	$\beta$ (Math)	SE (Math)
Total Program Hours	0.0038	0.0030	0.0110**	0.0034
Gender (Male = 1)	-2.87***	0.48	2.27***	0.52
Black/African American	-4.51	3.09	2.21	3.38
Hispanic	3.82	3.03	12.89***	3.31
Native American/Alaskan Native	7.48	5.00	12.72*	5.46
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1.35	3.12	10.59**	3.41
White	1.31	3.04	11.15**	3.32
Two or More Races	1.65	3.37	8.58*	3.68
Attendance <90% (Prior Yr)	-1.93*	0.77	-4.55***	0.85
ELL Status	-14.31***	0.93	-13.74***	1.02
Free/Reduced Lunch	-6.75***	0.73	-6.32***	0.80
Special Needs Status	-16.42***	0.69	-18.73***	0.76
PQA Self ITS Score	0.18	0.84	-0.23	1.19
Constant	1059.62***	4.47	1050.46***	5.66

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

### HLM Results

The hierarchical linear models evaluated whether student level characteristics and program participation were associated with academic performance, while accounting for the nested structure of students in 21st CCLC sites. These models also assessed whether site level program quality (measured through a PQA self-assessment instructional total score) explained variation in outcomes beyond student level factors. Total program hours were positively and significantly associated with higher math scores ( $\beta = 0.0110, p = .001$ ), indicating that greater participation corresponded with improved math performance even after adjusting for student characteristics and clustering by site. Variables that were significant predictors include: gender (male students scored significantly higher in math) and attendance below 90% in the prior year negatively impacted math achievement (see **Table 11**). The ITS was not significantly associated with math scores which suggests that the variation in site level self-rated program quality did not predict

math achievement once individual level variables were included. Total program hours were not significantly associated with reading scores ( $\beta = 0.0038, p = .203$ ), indicating that participation alone did not explain differences in reading achievement in the multilevel model. Additionally, the ITS was not a significant predictor of reading outcomes.

While these results highlight the site level variation in academic performance that exists, (particularly math), the effect is nuanced, and program dosage and individual level factors are stronger predictors of student outcomes. Furthermore, while the PQA self ITS was not a significant predictor, this may reflect the limited variability in the scores and/or limitations in self-reporting. Future analyses could incorporate external program quality observations to further explore site-level quality effects.

### Evaluation Limitations

While the evaluation provides meaningful insights into the effectiveness of Arkansas's 21st CCLC programming, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings:

- **Non-Randomized Design**  
As a quasi-experimental study, the evaluation relied on statistical controls rather than random assignment. Although generalized propensity score analysis was used to adjust for observed differences in program dosage levels, unmeasured confounding variables may still influence outcomes.
- **Subset Focus on Grades 4–8**  
The outcome analyses focused on students in Grades 4–8, in alignment with federal GPRA reporting requirements for academic outcomes. As a result, findings may not generalize to students in other grade bands, particularly high school students, where sample sizes were smaller and patterns of participation varied.
- **Variation in Program Implementation**  
Local implementation fidelity and the quality of program delivery may differ across sites. Although site-level program quality scores were included in hierarchical models, unmeasured differences in staffing, curriculum, and engagement strategies may affect student outcomes.



- **Incomplete or Missing Data**

In some cases, incomplete student records, particularly around academic assessments or program attendance hours, limited the inclusion of cases in certain analyses. This may introduce selection bias if the excluded cases systematically differ from those retained.

These limitations reflect typical challenges in statewide educational evaluations and do not negate the observed trends. Rather, they point to areas for future data collection and methodological refinement to strengthen the evidence base supporting afterschool programming in Arkansas.

### **Overall Summary and Recommendations**

Findings show strong progress in many areas, including program self-assessment practices, leadership development, student engagement, and participation consistency. Math outcomes were significantly associated with greater participation in programming, and positive trends were observed in reading under the GPSA model. While site-level program quality scores did not significantly predict academic performance, student-level factors such as ELL status, economic disadvantage, and prior chronic absenteeism remained consistently associated with outcomes across all models.

