

21st Century Community Learning Centers Program 2021-22 State Evaluation Report

May 2023



Pennsylvania
Department of Education

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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Executive Summary

The Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provides federal funds to provide academic, artistic, and cultural enrichment opportunities for students and their families. These opportunities must occur during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session to help students attending high-poverty and low-performing schools meet state and local standards in core academic subjects. Centers must also offer students a broad array of activities that can complement their regular academic programs, including literacy and other educational services to families.

In the 2021-22 program year, there were 153 grantees from three grant funding cycles, each called a cohort: Cohort 8 included 42 grantees, Cohort 9 included 42 grantees, and Cohort 10 included 69 grantees. Cohorts 9 and 10 were eligible to operate the full program year (summer 2021 through the end of the 2021-22 school year) while Cohort 8 centers only operated for part of the program year because their grant contracts ended on December 31, 2021.

EVALUATION DESIGN

The state evaluation of Pennsylvania's 21st Century program examined three performance measures focused on students' positive academic, social, and behavioral changes. Data sources included the federal 21APR system, Pennsylvania 21st CCLC Implementation Survey, Center Operations data, PA De-identified Student Data Spreadsheet, and other data from PDE and the Center for Schools and Communities, Pennsylvania's contractor for 21st Century technical assistance.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) contracted the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU) to conduct a comprehensive external evaluation of the 21st Century program to fulfill federal requirements under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended, Sections 4202 (C) and 4203 (A) and Section H-5 of the *21st Century Community Learning Centers Non-Regulatory Guidance*. The program findings shared in this report are for the 2021-22 program year, including summer 2021 and school year 2021-22.

GRANTEE CHARACTERISTICS

There were 153 grantees in the 2021-22 program year categorized in three funding cycles (cohorts). Grantees were community-based/nonprofit organizations (43 percent), schools, districts, charter, or career/technical schools (42 percent), intermediate units (8 percent), or higher education (7 percent). This varied somewhat by cohort. Cohort 8 had a higher concentration of community-based grantees (45 percent) and Cohort 9 had a higher concentration (47 percent) of schools, districts, charter, or career/technical schools.

Grantees operated programs out of 396 centers (99 Cohort 8 centers, 97 Cohort 9 centers, and 200 Cohort 10 centers), and operated between one and 11 centers per grantee, with an average of three centers; however, the mode (most frequent value) was one center.

Fifty-eight percent of grantees classified their programs as operating in an urban environment; 24 percent were reported as rural, 6 percent were reported as suburban, and 13 percent were reported as a combination of these types.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Grantees have much design flexibility when providing out-of-school-time programs that offer students supplemental academic and enrichment activities. Details about how grantees implemented their programs are as follows.

Operations

Grantees could operate programs during the summer of 2021,¹ school year 2021-22, or both. Specific date ranges were not prescribed to allow for the local variance of school year start or end dates. Program guidance required grantees to operate a minimum of 12-15 hours per week for 36 weeks per school year, unless approved otherwise. Grantees reported operations data in the state's 21st Century online dashboard.

Program Design

All 152 grantees² completed an annual Implementation Survey and indicated the 21st Century program areas they addressed. Program areas options were provided from a list of fifteen outlined in Pennsylvania's program guidance. Most grantees offered academic enrichment (97 percent), science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) activities (93 percent), literacy education (87 percent), healthy and active lifestyle activities (84 percent), social emotional learning (SEL) activities (83 percent) and cultural programs (73 percent). The five least selected program areas addressed by grantees were expanded library hours (16 percent), assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled (29 percent), activities for English learners (37 percent), well-rounded education activities (37 percent), and services for individuals with disabilities (36 percent). These findings are similar to prior years.

Grantees were most likely to serve grades 1-7, with 58 percent of grantees selecting one or more of the grade levels in this range. Grades 3-5 had the highest percentage (60 percent of grantees).

Adult Family Member Activities

All 152 grantees reported that parents/adult family members participated in at least one activity during this program year, with counts ranging from one adult to 599. The average number of adult participants per grantee was 69. Overall, grantees reported a total of 10,525 adult family members participating, which is 44% more than the prior year.

Program Participation

Grantees served 32,724 students over the course of the summer 2021 and school year 2021-22 program year, which is nearly 25 percent greater than the total number of students served in the previous year. In 2021-22, Pennsylvania public school enrollment³ was 1,739,452 students. Therefore, Pennsylvania's 21st Century programs served approximately 1.9 percent of the

¹ Generally, grantees were required to operate during both summer and school year or school year only, depending on their contract. In some cases, a grantee contract ended early making them eligible to operate during a portion of the year.

² One grantee of all 153 did not complete the survey. Unless otherwise indicated, all 152 responding grantees are included in the counts and percentages for each survey question.

³ This number is based on PDE 2021-22 academic year public enrollment records.

Pennsylvania public school population, an increase of 0.3 percentage points from 2021-22. On average, students attended 102 hours of programming throughout the year.

Student program participation ranged from 11 to 1,020 students per grantee, with an average of 218. Their attendance was categorized into six different hour bands, with most students attending between 15-44 hours (21 percent), 45-89 hours (20 percent), or 90-179 hours (20 percent). Eighteen percent of students attended less than 15 hours, ten percent attended 180-269 hours, and nine percent attended 270 hours or more. Most students (69 percent) attended programming only during the school year. Twenty percent attended during summer 2021 only, and 11 percent attended both summer 2021 and school year 2021-22 terms.

Data were also available to compare the number of students Cohort 9 and 10 proposed to serve in their approved grant applications to their actual counts. Cohort 8 was not included as their grants were ending. The 153 grantees proposed to serve 30,512 students, but actually served 32,724 students; 7 percent more than expected. Of these grantees, 70 served more students than proposed, with counts ranging from one student more (1 percent) to 798 more (359 percent). The average number of additional students served for these 70 grantees was 118 (55 percent more). One grantee served the same number of students as they proposed. The remaining 82 grantees served fewer students than proposed, falling short of their target number by two (2 percent) to 251 students (95 percent). On average, these grantees fell short by 67 students (34 percent).

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Student outcomes are defined by five GPRA measures: math and reading state assessments, school year GPA, school day attendance, behavior (in-school suspensions), and student engagement in learning. These measures came into effect in summer 2021.

Academics

Of the 15,243 21st Century students in grades 4-8, roughly half had prior and current year state assessment data in math, reading, or both for comparison.

After excluding those students who did not need to improve, 18 percent of students improved in math and 22 percent improved in reading. Most students had no change in their score level (69 percent for math; 60 percent for reading), while 13 percent declined in math and 18 percent declined in reading.

Although comparative data was not available for all students in grades 4 through 8, approximately 70 percent had 2021-22 state assessment scores. Students were more likely to perform better on reading state assessments, where 34 percent scored at the proficient or advanced level, compared to math where only 15 percent of students scored as proficient or advanced. Further, 66 percent scored at the basic or below basic level in reading compared to 85 percent in math. Overall, this data indicates lower levels of proficient or advanced students than in prior years, likely due to pandemic-related learning loss.

There is also evidence of a relationship between 21st Century program attendance and assessment scores. Those who attended more often were also more likely to have proficient or advanced assessment levels and less likely to score at the basic or below basic levels. This

trend was not as strong for reading assessments, though students historically perform better in reading overall.

Current and prior year GPA data was available for 5,245 students in grades 7-8 and 10-12, which is 52 percent of students reported in those grades. Between 2020-21 and 2021-22, the average GPA of these students increased from 1.9 to 2.1, a 10 percent increase.

Comparing GPA data from the 2020-21 to 2021-22 school years, 43 percent of students improved while 21 percent declined. Twenty-four percent did not need to improve their GPA, and 13 percent exhibited no change. Overall, when excluding the “did not need to improve” group, 56 percent of students improved their GPA.

As with 21st Century program attendance and state assessment scores, there also appears to be a relationship between attendance and GPA improvement. After excluding students who did not need to improve, students with more 21st Century program hours were more likely to improve their GPA and less likely to experience a decline. There is also evidence that attendance term – summer only, school year only, and both summer and school year – may impact student GPA results. Only 39 percent of students who attended summer programming improved their GPA, compared to 62 percent of school year only students and 60 percent of students who attended both terms.

Overall, 7,253 students in grades 7, 8, or 10-12 had 2021-22 GPA data, representing 72 percent of all students in those grades. Of these students, 77 percent (5,555) completed the 2021-22 school year with a passing GPA (1.3/C-). However, it should be noted that more students may have passed their courses, as these calculations are based on conversions to the standard 4.0 GPA scale with a C- grade considered passing.

The 21st Century Teacher Survey, administered to classroom teachers of regularly attending students in grades 1-5, included an indicator for teachers to report student change in academics. Results show that 55 percent of students who needed to improve did so while 41 percent showed no change, and 4 percent declined.

The count of students who improved (3,111) was more than 15 times greater than the count of students who declined (201).

Again, the percentage of students who steadily improved increased with the number of hours the student attended 21st Century programming. The percentages of students declining were similar across hour bands, and the percentage of students who experienced no change decreased with more program hours.

Behavior

21st Century Teacher Survey data for each behavioral data element includes between 7,439 and 7,635 students, or 52 to 53 percent of attendees in grades 1-5. Historically, student gains are most prevalent from these survey results. When students who did not need to improve behavior are excluded from the analysis, each of the seven non-academic teacher survey indicators showed improvement by roughly half of regular attendees. Teachers reported that:

- 64 percent improved homework completion to their teacher’s satisfaction;
- 63 percent improved their class participation;
- 48 percent improved in volunteering in class;

- 53 percent improved their class attentiveness;
- 50 percent improved their class behavior;
- 55 percent improved their motivation to learn; and
- 46 percent improved their engagement in learning.

As per the new GPRA measures, student behavior was also assessed using the number of in-school suspensions between 2020-21 and 2021-22. Only 251 students received an in-school suspension in 2020-21, and therefore needed to improve on this measure. Of these students, 62 percent decreased their total number of suspensions in 2021-22 and 51 percent received no in-school suspensions.

Comparative school day attendance rates were available for 70 percent of students in grades 1-12. Of these students, thirty percent had a 2020-21 attendance rate at or below 90 percent, and therefore needed to improve. Of the 6,141 students who needed to improve, 72 percent did so, 27 percent declined, and less than one percent experienced no change in attendance rate.

Evidence also suggests that greater 21st Century program attendance has a positive effect on attendance. Results were also analyzed by cohort, grade level, and years of participation in 21st Century programming. However, there was no evidence that these factors impacted student attendance outcomes.

Promotion

Promotion status was available for 22,408 students (68 percent of all 21st CCLC participants). Of these students, 97 percent were promoted at the end of the 2021-22 school year. Because nearly all students were promoted, additional disaggregation was not conducted as part of the analysis as it would not add value to the finding.

High School Credit/Course Recovery

Twenty-seven grantees reported that one or more high school students engaged in the credit recovery programming they offered in 2021-22 (19 percent of grantees). Grantees offered credit recovery instruction primarily through a blend of face-to-face instruction and computer-based instruction (73 percent), followed by primarily face-to-face instruction (15 percent), and primarily computer-based instruction (12 percent).

Eleven of these grantees (40 percent) reported additional credit recovery details for 1,503 students (4.5 percent). Overall, 1,164 (77 percent) students recovered one or more credits, which is 4 percent more than the previous program year. The total number of credits recovered was 1,875.

Some students were also able to recover credits in more than one subject area. Of the 1,503 students:

- 519 (35 percent) recovered literacy-related credits;
- 412 (27 percent) recovered math-related credits; and
- 672 (45 percent) recovered credits for other subjects.

CONCLUSION

Pennsylvania 21st Century programs provided a variety of academic and enrichment services to students and their families intended to influence student outcomes. In most areas, considerable numbers of students showed improvement in one or more academic and/or behavioral areas. Results further suggest that increased, ongoing, and sustained participation (e.g., collectively increased levels of program dosage) has a positive influence on students.

Although there were many gains, students still have considerable needs. Based on evaluation findings, evaluators recommend that grantees collaborate with their local evaluator to examine program findings to identify their students' areas of need and strength and make decisions designed to promote continuous program improvement and positive student outcomes. Grantees should also implement strategies to increase student retention and ongoing, consistent program attendance. Prioritizing programming that addresses student learning loss and prepares them for future state assessments is also recommended.

At the state level, it is recommended that the state team adjust the three state performance measures to align with the new GPRA, set benchmarks for each GPRA measure, and set a timeline for achievement. Further, the state team and evaluators should continue to adjust data collection, reporting, and monitoring processes to make them more efficient, simpler, and informative for grantees. As per current practice, it is also recommended that the state team continue to prioritize provision of guidance and training to grantees on best practices in encouraging repeat and consistent attendance. The state should work closely with grantees to identify barriers to attendance and develop evidence-based, creative solutions to address them. Solutions should also be developed to better allow grantees to accurately track their daily attendance. Finally, evaluators should incorporate longitudinal data analysis in future reports to assess student outcomes over time.

Program Highlights

In this section, evaluators present several program highlights that showcase program success and progress. Program areas for improvement are addressed in the [Reflections, Implications, and Recommendations](#) section at the end of this report.

- More than 32,000 students had structured, safe, and educational afterschool programming. **Grantees served 32,724 students** during the summer 2021 and school year 2021-22 program year, which was approximately 1.9 percent of Pennsylvania's K-12 public school population (1.7 million).
- Over three-fourths of grantees (83 percent) reported offering both STEM and literacy activities as part of their 2021-22 programs.
- 75 percent of grantees reported that they implement literacy-related activities daily; 63 percent implement math activities daily.
- Slightly more than half of grantees (58 percent) classified their geographic context as urban; 24 percent self-classified as rural; 6 percent self-classified as suburban; and 13 percent indicated they served a combination of these community types.
- A total of 1,164 high school students recovered a total of 1,875 credits, which likely supported them in meeting graduation requirements. These credits included 519 literacy credits, 412 math credits, and 672 other credits. Credit recovery students represented 4.5 percent of all 21st Century participants.
- 9,862 (30% of students) improved in at least one academic measure (reading/math state assessments, GPA, academic performance teacher survey data).
- Nearly all grantees maintain ongoing communication with school administrators (99 percent) and/or classroom teachers (97 percent); 85 percent of grantees employ school-day teachers as program staff, providing a direct connection between the school day and the 21st Century program.
- Of students (grades 4-8) needing to improve on state assessments, 18 percent improved on their math assessment and 22 percent improved in reading.
- Fifty-six percent of students needing to improve their GPA did so. On average, these students GPAs improved by 10 percent, from 1.9 to 2.1. There is also evidence that a greater volume of attendance hours and attending the program during the school year, rather than only in the summer, had a positive effect on student GPAs.
- Seventy-seven percent of students completed the 2021-22 school year with a passing GPA (1.3/C-).

- The 21st Century Teacher Survey results consistently showed large percentages of students improving on each measure. Classroom teachers may be able to detect small improvements in individual students before they show up on assessments or other measures. These findings may indicate that student improvements may be observed in the future. If students who did not need to improve are excluded from the analysis, each of the seven teacher survey indicators showed that nearly half of regular attendees improving according to 21st Century Teacher Survey data:
 - 64 percent of students with teacher survey data were reported as improving their homework completion to their teacher's satisfaction;
 - 63 percent of students with teacher survey data improved their class participation;
 - 48 percent of students with teacher survey data improved in the area of volunteering in class;
 - 53 percent of students with teacher survey data improved their class attentiveness;
 - 50 percent of students with teacher survey data improved their class behavior;
 - 55 percent of students with teacher survey data improved their academic performance;
 - 55 percent of students with teacher survey data improved their motivation to learn; and
 - 46 percent of students with teacher survey data improved their engagement in learning.
- Of students who needed to improve, 77 percent improved their school day attendance rate. There is evidence that a greater volume of 21st Century program attendance had a positive effect on attendance rates.
- Grantees served 10,525 adult family members of participating students.

Introduction

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION⁴

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provides federal funding for the establishment of community learning centers that offer academic and enrichment opportunities to children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, to meet state and local standards in core academic subjects through a broad array of activities that can complement their regular academic programs. Literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children must also be provided.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st Century) program is authorized under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (P.L. 107-110), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Pennsylvania's primary goal for its 21st Century program is to assist youth to meet state standards for core academic subjects by providing them with academic and enrichment opportunities. In addition to academics, centers are encouraged to offer participants a broad array of other services and programs during non-school hours, such as art, music, recreation activities, character education, career and technical training, drug and violence prevention programming, and technology education. Educational services for families of participating students, such as literacy instruction, computer training, or cultural enrichment, must also be included.⁵ Federal law requires that all 21st Century program sites provide academic enrichment activities and parental involvement activities. Programs are encouraged to use innovative instructional strategies, coordinate academics with local curricula and assessments, and use assessment data to inform instruction and evaluate results. Academics are to involve more than just helping participants with homework and should not just repeat school day activities.

Pennsylvania's 21st Century program encourages active youth and family participation to ensure that both have decision-making roles in the creation, operation, and evaluation of every 21st Century program in Pennsylvania. School and community collaboration is another key in meeting the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of children and families. Programs are to offer quarterly open house meetings and maintain an open-door policy where adult family members feel welcome and are encouraged to drop in.

All activities are to be based on rigorous scientific research and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) provides "principles of effectiveness" to guide programs in identifying and implementing programs that enhance student learning. Activities must address the needs of local schools and communities and be continuously evaluated at the local level.

⁴ Program information and requirements were adapted from 21st Century application and program guidance documentation.

⁵ The majority of 21st Century activities are to take place during non-school hours. However, activities for adult family members and pre-kindergarten students may take place during school hours if these times are the most appropriate to these constituents.

Grantee Eligibility

Federal law mandates, per section 4203 (a)(3), that any public or private organization may apply for funding if it proposes to serve students who primarily attend schools eligible for school-wide programs under Title I section 1114, or schools that serve a high percentage of students (at least 40 percent) from low-income families and the families of such students. Non-school applicant agencies must collaborate with local education agencies when applying for funds and may establish memoranda of understanding, formal contracts, or informal agreements to facilitate implementation and data collection.

Participant Eligibility

Eligible participants are public and private/nonpublic school students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Programs are to target the ages and grades deemed to be at greatest risk and those students who are academically below proficiency. At-risk behaviors might include poor school performance, poor school attendance, drug or alcohol abuse, criminal activity, or any other indicators judged by the applicant as placing the child at higher risk and greater need. Adult family members of students participating in the community learning center are to be served through educational activities that are appropriate for adults.

REPORTING VENUES

21 Annual Performance Report

21st Century is a federally-authorized program operating across the nation. One of the requirements of 21st Century grantees is to complete program and outcomes reporting in the federal 21APR system, where “APR” stands for Annual Performance Report. The 2021-22 year was the fifth year that the 21APR system operated.

The 21APR system collects information on grantees and their centers, program staffing information, activities, program attendance, student characteristics, and student outcomes based on federal measures. Student outcome measures included state reading and math assessment gains, reading and math report card grades, and teacher survey responses. However, at this time, no data or results entered by grantees are exportable for efficient state use.

State Reporting

State reporting took three forms: the PA Implementation Survey, Center Operations, and the De-identified Student Data Spreadsheet. State reporting forms provided grantees with a method of reporting information that Pennsylvania needs to examine state and cohort performance given that data are not exportable for state use from the 21APR system. Public school student and demographic data was collected via students’ PASecureIDs – provided in the Student Data Spreadsheet – from the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).⁶

⁶ In some cases where grantees were unable to obtain students’ PASecureIDs, they collected the demographic and outcome data themselves and reported it to state evaluators.
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The Allegheny Intermediate Unit, the contracted evaluator for Pennsylvania's 21st Century program, constructed and implemented the state reporting forms. Evaluators compiled the data from each source for all grantees and analyzed it overall, by cohort, and by grantee.

Other Data Sources

Additional information was collected about grantees and their programs by PDE and the Center for Schools and Communities, PDE's subcontractor for 21st Century technical assistance; however, these data/reports were typically not (intended to be) used for the state evaluation.

Grantees conduct a local level evaluation, and their contracted external local evaluator produces a report that they submit to the state. PDE program officers are the primary reviewers of these reports. The state evaluation team does not include grantee local evaluation information in the state evaluation process.

EVALUATION DESIGN

The evaluation of the 2021-22 program year of 21st Century programs in Pennsylvania includes information about the programs operated under the Cohort 8, Cohort 9, and Cohort 10 funding cycles. The 2021-22 program year included 153 grantees: Cohort 8 included 42 grantees, Cohort 9 included 42 grantees, and Cohort 10 included 69 grantees. Cohorts 9 and 10 were eligible to operate the full program year, which included summer 2021 and school year 2021-22. Cohort 8 ended December 31, 2021, so these grantees only operated for part of the program year.

The evaluation of Pennsylvania's 21st Century program examined three performance measures, within which grantees established their own performance indicators. The measures included:

1. Participants in 21st Century programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes;
2. Increasing percentages of students regularly participating in the program will meet or exceed state and local academic achievement standards in reading and math; and
3. Students participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance, and reduced disciplinary referrals.

PDE contracted with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program to fulfill federal requirements under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended, Sections 4202 (C) and 4203 (A) and Section H-5 of the *21st Century Community Learning Centers Non-Regulatory Guidance*:

States must conduct a comprehensive evaluation (directly, or through a grant or contract) of the effectiveness of programs and activities provided with 21st Century funds. In their applications to the Department, States are required to describe the performance indicators and performance measures they will use to evaluate local programs. States must also monitor the periodic evaluations of local programs and must disseminate the results of these evaluations to the public.

Findings

The program findings shared in this report include information reported by grantees and state-level program staff about the 2021-22 program year, which includes summer 2021 and school year 2021-22. The various reporting venues are explained in the prior section of this report.