Drawing from both statewide performance data and analytic modeling results, the following recommendations are offered to inform future planning, technical assistance, and strategic investment:

- **Target supports for underserved student groups and geographic areas.**

Students identified as eligible for free/reduced-price lunch, with special needs, or with prior attendance below 90% consistently demonstrated lower academic outcomes. These student groups should remain a top priority for targeted instructional supports, engagement strategies, and family outreach. Additionally, geographic analysis revealed that several counties, particularly in the southwestern part of the state, exhibit clusters of Title I schools with limited or no 21st CCLC coverage, suggesting that students in high need areas may lack access to out-of-school time programming. Addressing these geographic access gaps through expanded funding opportunities, technical assistance, and local partnership development is essential to reaching the students who stand to benefit most.



- **Enhance academic enrichment with a focus on math.**

Program dosage was significantly associated with higher math scores across multiple analytic models, suggesting that expanding access to sustained math-focused activities may yield measurable academic benefits.

- **Expand and incentivize frontline staff training.**

While directors showed high participation in professional development, fewer staff engaged in Youth Work Methods training. Offering incentives and reinforcing expectations for staff participation can help align program quality at all levels.

- **Strengthen outreach to chronically absent students.**

Only 13% of participants had school day attendance below 90%, indicating an opportunity to more effectively enroll students who stand to benefit most from consistent out-of-school time programming.

- **Implement data collection best practices in the network.**

Limited data availability on offerings reduced the ability to fully assess particular aspects of 21st CCLC in Arkansas. Incomplete or inconsistent data limited the scope of the current evaluation. Strengthening data collection practices through clear guidance, consistent reporting, and supportive technical assistance will ensure that these efforts are well documented and can be meaningfully reflected in future evaluations.



## Appendix A. Statewide Goals, Objectives, and Indicators

<b>Goal 1: Support organizational capacity amongst grantees to deliver high-quality programming to all participants attending 21st CCLC programming.</b>		
<b><i>Objective 1.1 Programs will assess program quality on an ongoing basis to support program improvement.</i></b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs that self-assess using the Program Quality Assessment.	>90%	100%
Indicator 2. Percent of programs with staff who report participating in the consensus meeting to score the Program Quality (self) Assessment.	>90%	60%
Indicator 3. Percent of programs with directors who report observing offerings to assess program quality.	>90%	N/A
Indicator 4. Percent of programs that participate in a PQA conducted by an external assessor.	>90%	N/A
<b><i>Objective 1.2 Programs will use data to set actionable goals that support program quality.</i></b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs that submit a Program Improvement Plan-Comprehensive Goals.	>90%	100%
<b><i>Objective 1.3 Programs will participate in professional development opportunities that promote evidence-based instructional practices.</i></b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs with directors who attended Planning with Data.	>90%	100%
Indicator 2. Percent of programs with staff who attended at least one Youth Work Methods.	>90%	46%
Indicator 3. Percent of second and third year programs who are visited by a quality coach at least twice during the program year.	>90%	N/A
<b><i>Objective 1.4 Program staff will receive performance feedback from their managers.</i></b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs with staff who agree that they get the feedback and support needed from their supervisor to be successful.	>90%	98%
<b><i>Objective 1.5 Program directors are supported to lead high-quality programs for youth.</i></b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>

Indicator 1. Percent of directors who agreed they have access to supports they need to be successful.	>=75%	98%
Indicator 2. Percent of directors who agree they look forward to coming to work each day.	>=75%	100%
Indicator 3. Percent of directors who have been working for this program for at least 2 years.	>=50%	68%
<b>Objective 1.6 Program directors demonstrate high-quality management practices that support staff retention.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of staff agree their supervisor makes sure program goals and priorities are clear.	>=75%	98%
Indicator 2. Percent of staff agree their supervisor encourages them to innovate and try new ideas.	>=75%	97%
Indicator 3. Percent of staff agree their supervisor is available during regular program hours.	>=75%	99%
<b>Objective 1.7 Staff demonstrate interest in their work as a youth-serving professional.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of surveyed staff agree they look forward to coming to work each day.	>=75%	98%
Indicator 2. Percent of staff who have been working for this program for at least 2 years.	>=75%	54%
<b>Goal 2: Consistently deliver high-quality programming aligned to 21st CCLC principles.</b>		
<b>Objective 2.1 Programs will serve communities who can most benefit from enrichment programming.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of students who qualify for Free and/or Reduced Price Lunch	>=75%	83%
Indicator 2. Percent of students scoring below proficiency on the state assessment in math	>=75%	68%
Indicator 3. Percent of students scoring below proficiency on the state assessment in reading	>=75%	72%
Indicator 4. Percent of students with an attendance rate during the previous school year <90%	>=75%	13%



<b>Objective 2.2 Programs offer activities in core academic subjects, including literacy, math, and science.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs offering activities that fall into Academic Enrichment, Literacy, and STEM 21st CCLC activity groupings.	>=90%	77%
<b>Objective 2.3 Programs offer activities in a variety of enrichment areas that complement a student's academic experience.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs that offer activities in at least three 21st CCLC activity categories outside of core academics.	>=90%	93%
<b>Objective 2.4 Students agree that programs support their school success.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of surveyed students that agree things they learn in the program help them do better in school.	>=75%	89%
<b>Objective 2.5 Programs will offer high-quality youth programming that promotes high youth engagement.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of second and third year programs with Instructional Total Scores (ITS) above high-engagement threshold of 3.9 on external PQA assessments. No programs score below 2.9, low engagement threshold.	>=75%	N/A
<b>Objective 2.6 Programs will maintain strong partnerships with communities and schools.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs with scores >=2 on the staff survey scale of community relationships.	>=50%	74%
Indicator 2. Percent of programs with scores >=2 on the staff survey scale of school partnerships.	>=50%	66%
<b>Objective 2.7 Programs will host educational opportunities for students' families.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs offering Parent Education 21st CCLC activities.	>=90%	5%
<b>Objective 2.8 Caregivers will report high levels of family engagement to ensure better outcomes for students.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs with a Safe Environment score >=3	>=90%	79%
Indicator 2. Percent of programs with a Supportive Environment score >=3	>=90%	52%



Indicator 3. Percent of programs with an Interactive Environment score $\geq 3$	$\geq 90\%$	52%
Indicator 4. Percent of programs with an Engaging Environment score $\geq 3$	$\geq 90\%$	66%
<b>Goal 3: Maintain high levels of student engagement in 21st CCLC program offerings.</b>		
<b>Objective 3.1 Programs will demonstrate high attendance rates amongst participating students.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of programs with an average number of attended hours per week greater than or equal to five during the school year.	$\geq 75\%$	100%
Indicator 2. Percent of programs with an average number of attended hours per week greater than or equal to five during the summer.	$\geq 75\%$	100%
<b>Objective 3.2 Students will report high engagement with the program offerings.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percent of students that report they are excited to attend the program.	$\geq 75\%$	87%
<b>Goal 4: Improve academic outcomes for regularly attending participants.</b>		
<b>Objective 4.1 Participants in the program will demonstrate academic improvements over the previous year.</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Indicator 1. Percentage of regularly attending students in grades 4-8 who score above Level 1 for math state assessments.	$\geq 50\%$	66%
Indicator 2. Percentage of regularly attending students in grades 4-8 who score above Level 1 for ELA state assessments.	$\geq 50\%$	68%
Indicator 3. Percentage of regularly attending students in grades 10-12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer with a prior year unweighted GPA of less than 3.0 who demonstrated an improved GPA.	$\geq 50\%$	N/A
Indicator 4. Percentage of regularly attending 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.	$\geq 50\%$	53%
Indicator 5. Percentage of regularly students in grades 1-5 participating in 21st CCLC programming in the school year and summer who demonstrated an improvement in teacher-reported engagement in learning.	$\geq 75\%$	90%