GRANTEE CHARACTERISTICS

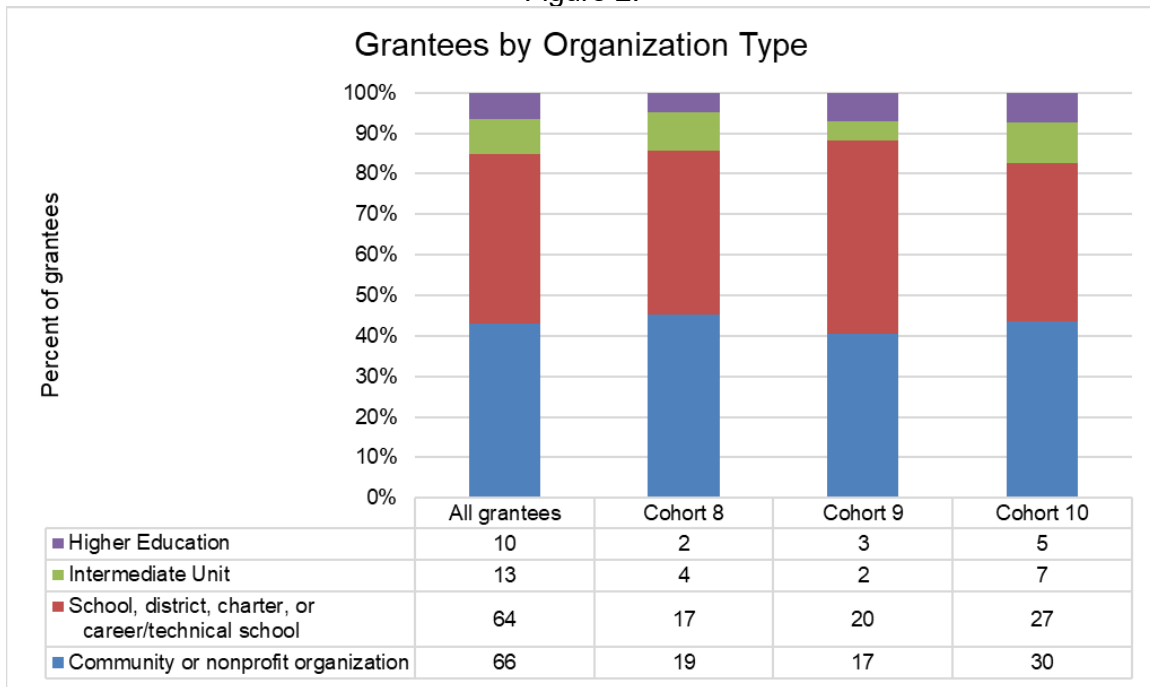
The 2021-22 program year included 153 grantees in three funding cycles (cohorts). Grantees were mainly community-based/nonprofit organizations (43 percent) or schools, districts, charter, or career/technical schools (42 percent). Cohort details are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1.



However, the grantee organization type is only indicative of the entity having fiscal and contractual responsibility for the program. Each grantee operated programming out of one or more centers (locations), which may be a different type than the grantee organization. For example, a community organization may operate its program in school buildings and a school district may operate its program in a community organization's facility, or some combination thereof. Each grantee was permitted to operate its program in whatever manner was described in its approved grant application based on the needs of the population to be served.

Figure 2.



Grantees operated programs out of 396 centers (99 Cohort 8 centers, 97 Cohort 9 centers, and 200 Cohort 10 centers). Grantees operated between one and 11 centers per grantee, with an average of three centers; however, the mode (most frequent value) was one center.

Evaluators asked grantees to indicate the geographic context of their programs. Fifty-eight percent of grantees classified their programs as operating in an urban environment; 24 percent were reported as rural, 6 percent were reported as suburban, and 13 percent were reported as a combination of these types. Results were similar across cohorts.

Figure 3.

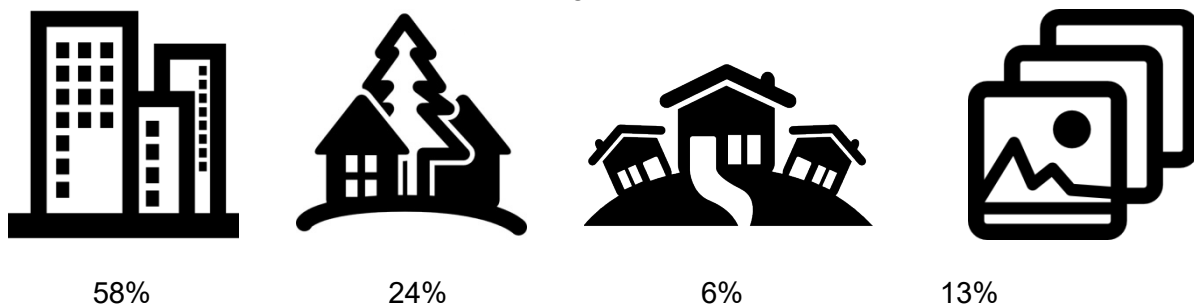
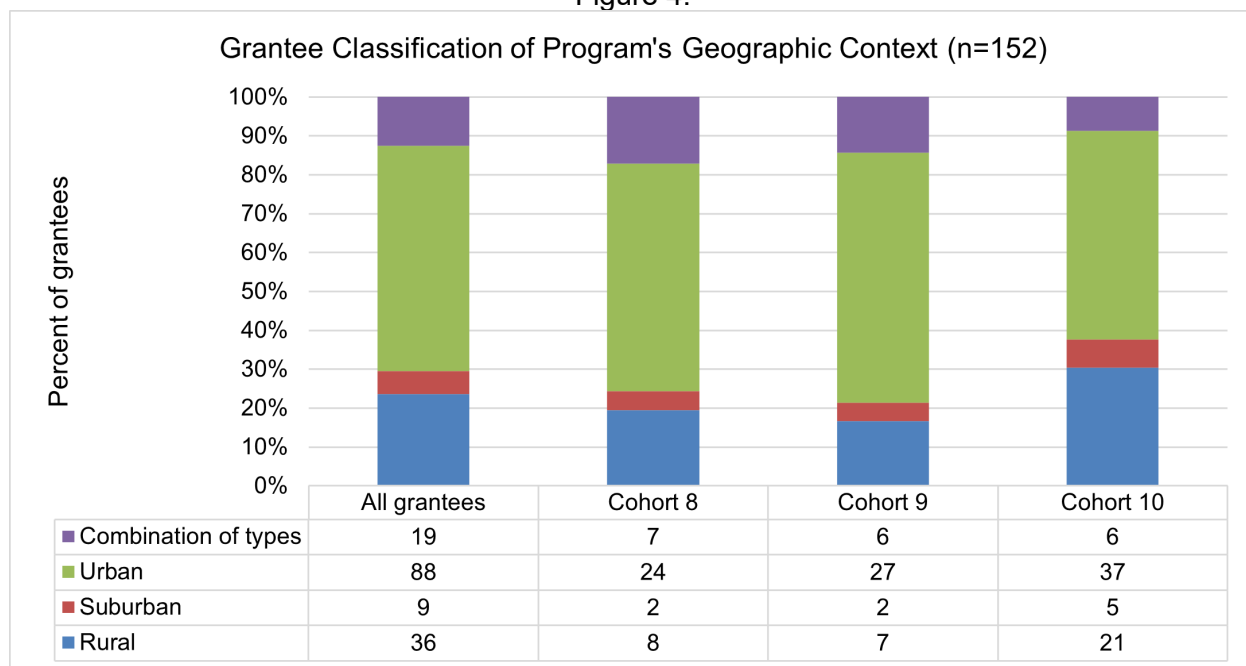


Figure 4.



PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

While the purpose of 21st Century programs is to provide out-of-school-time programs that offer students supplemental academic and enrichment activities and there are some operational requirements, the 21st Century grant affords grantees much program design flexibility.

Student demographics data was available for over 23,000 students (nearly three-fourths of all students).⁷ Data was either extracted from Pennsylvania's Information Management System using students' PAsSecureID number⁸ or reported by grantees for students who did not have an ID number or the number was unknown. Demographics information is helpful, as grantees are expected to prioritize at-risk and low-income populations as part of their grant eligibility requirements.

Of students with demographics data, over half were from Cohort 10 (51 percent), 26 percent were from Cohort 9, and 22 percent were from Cohort 8. These students were slightly more likely to be female (52 percent) than male (48 percent). These percentages are similar to those of the statewide public school population. Nearly three-fourths of students (73 percent) were considered economically disadvantaged, indicating that 21st Century grantees are prioritizing and reaching low-income populations.

Of students with race or ethnicity data, 40 percent identified as white, followed by 30 percent identifying as Black or African American, and 22 percent identifying as Hispanic or Latino. Other race and ethnicity categories account for less than ten percent of students. Overall, 21st Century programming was represented by a higher proportion of minority students than that of the entire statewide public school enrollment.

⁷ This figure has been rounded to the nearest hundredth.

⁸ A unique, numeric identified assigned to each student in Pennsylvania's public school system.

A total of 2,069, or roughly 9 percent of students with data, were classified as current or former English learners (ELs) (compared to 4 percent of all Pennsylvania public school students). Current ELs represented 7 percent of the students with demographics data. One percent were former ELs whose language abilities are monitored, and less than 1 percent were former ELs whose abilities no longer need to be monitored.

Of students with data, 21 percent were reported as having special needs. Of these 4,087 students, 45 percent were reported as having a specific learning disability, 21 percent had a speech or language impairment, and 17 percent had another health impairment. Other special needs were less common.

Table 1 provides counts and percentages for each of the demographic categories.

Table 1: Demographics of 21st Century Regular Attendees

Demographic	Count	Percentage	Statewide Percentage
Race/Ethnicity			
<i>American Indian / Alaskan Native</i>	58	<1%	<1%
<i>Asian</i>	410	2%	4%
<i>Black or African American</i>	7,026	30%	14%
<i>Hispanic</i>	5,090	22%	14%
<i>Two or more races</i>	1,365	6%	5%
<i>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic)</i>	22	<1%	<1%
<i>White</i>	9,460	40%	63%
Economically Disadvantaged			
<i>Yes</i>	16,723	73%	46%
<i>No</i>	6,160	27%	54%
Sex			
<i>Female</i>	12,197	52%	48%
<i>Male</i>	11,238	48%	52%
English Learners (ELs)			
<i>Current EL</i>	1,638	8%	<i>Not available</i>
Demographic	Count (n=5,225)	Percentage	Statewide Percentage
<i>Former EL (monitored)</i>	268	1%	<i>Not available</i>
<i>Former EL (unmonitored)</i>	163	0%	<i>Not available</i>
Disability			
<i>Yes</i>	4,877	21%	<i>Not available</i>
<i>No</i>	17,811	79%	<i>Not available</i>

Operations

Grantees could operate programs during the summer of 2021,⁹ school year 2021-22, or both. Specific date ranges were not prescribed to allow for the local variance of school year start or end dates. Program guidance required grantees to operate a minimum of 36 school year weeks, for 12-15 hours per week after school, unless approved to operate otherwise. Grantees reported operations details in the state 21st Century Dashboard.

Grantees operated programs out of 396 centers.

Grantees operated 237 centers during summer 2021. Of these centers, 201 had detailed operations data available.¹⁰ These 201 centers operated between seven and 45 hours per week, with the bulk of these hours occurring during the day on weekdays. Center operations averaged 21 hours per week during the summer with the most frequent operations volume being 16 hours per week. Centers operated between three and six days per week. Most of the centers (95 percent) operated either four or five days per week. Centers offered these programs between one and nine weeks per center; 67 centers (30 percent) operated for six or more weeks.

During the school year, programming occurred through 372 centers (94 percent of all centers). Detailed operations data was available for 338 of these centers.

Grantees offered programming between two and seven days per week, with an average of five days per week, and between three and 65 total hours per week,¹¹ with an average of 13 hours per week. The minimum requirement for hours per week during the school year was 12 hours; 319 centers with data (94 percent) met or exceeded this requirement.

Centers operated between five and 41 total weeks during the school year 2021-22, with 171 centers (51 percent of school year centers) operating for 36 weeks or more, which was the expected level of implementation for a full year's program. Programming ran for an average of 31 weeks.

Compared to last year when nearly half of grantees offered virtual/remote programming (215, 48%), thirty-five percent of grantees (53) did so in the 2021-22 program year. Sixty-five percent (98) centers operated in person. Of grantees who operated virtually, the majority (46, 89%) provided live/synchronous online instruction for students and did so for most of the programming time (38 grantees, 70 percent of the time). Other methods utilized for virtual programming included recorded/asynchronous instruction (22, 42%), packet-based materials for remote learning (19, 37%) web-based or app-based programming (14, 27%), and phone-based programming (5, 10%). Fifteen percent provided recorded/asynchronous virtual instruction, and three percent provided phone instruction.

⁹ Generally, grantees were required to operate during both summer and school year or school year only, depending on their contract. In some cases, a grantee contract ended early making them eligible to operate during a portion of the year.

¹⁰ Due to an error in the state database, some grantees' detailed centers information was lost.

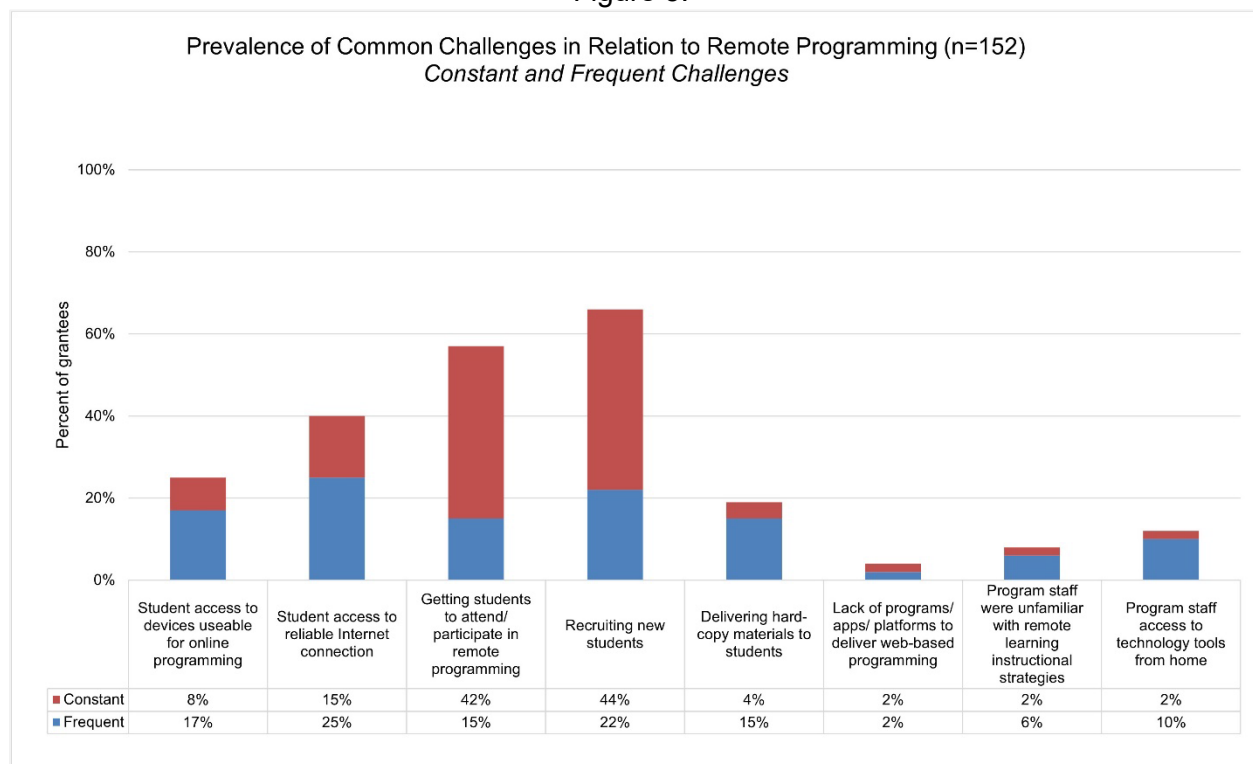
¹¹ Centers reported PreK and K12 program hours separately.

Based on information grantees (152)¹² shared in the Implementation Survey about remote learning programming¹³:

- 48 grantees offered synchronous virtual activities.
- 17 grantees indicated they used asynchronous activities.
- 15 grantees reported that they used paper-based remote learning activities.
- 8 grantees reported using remote learning activities via email.
- 15 grantees reported using computer programs or app-based activities (not staff-led instruction).
- 30 grantees provided one-on-one help to individual students.
- 42 grantees provided support to students in small groups.
- 14 grantees allowed students to work alone at their own pace.

Evaluators asked grantees to share their experience with common challenges in their transition to remote program delivery. Grantees were presented with a list of common challenges and asked to rate the prevalence of these challenges for their programs. Frequency options included 'constant challenge,' 'frequent challenge,' 'occasional challenge,' and 'did not experience this challenge.' The following graph illustrates these most frequent challenges. Recruiting new students was a top challenge for grantees.

Figure 5.



¹² Unless otherwise indicated, all 152 grantees are included in the counts and percentages of each survey question.

¹³ Counts include grantees who indicated that they used the following activities 'most or all of the time' or 'some of the time'. Grantees who indicated that they used the activities 'rarely' or 'not at all/did not use' were excluded from the counts.

Grantees were also asked to estimate the average ratio of students to teacher during programming¹⁴. The most common answer was ten students to one teacher (22 percent of 148 respondents), followed by 15 students to one teacher (18 percent), and 12 students to one teacher (13 percent). The smallest ratio listed was one to one and the largest was 26 students to one teacher. On average, programs had a student-teacher ratio of 11:1.

In the Implementation Survey, grantees were asked how they provided transportation during traditional, in-person programming. Grantees indicated that parents most often provided transportation (68 percent), followed by 43 percent of grantees providing transportation during the school year. Thirty-six percent of grantees reported that most students live within walking distance of their center. Less commonly selected options are as follows:

- Schools/districts provided transportation (36 percent);
- Grantee provided transportation during summer programming (35 percent);
- Grantee provided transportation for field trips and special events (30 percent);
- Grantee did not provide any transportation (28 percent);
- Students took public transportation (28 percent);
- Grantees provided transportation on weekdays (26 percent);
- Grantee shared that transportation is unnecessary (13 percent);
- Students drove themselves to programming (2 percent), and;
- Grantee provided transportation on the weekends (<1 percent).

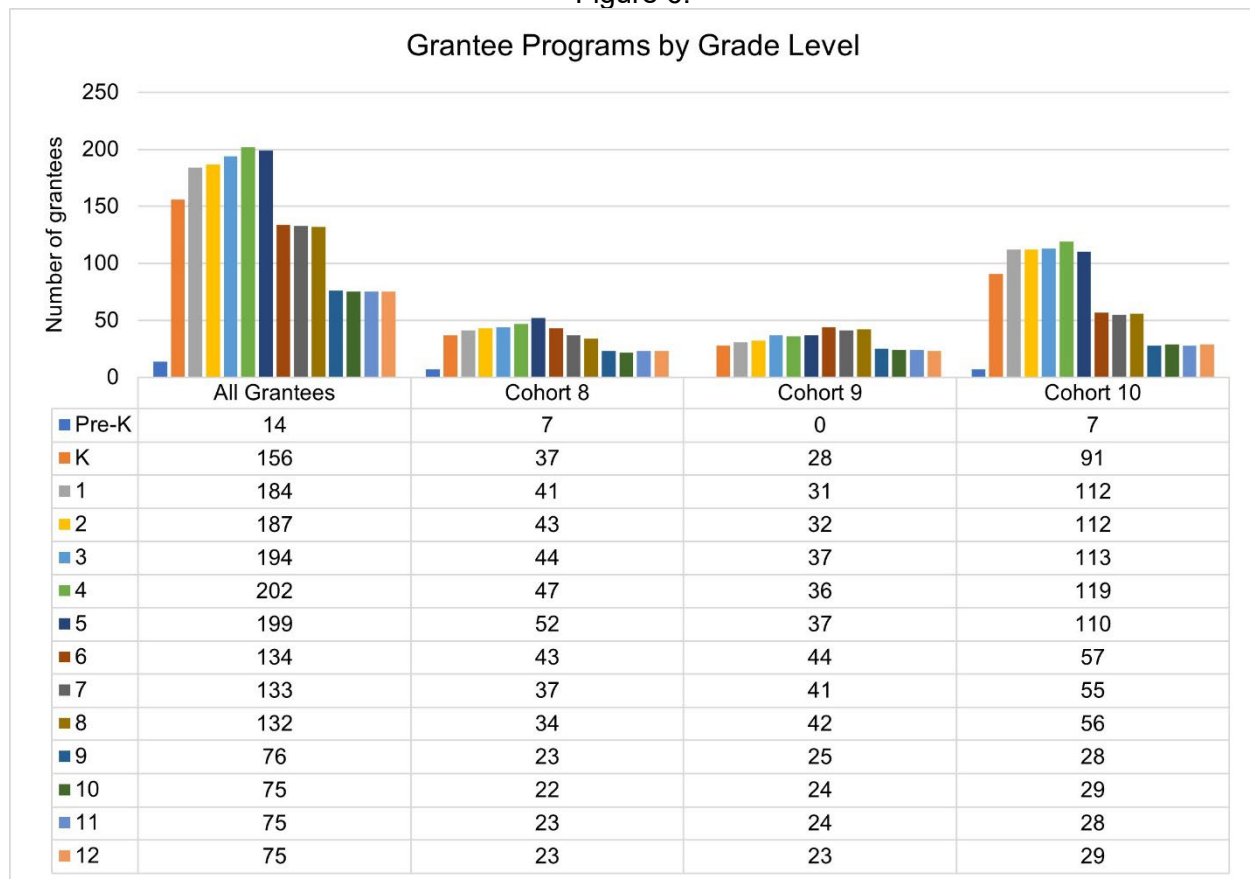
Program Design

Program guidance included a list of allowable activities. In the PA Implementation Survey, grantees indicated which program areas they addressed from a list of 15 areas outlined in Pennsylvania's program guidance. The largest percentages of grantees indicated they offered academic enrichment (97 percent), STEM activities (93 percent), literacy education (88 percent), and/or healthy and active lifestyle education (84 percent). Less common service categories included expanded library service hours (16 percent), assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled (29 percent), and/or services for individuals with disabilities (35 percent).

Grantees were most likely to serve grades 1-7, with between 58 percent of grantees selecting one or more of the grade levels in this range. Grades 3-5 had the highest percentage (60 percent of grantees, or between 81 and 89 grantees).