## Appendix B. Analytic Technical Tables

Detailed descriptions of analytic methods and interpretations of findings are provided in the main body of the report. This appendix contains technical output tables for the three primary statistical methods used to examine the relationship between program participation and student outcomes: multiple linear regression, generalized propensity score analysis (GPSA), and hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). Diagnostic checks were conducted for all regression models to ensure that key statistical assumptions (e.g., linearity, normality, and multicollinearity) were adequately met. For the HLM models, intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) were calculated to justify the use of multilevel modeling and confirmed variance between sites.

**Table B1. Multiple Regression Output: Reading and Math**

Predictor	$\beta$ (Reading)	SE (Reading)	$\beta$ (Math)	SE (Math)
Total Program Hours	0.0024	0.0024	0.0084**	0.0027
Gender (Male = 1)	-3.08**	0.47	1.92***	0.51
Black/African American	-6.15	3.86	-1.45	5.36
Hispanic	2.54	3.85	11.21*	5.33
Native American/Alaskan	6.79	6.29	12.45	7.66
Native Hawaiian/Pacific	-0.59	3.88	9.21	5.33
White	0.58	3.86	9.14	5.37
Two or More Races	-0.40	4.15	5.25	5.63
Attendance < 90% (Prior Yr)	-3.03***	0.73	-6.21***	0.87
ELL Status	-13.93***	0.83	-13.64***	1.0
Free/Reduced Lunch	-7.79***	0.65	-7.33***	0.72

Special Needs Status	-16.25***	0.7	-18.94***	0.89
Constant	1062.95***	3.9	1054.33***	5.45

\*Note:  $p < .05^*$ ,  $p < .01^{**}$ ,  $p < .001^{***}$

**Table B2. Generalized Propensity Score Analysis (GPSA): Reading and Math**

Predictor	$\beta$ (Reading)	SE (Reading)	p (Reading)	$\beta$ (Math)	SE (Math)	p (Math)
Total Program Hours	0.0202**	0.0067	.002	0.0137	0.0075	.067
GPS	2002.95**	588.63	.001	876.39	647.44	.176
Interaction: Hours $\times$ GPS	-10.57***	2.92	<.001	-3.36	3.29	.307
Constant	1044.54***	1.79	<.001	1054.35***	1.97	<.001

\*Note:  $p < .05^*$ ,  $p < .01^{**}$ ,  $p < .001^{***}$

**Table B3. Hierarchical Linear Model (HLM) with PQA Self-Assessment Score**

Predictor	$\beta$ (Reading)	SE (Reading)	$\beta$ (Math)	SE (Math)
Total Program Hours	0.0038	0.0030	0.0110**	0.0034
Gender (Male = 1)	-2.87***	0.48	2.27***	0.52
Black/African American	-4.51	3.09	2.21	3.38
Hispanic	3.82	3.03	12.89***	3.31
Native American/Alaskan Native	7.48	5.00	12.72*	5.46

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1.35	3.12	10.59**	3.41
White	1.31	3.04	11.15**	3.32
Two or More Races	1.65	3.37	8.58*	3.68
Attendance < 90% (Prior Yr)	-1.93*	0.77	-4.55***	0.85
ELL Status	-14.31***	0.93	-13.74***	1.02
Free/Reduced Lunch	-6.75***	0.73	-6.32***	0.80
Special Needs Status	-16.42***	0.69	-18.73***	0.76
PQA Self ITS Score	0.18	0.84	-0.23	1.19
Constant	1059.62***	4.47	1050.46***	5.66

\*Note:  $p < .05$ \*,  $p < .01$ \*\*,  $p < .001$ \*\*\*