¹⁴ Some grantee responses included multiple student-to-staff ratios depending on summer- or school-operating years, grade levels, or types of programs offered.
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2021-22 State Evaluation Report
Originated May 12, 2023

Figure 6.



Grantees indicated in the PA Implementation Survey strategies they used to identify students to enroll. Grantees could select from a list of strategies or share their own and they could select all strategies that applied to them. The largest portion of grantees (92 percent) used teacher or school recommendation to identify students to enroll, followed by parent referral (85 percent of grantees), among others.

Grantees shared a variety of strategies they used to identify students' needs in the PA Implementation Survey. The largest portion of grantees (93 percent) used teacher or school recommendations or referrals to identify students' needs, followed by parent feedback (88 percent of grantees), observation (87 percent of grantees), and report card grades (81 percent of grantees), among others.

When selecting an intervention, grantees shared a variety of information or qualities that they considered to be the most important. Based on the PA Implementation Survey, alignment with PA academic standards was the most common (74 percent of grantees), followed by the intervention complements/]matches district programming (67 percent of grantees), and demonstrated program success with specific student groups (63 percent of grantees), among others.

Identification and recruitment challenges grantees reported included parent commitment to consistent attendance (62 percent), competition with other programs (56 percent of grantees),

and parent involvement and awareness (53 percent of grantees). Seven percent of grantees indicated that they did not experience or were not aware of any such challenges.

Grantees were asked in the Implementation Survey to describe strategies/protocol their staff used to encourage regular and repeated attendance at their program. The largest portion of grantees (97 percent) did so by offering high-interest activities, followed by program staff contacting parents of students who were absent from the program (84 percent of grantees, among others).

Grantees were then asked to share which strategies were the most effective in encouraging regular and repeated attendance in *virtual* programming, if applicable. A variety of strategies were shared, with the most frequent strategies including:

- Communication with families/students about programming or student absences via phone calls, emails, text messages, apps, learning platforms, social media, or letters;
- Incentives/prizes for participation and/or attendance;
- Offering high-interest activities;
- Students helped plan activities;
- Allowing students to openly communicate with their peers during non-instruction time;
- Fun activities/games, and;
- One-on-one or small group tutoring.

In addition to examining implementation and operations of 21st Century programs, the PA Implementation Survey asked grantees to indicate how they collaborated with students' schools. Grantees collaborated in multiple ways, but nearly all grantees indicated that they maintain ongoing communication with school administrators (99 percent of grantees), and many grantees maintain ongoing communication with school day teachers (97 percent). Many grantees (85 percent) reported that school day teachers also served as program staff, providing a direct link between school and the 21st Century program.

The Implementation Survey asked grantees to share any models or pre-packaged programs that were being used academically in their program. These items have been categorized into the following list, given in order of frequency:

- Virtual learning platforms (e.g. Edgenuity, iReady, Edmentum, IXL, etc.);
- Websites providing digital learning resources and lessons (e.g., Scholastic, PBS, National Geographic, Mindworks, Discovery Education, etc.);
- Math learning websites, curriculum, apps, etc. (e.g., MANGO Math, Rocket Math, NASA FlyBy Math, Imagine Math, etc.);
- STEM/STEAM learning websites, curriculum, apps, etc. (Green STEM, Science Explorers, Gizmos Science, Stemfinity, etc.);
- SEL resources, programs, etc. (e.g., Second Step Program, CASEL, Suite 360, Taproot Learning, etc.);
- ELA/literacy learning websites, curriculum, apps, etc. (e.g., Lexia Literacy, Foundations, Accelerated Reader, Playbook Reader's Theater, etc.);
- Fitness/wellness resources, programs, etc. (e.g., SPARK, PowerUp Fitness, CATCH Program, etc.), and;
- Less common themes, such as college and career readiness, drug and alcohol prevention, environmental education, arts, and others.

Grantees were also asked in the survey to describe how their program integrated the school day curricula into its activities and how the educational activities offered supported regular school-day learning. Programs most commonly worked with school day teachers and administrators to develop their programming. Other strategies that the programs used are as follows, listed in order of frequency:

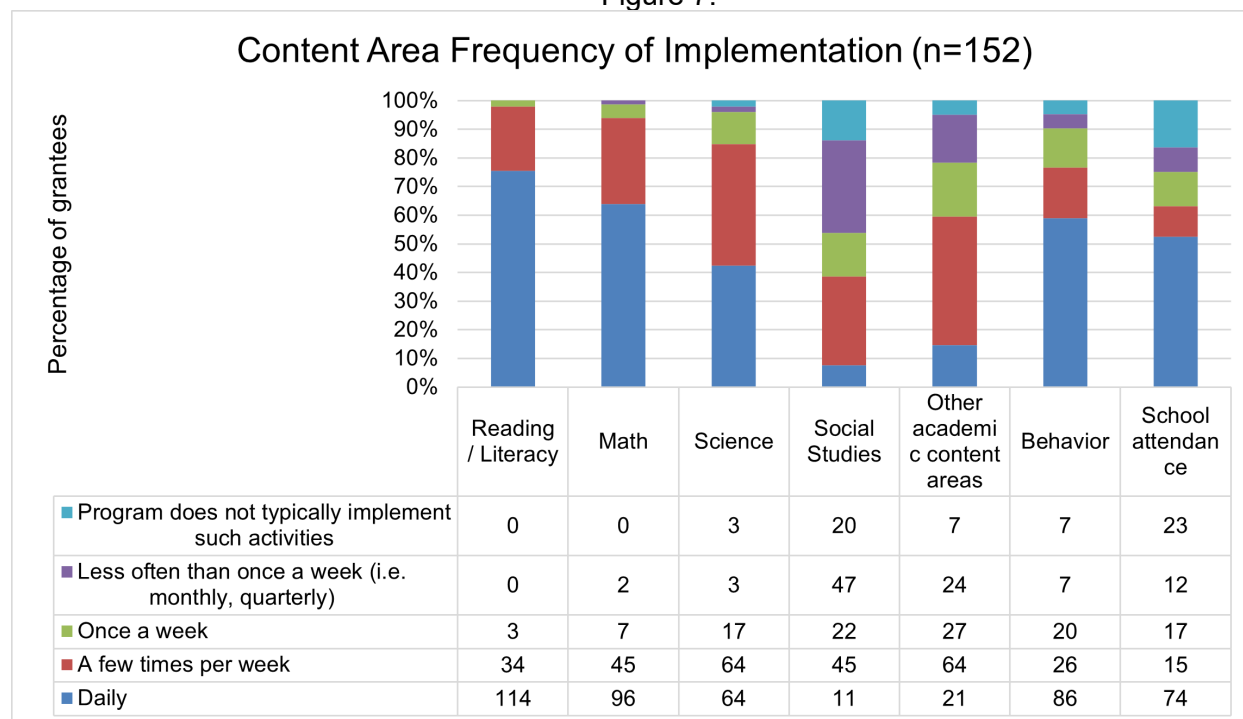
- Designing programming after school-day curriculum and/or state standards;
- Providing engaging activities that reinforced school day lessons;
- Hiring school day teachers as program staff, which allowed for teachers to easily extend school day lessons and understand the needs of the students;
- Making data-based decisions on programming and students' needs (e.g., via test scores, student portfolios, grades, etc.);
- Providing individual or small-group tutoring, and;
- Other, less common strategies.

In the Implementation Survey, grantees were asked to describe the strategies/protocol their program used to influence positive student behavior (for students with such a need). The most common strategy was offering Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) activities or curriculum. Other strategies included, in no particular order:

- Supportive staff and a focus on building positive relationships with students;
- Creating a “safe space” environment in which students felt comfortable with open communication;
- Physical activity;
- Teamwork and problem-solving activities;
- Cultural competency skill development;
- Self-confidence and interpersonal skills;
- Student leadership opportunities;
- Staff training of SEL curriculum and implementation;
- Peer mentoring / support sessions;
- Guest speakers and/or mentors who provided SEL education or additional student assistance;
- Counseling sessions for students;
- Mental health educational components;
- Incentives and rewards for attendance and/or appropriate behaviors;
- Behavior modification systems and/or tools;
- Requiring parents and/or students to sign a code of conduct contract;
- Communication with family and/or staff of any issues or concerns;
- Referral to specialized services (if appropriate);
- Frequent student reminders of program rules/expectations;
- Data-driven and individualized learning plans; and
- Utilizing behavior redirection strategies.

In the PA Implementation Survey, grantees were asked to indicate the frequency with which they implemented activities relevant to key content areas within a typical program week. Reading and math activities were most frequently indicated as daily activities; 75 percent of grantees indicated daily reading or literacy activities and 63 percent of grantees indicated they had daily math activities in a typical program week. Grantees implemented science, social studies, and other areas less frequently.

Figure 7.



In the Implementation Survey, grantees were also asked to describe the strategies/protocol their program used to influence positive student behavior. The most common strategies were communication with parents (91 percent of grantees) and communication with school/teachers/administrators (91 percent of grantees), followed by character education activities (77 percent of grantees), among others. Thirteen percent of grantees reported that improving behavior and discipline were not focuses of their respective programs.

Grantees also used a variety of strategies to positively influence student attendance at school. According to the Implementation Survey, the most common strategy was communication with school/teachers/administrators (86 percent of grantees), followed by communication with parents (84 percent of grantees), among others. Ten percent of grantees reported that improving school attendance was not a focus of their respective programs.

Adult Family Member Activities

Programs were required to serve parents and family members of participating students. In the PA Implementation Survey, grantees could indicate the types of parent or family activities offered from a list of options or describe other activity types. Grantees could select all activity types that applied to their program for 2021-21. A majority of grantees selected open house activities (82 percent of grantees), followed distantly by family literacy nights (50 percent of grantees) and health, nutrition, fitness, or wellness activities (49 percent), with other options selected to a lesser extent.

Table 2 provides counts and percentages of grantees offering different types of adult family member opportunities. This table simply indicates the number of grantees offering such activities and not the frequency, duration, content, or intensity of such offerings.

Table 2. Grantees' Adult Family Member Activity Types and Prevalence

Activity Type	Number of Grantees Offering Such Activities	Percentage of Grantees Offering Such Activities
Adult education opportunities and/or GED classes	21	14%
Adult ESL services	10	7%
Career/job training	23	15%
Computer/technology training	26	17%
Cultural events	57	38%
Family literacy nights	76	50%
Health, nutrition, fitness, or wellness activities	75	49%
Open House	124	82%
Parent reinforcement of the importance of school and education	54	36%
Parent training on how to help their children with schoolwork	42	28%
Parent training on post-secondary options and planning	23	15%
Parent volunteering at the program	13	9%
Parent/Center staff meetings	47	31%
Parenting skills classes	33	22%
Structured family recreation	44	29%
Other	23	15%

Grantees also reported how they communicate with parents, students, and the community. Grantees most often indicated phone calls as a method of sharing information (91 percent of grantees), followed by fliers, promotional materials, and/or newsletters (89 percent of grantees), Open Houses and/or family nights (88 percent) and informal feedback or communication (88 percent of grantees), among other formal and informal methods selected with lower frequency.

Grantees reported counts of parents/adult family members participating in program activities. For adult family members of participating students who participated in at least one activity of any type during this program year, all 152 grantees (100 percent) reported serving parents/adult family members and these grantee counts ranged from one adult to 599, with an average of 69 adults. Grantee adult counts totaled 10,525 adult family members participating, which is a 44% higher proportion of adult participation compared to the prior year.

In terms of participation in parent education or engagement activities, including such activities as adult ESL, parent education/workshops, computer training, parenting skills, and similar offerings, grantees (102, 67 percent of grantees) reported serving 4,296 adults, with grantee counts ranging between one and 398 adult family members participate in such activities, with an average of 28 participants.

In terms of participation in parent involvement activities, such as open house events, family nights, and similar opportunities, 126 grantees (83 percent of grantees) reported serving 7,714 adult family members with grantee counts between three and 398 adult family member participants, with an average of 51 participants.

Grantee Provision of Professional Learning Opportunities

Of the 152 grantees, 99 percent indicated that professional learning opportunities in some form were available to staff, either through the grantee or their home school/agency. This professional learning most typically took the form of staff orientations (93 percent of grantees) and/or health and safety trainings (81 percent of grantees), among other options. Professional development sessions and trainings were typically provided by grantee staff (86% of 152 respondents), presenters at conferences (49%), partners (49%), contractors/vendors (47%), and the school district/LEA (41%). Grantee contracts require them to participate in certain professional learning and conference opportunities, which are detailed in the following section.

When asked to indicate how professional development learning, information, and resources were shared with other program staff, email was selected most (98 percent of grantees), followed by staff meetings (95 percent) and informal conversations (91 percent) among other methods to a lesser extent.

State Provision of Professional Learning Opportunities

PDE and the Center for Schools and Communities, PDE's contractor to provide training and technical assistance for PA Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC), offered and facilitated grantee access to numerous professional development opportunities in the 2021-2022 academic year. These opportunities occurred in four capacities: the Extra Learning Opportunities: Promising Practices – Proven Strategies Conference, the annual 21st CCLC Grantees' Meeting, Regional Trainings, and webinars throughout the year. The Center for Schools and Communities was primarily responsible for state-level training opportunities and submitted a full report about the trainings to PDE. Included here is an overview intended to provide a synopsis of the scope and reach of state-offered professional development opportunities.

The 2022 Extra Learning Opportunities (ELO) Conference took place virtually from February 15 – 17, 2022. Dr. Karen Mapp, Senior Lecturer on Education, Harvard School of Education opened with a keynote on the topic of *“Embracing a new Normal: Family Engagement in Afterschool.”* Dr. Traci Baxley, DEI consultant, closed the conference with the topic *“The Healing Power of Friendships and Relationships – How Afterschool Programs Can Foster Belonging in Students and Staff.”* ELO offered five 2-hour Institutes and fifteen 90-minute workshops. Content featured presenters representing education agencies, state agencies, and leading state, and national organizations. The conference feedback overall was positive, and the sessions were rated favorably. Among those with the highest ratings:

- *“The Critical 4 R's of Trauma Responsive Education”*
- *“Create Opportunities for Students to Explore the World”*
- *“Resources for Including Environmental Education in Your Afterschool Program”*
- *“5 Reading Activities to Increase Engagement and Rigor”*
- *“How to Be the Supervisor Your Staff Need”*

The 21st CCLC Grantees' Meeting was held on April 19, 2022. It was offered in a hybrid format whereby grantees could choose to attend in person or virtually. The meeting offered updates from the PA Department of Education, from the 21st CCLC Advisory Board and PA Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network. Following a break for lunch, successes of the PA 21st CCLC programs were shared. The day concluded with *“Community Violence Interventions for 21st Century Community Learning Centers”* presented by Dana Milakovic. There were twenty-five in-person and 90 virtual attendees.

Two Regional Trainings were held virtually during the month of October 2021. Each session's content was identical, and attendance was nearly equal with 143 attendees on October 19 and 144 attendees on October 21. The training was titled "*Cultural Responsiveness for Afterschool Leaders*" and covered the following content where participants:

- Reflected on their understanding of the role of culture in shaping their identity and considered how this impacts youth and their families;
- Created shared language and a vision for embracing the skills, talents, and expertise of youth;
- Had the opportunity for self-reflection and discussion with peers on promoting cultural diversity and creating an inclusive environment.

The following webinars were offered in the 21-22 year:

- July 7 and 8, 2021- Continuing the Conversation with Dr. Rich Milner on his book "Start Where You Are, But Don't Stay There"
- October 28, 2021 – "Cohort 8 Grant Closeout"
- November 17, 2021 – NASA Challenge Project
- January 12, 2022 – Cohort 11 Pre-Grant Release for School Districts and LEAs
- January 14, 2022 – Cohort 11 Pre-Grant Release for Community and Faith-Based Agencies
- February 4, 2022 – Grant Writing
- April 14, 2022 – 21st CCLC Fiscal Q&A Session

Of the seven professional development webinar opportunities offered (Table 3), the session titled "*Grant Writing Webinar*" was the most highly attended, with 323 participants tuning into the presentation where they heard specifics important to the Information for Applicant (IFA) and how to respond to it. The second most popular webinar was the "*2022 Pre-grant Release Webinar*" that went over how to apply for a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant, with a total of 212 attendees.

Table 3. Webinar Details

Topic	Presenter(s)	Month/Year	Participants
Continuing the Conversation: Dr. Milner's 2021 ELO Keynote Address (Equity, Social Justice in Education)	Dr. Richard Milner, Professor and Chair of Education and Professor of Education in the Department of Teaching and Learning, Peabody College of Vanderbilt University	July 2021	32
Grant Closeout Webinar	Rachel Baur- Program Officer (PDE) and Leslie McConnell - Program Director of Evaluation, Grants, & Data (AIU3)	October 2021	104
Celebrating the 2021 NASA/21st Century Community Learning Centers Project – “Tour of the Night Sky”	Linda Powell Planetarium Director / Museum Educator II The State Museum of Pennsylvania	November 2021	Many virtual classrooms
Pre 2022 Grant Release Webinar – LEA, CS, IU	PA Department of Education's 21st CCLC Program Supervisor, Craig Norman Scott & PA Department of Education's 21 st CCLC Program Officer, WaTanya Ney	January 2022	188
Pre 2022 Grant Release Webinar - CBOs	PA Department of Education's 21st CCLC Program Supervisor, Craig Norman Scott & PA Department of Education's 21 st CCLC Program Officer, WaTanya Ney	January 2022	212
Grant Writing Webinar	PA Department of Education's 21st CCLC Program Supervisor, Craig Norman Scott & PA Department of Education's 21 st CCLC Program Officer, WaTanya Ney	February 2022	323
Fiscal Q&A	PA Department of Education's 21st CCLC Program Supervisor, Craig Norman Scott & PA Department of Education's 21 st CCLC Program Officer, WaTanya Ney	April 2022	86

Professional Learning and Support Needs

Within the PA Implementation Survey, grantees had the opportunity to share or explain their needs or interests for additional training or support; about 61 percent of grantees provided a substantive response. These needs and interests are outlined in the following pages in no particular order. Common themes included needs related to staff training in social/emotional learning, parent engagement/involvement/programming, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) tools and techniques, and successful student recruitment and retention strategies, which have been common themes in the past as well. Programs expressed interest in these items as they relate to in-person programming, as well as several ongoing virtual/hybrid programs, due to COVID-19 response.

Identification, Recruitment, and Retention

- Recruitment and retention strategies, especially for middle and high school students and for virtual and hybrid program models;
- Maintaining positive relationships with school administration and staff;
- Collaborative efforts with school administration, teachers, and parents regarding student recruitment and retention;
- Maintaining consistent attendance amongst target populations;
- Development of a recruitment budget template; and
- Social media-based tools for recruiting students.

Operations and Implementation

- Continued support and guidance related to COVID-19 response;
- Strategies on diversity and equity education;
- Education of issues faced by marginalized groups;
- Behavior and classroom management training;
- Application of in-person guidelines and policies to virtual settings;
- Training for new staff;
- Strategies for staff to develop and implement their own programs;
- Ongoing, continuous professional development opportunities;
- Strategies for increased family engagement and involvement, especially due to effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Development of a monthly, comprehensive task list for staff;
- Networking opportunities for other grantees and/or stakeholders
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) tools and techniques for staff implementation;
- Meeting 21CCLS standards;
- Career development opportunities for students;
- Curriculum development for individual student needs (i.e., reading/literacy, health education, socio-emotional needs, behavioral needs);
- Positive behavior supports;
- PDE webinars for staff;
- Staff trainings on populations with specific needs and/or backgrounds;
- Virtual learning best practices;
- Strategies for consistent program attendance (i.e., incentives, rewards, etc.);
- Classroom and/or time management skill development for staff;
- Strategies to address transportation issues and barriers; and

- Financial supports.

Data and Evaluation

- Training on gathering and reporting data;
- Program evaluation development opportunities;
- Issues with database transfers and recording; and
- Using data to guide daily program implementation and reporting.

Creative and Innovative Strategies

In the PA Implementation Survey, grantees had the opportunity to share what they believed were creative or innovative strategies being used in their programs to engage students and address their needs; about 84 percent of grantees shared one or more strategies. These are listed here, in no particular order. Comments related to STEM/STEAM activities were most common.

- Partnerships with providers to develop or enhance curriculum;
- Hands-on STEAM curriculum;
- Identifying student needs/interests via surveys, assessment data, and informal conversations with students and/or parents;
- Enrollment packages that collect student data and family goals;
- 1:1, small group, or peer-to-peer tutoring for students;
- Credit recovery programming;
- Collaboration with school teachers in curriculum programming;
- Outdoor programming;
- Creative arts programming;
- Interactive activities using technology;
- Visuals created to engage students;
- Incentive- and reward-based systems to reinforce consistent attendance;
- Peer-led activities;
- High-interest student clubs;
- Professional development activities;
- Curriculum development based on student interests;
- Cooking activities;
- Frequent breaks for students;
- Discussion of social issue topics and the roles students play in them;
- Hiring teachers as program staff;
- Showcasing student work made during programming;
- Information sessions for families with school administration;
- Digital program advertisements;
- College and/or career-readiness programming;
- Guest speakers that promoted healthy behaviors and lifestyles;
- Partnerships with community organizations;
- Community service projects;
- Monthly themes for programming;
- SEL and/or wellness activities;
- Culturally relevant activities; and

- Environmental education programming.

Social Emotional Learning and Environmental Education Program Funding

During the 2021-22 year, PDE made available additional supplementary funding to existing grantees to implement social and emotional learning (SEL) programs and/or environmental education programs. Funds were available on a competitive basis. Grantees reported on their implementation of these funds in the Implementation Survey. During the 2021-22 year, mini grants were only applicable for programs in Cohort 9.

Only 15 grantees in Cohort 9 were approved for these supplemental programs and funds:

- **10 grantees operated SEL programs; and**
- **Five grantees operated environmental education programs.**

Grantees delivered these activities through a combination of program staff, school or LEA staff, community partners, and private contractors. Programming was offered to students from grades K-12.

Of the 10 grantees offering SEL programs, three (30 percent) offered SEL activities daily; five (50 percent) offered them several times per week; and two (20 percent) offered such activities once per week.

Of the five grantees offering environmental education programs, one (20 percent) offered activities daily, one (20 percent) offered them several times a week, one (20 percent) offered them once a week, and two (40 percent) offered them two to three times per month.

Evaluators asked grantees to briefly explain the nature of their social emotional learning and environmental education programs.

Social emotional learning programs covered topics including:

- SEL-based curriculums;
- Positive behavior activities;
- Self-expression;
- Diversity and culture;
- Drug abstinence;
- Violence prevention;
- Relationship skills; and
- Self-awareness and self-management.

Environmental education topics or programs included:

- Outdoor learning opportunities;
- Gardening skills;
- Field trips to environmental centers;
- Climate and weather education;
- Strategies to reduce and recycle waste; and
- Community environmental service opportunities.

Program Participation

Grantees served approximately 32,724 students over the course of the summer 2021 and school year 2021-22 program year, which is a nearly 25 percent increase from the previous year. Pennsylvania public school enrollment, based on PDE public enrollment records for the 2021-22 academic year, was 1,739,452 students. This means that Pennsylvania's 21st Century programs served approximately 1.9 percent of the Pennsylvania public school population, an increase of 0.3 percentage points from 2020-21.

Under typical circumstances, an individual student would only receive services through one program/grantee. However, it is possible that a student may receive services under more than one grant. A student might transition from one grant to another: 1) because of normal grade progression (for example being eligible for one grade level and grant in summer and a different grade level and grant in the school year); 2) because a program ends; or 3) if the student moves to a new residence and is eligible for their new school's program. For 2021-22, approximately 573 students across 55 grantees were served under more than one grant, as determined by each student's PASecureID, name, and other identifying information in the student dataset. This count is considered in the 32,724 unique count above, but these 573 students served through more than one cohort may be reported within each cohort's results as appropriate. However, as these 573 students make up 1.8 percent of the students served through 21st Century, their inclusion is highly unlikely to influence results in any considerable way.

Across cohorts, Cohort 10 had the largest portion of students (50 percent), followed by Cohort 9 (26 percent), and Cohort 8 (23 percent). Student participation was previously calculated by total number of days attended. With the implementation of the new GPRAs in summer 2021, grantees were required to track attendance in terms of hours. Participation ranged from 11 to 1,020 students per grantee, with an average of 218 students per grantee. Across all grantees, students attended an average of 102 program hours, but a median of 65 program hours, indicating that the average was skewed by the smaller number of students who attended high volumes of programming.

Attendance hours were broken into six hour bands, determined by the new GPRAs. Across all cohorts, no one hour band was most common, with most students attending between 15-44 hours (21 percent), 45-89 hours (20 percent), or 90-179 hours (20 percent). Eighteen percent of students attended less than 15 hours and ten percent attended 180-269 hours, while nine percent attended 270 hours or more. Approximately 40 percent of students attended 90 hours or more, which is the federally recommended, research-based dosage of hours and captures students who would have been considered regular attendees (30 or more attendance days) under the old GPRA. These results were similar across cohorts, with the exception of Cohort 8, where more students attended less than 15 hours (26 percent) or 15-hours (25 percent). The lower attendance volume is likely attributed to Cohort 8 grants ending in December 2021.

Grantees reported in their Implementation Survey that most often used high interest activities (97 percent of grantees) and parent outreach following absences (84 percent of grantees), among other strategies, to encourage regular and repeated program attendance.

Additional details about program participation are shown in the following figures.

Figure 8.

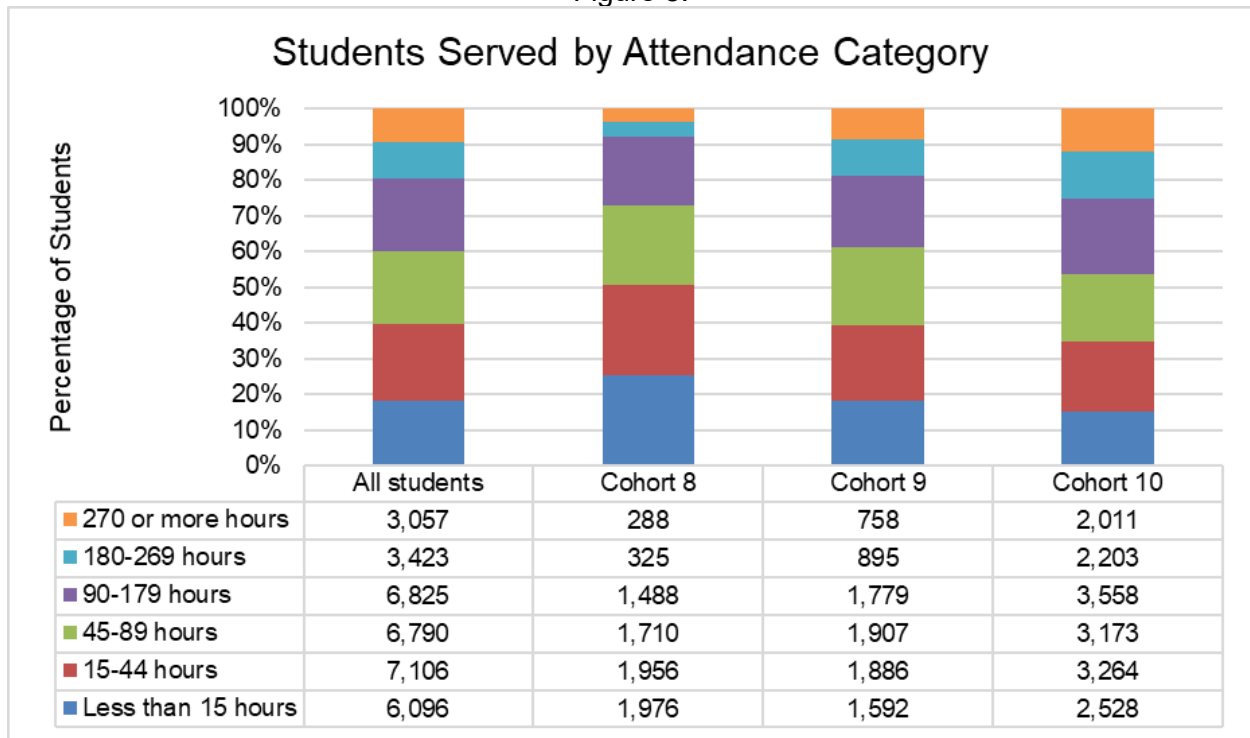


Figure 9.

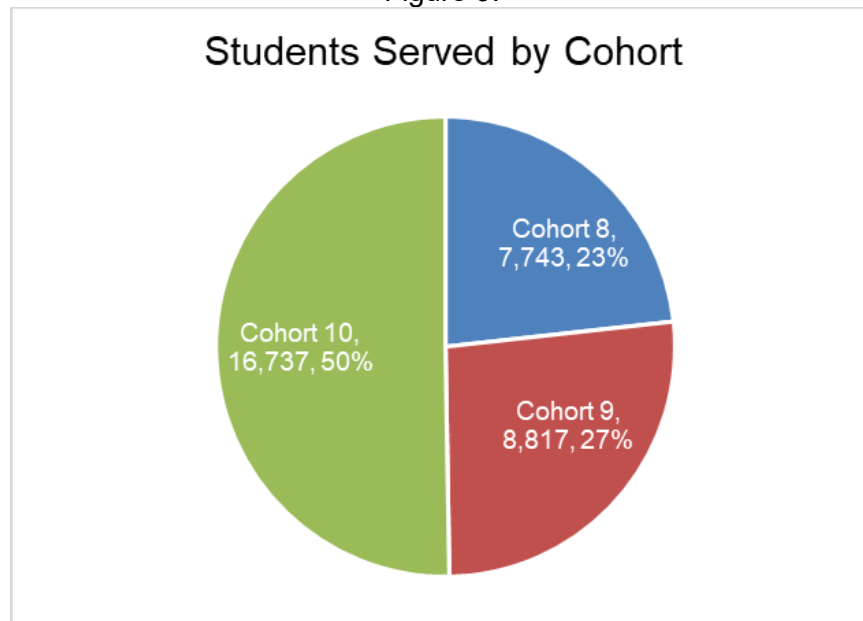
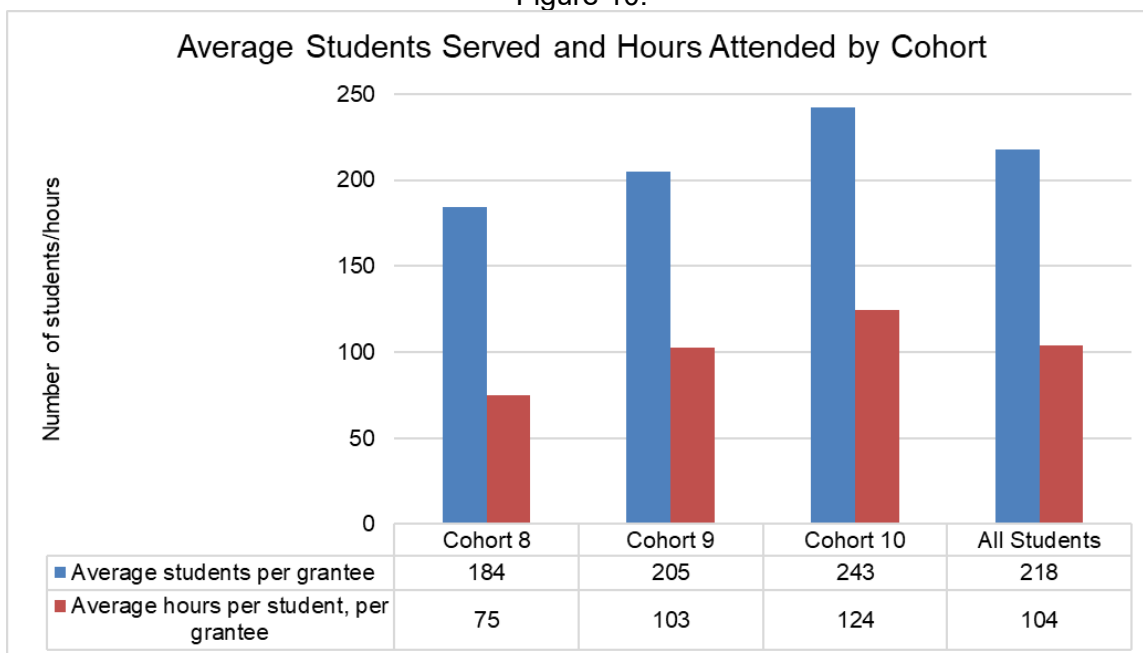
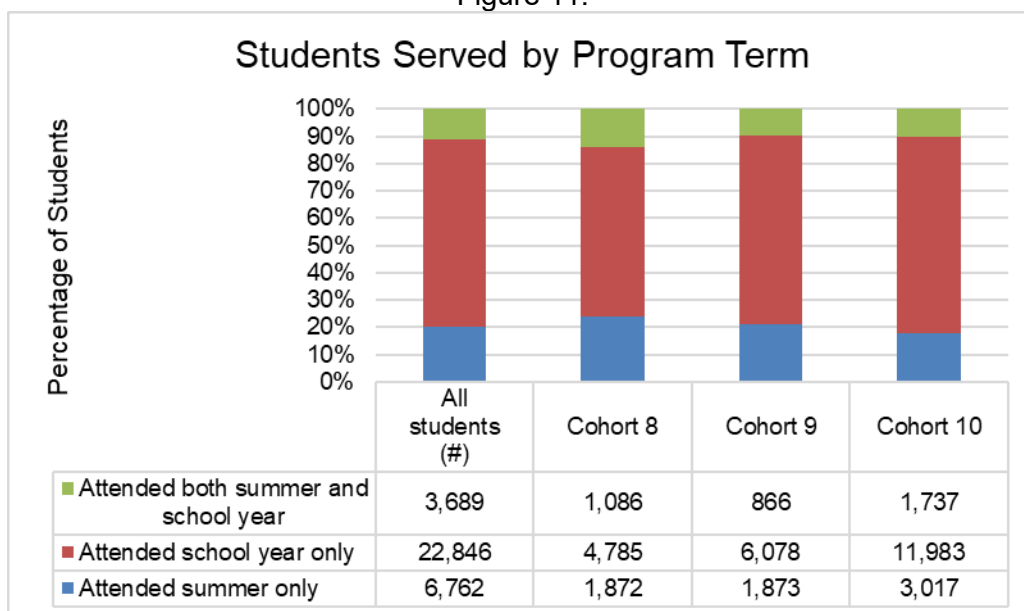


Figure 10.



A majority of students (69 percent) attended only during the school year; 20 percent attended during summer 2021 only and 11 percent attended both summer 2021 and school year 2021-22 terms.

Figure 11.



Data were also available to compare the number of students served to the number of students grantees proposed to serve in their approved grant applications. This calculation was possible for Cohorts 9 and 10. Cohort 8 was not included in this analysis, as their grants were ending.

Based on their funded grant documentation, these 153 grantees proposed to serve 30,512 students. Based on the data reported, these same 153 grantees served 32,724 students, which is 2,212 students more, or an additional 7 percent of the total number that they had proposed to serve.

Of the 153 grantees included in this comparison, 70 grantees served more students than they had proposed to serve in their grant applications, with counts ranging from one student more to 798 more, with an average of 118 students more than their proposed unique count. In terms of percentage over, this ranged from less than 1 percent more to 359 percent more students than proposed, average 55 percent more students.

One grantee reported serving exactly the same number as they proposed to serve.

The remaining 82 grantees served fewer students than they had proposed to serve. These grantees fell short of their target number by two students to 251 students, average 67 students, or by percentage, 2 percent to 95 percent short of their target (average 34 percent).

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Grantees collected the following student outcome data¹⁵: GPA, teacher survey results, credit recovery, school day attendance, school behavior, and PSSA/PASA test results. In prior years, grantees were only required to report outcomes on regular attendees, those attending 30 or more days of programming. Starting in summer 2021, the concept of 'regular attendee' was retired and grantees were required to report on all students.

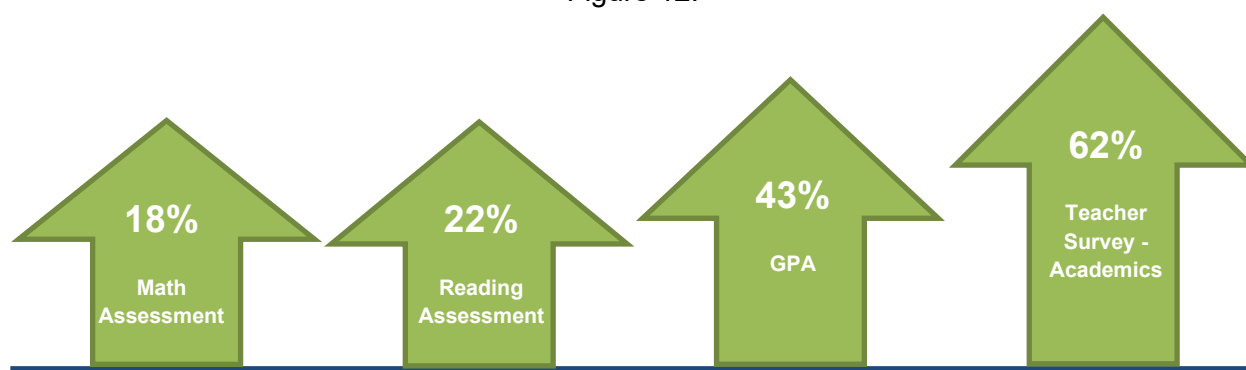
Academics

Results provided in this section address the program performance measure: "Increasing percentages of students regularly participating in the program will meet or exceed state and local academic achievement standards in reading and math."

The following graphic illustrates the overall percentage of students improving based on each data source after excluding students who did not need to improve.

¹⁵ Results described in this report include all students having data reported that could be analyzed and may not represent all students served by the program. Relevant percentages describe the portion of students served who were included in analysis.

Figure 12.



State Reading and Math Assessments

As informed by the new GPRA measures, analysis was performed on students' state assessment results in grades 4-8. Of the 15,243 21st Century students in these grades, roughly half had prior and current year data in math, reading, or both for comparison. Students were marked "improved" if they moved up on the score range (below basic, basic, proficient, advanced) from 2020-21 to 2021-22. Students who scored at the advanced level in 2020-21 were coded as not needing to improve.

After excluding those students who did not need to improve, 18 percent of students improved on the math assessment and 22 percent improved in reading. Those who had no change in their score level accounted for most students (69 percent for math; 60 percent for reading). Thirteen percent of students declined in math and 18 percent declined in reading.

Math state assessment scores were disaggregated and analyzed across the six hour bands. These results showed no discernible trends across hour bands. This is not to say that the 21st Century program had no impact on students' scores, as roughly three-fourths of students (range 65 percent to 74 percent) had no change in their test score level. Due to pandemic-related learning disruption and loss, maintenance of test scores should be considered a success even if students did not improve. Additionally, students are given a numerical composite score on state assessments, which is then placed in one of the four score levels. Therefore, students may not have moved from one level to the next but may have made positive gains within a level.

For reading, there was a small increase in the percentage of students who improved once they reached 90 hours of program attendance. However, this difference is not large enough to confidently indicate that increased attendance is correlated with increased test scores. That said, the majority of students (58 percent to 64 percent) across hour bands had no change in their score. Like math, this could be an indicator of program success.

Test score results were also analyzed by attendance term – summer only, school year only, and both summer and school year – but results were similar across terms and did not indicate that this factor had an impact on scores.

A complete breakdown of test scores by hour bands is included in Tables 4 and 5. Students who did not need to improve were excluded from these calculations.

Table 4. State Math Assessment Improvement Results for 2021-22

Score Level	All students	Less than 15 hours	15-44 hours	45-89 hours	90-179 hours	180-269 hours	270 or more hours
<i>Improved</i>	18%	13%	15%	20%	13%	18%	23%
<i>No change</i>	69%	74%	72%	67%	67%	68%	65%
<i>Declined</i>	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%	14%	13%

Table 5: State Reading Assessment Improvement Results for 2021-22

Score Level	All students	Less than 15 hours	15-44 hours	45-89 hours	90-179 hours	180-269 hours	270 or more hours
<i>Improved</i>	22%	13%	15%	20%	13%	18%	23%
<i>No change</i>	18%	74%	72%	67%	67%	68%	65%
<i>Declined</i>	6%	13%	13%	13%	13%	14%	%

While comparative data was not available for all students in grades 4 through 8, approximately 70 percent of students had data available for their 2021-22 state assessment scores. Students were more likely to perform better on reading state assessments, where 34 percent of students scored at the proficient or advanced level compared to 15 percent of students in math. Sixty-six percent of students scored at the basic or below basic level in reading and 85 percent did so in math. Overall, this indicates lower levels of proficient or advanced students than in prior years, likely due to pandemic-related learning loss. Complete results by score level are shared in Table 6.

Table 6. State Math and Reading Assessments Score Level Results for 2021-22

	Math		Reading	
<i>Advanced</i>	4%	15%	7%	34%
<i>Proficient</i>	11%		27%	
<i>Basic</i>	26%	85%	43%	66%
<i>Below basic</i>	58%		23%	

There is evidence of a correlation between increased attendance and an increased percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced levels and a decrease in the percentage of students scoring at the basic or below basic level, as visualized in Figures 13 and 14. This trend is especially obvious for students scoring at the below basic level in math, accounting for 68 percent of students who attended at 15 hours or less of programming and steadily decreasing to 49 percent of students who attended 270 hours or more. For reading assessments, this trend was not as strong, the percent change between hour bands only ranged from between zero and five percentage points for each score level. However, students historically perform better in reading, so it is to be expected that program-related gains would be more obvious for math scores. Complete results are shared in the data table of each figure.

Figure 13.

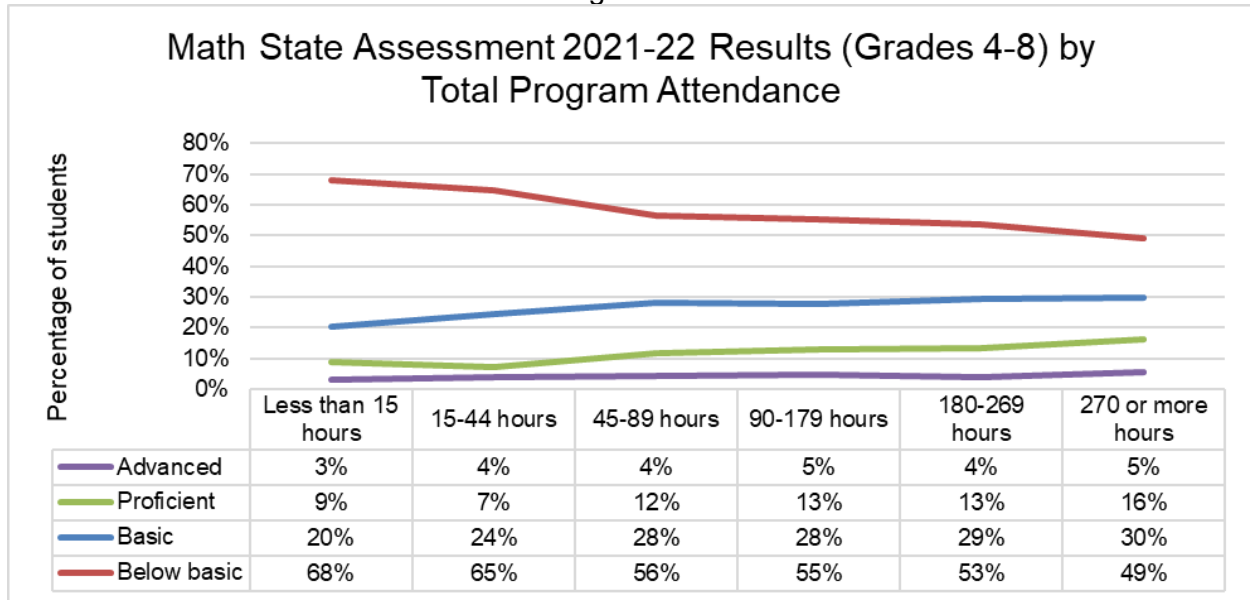
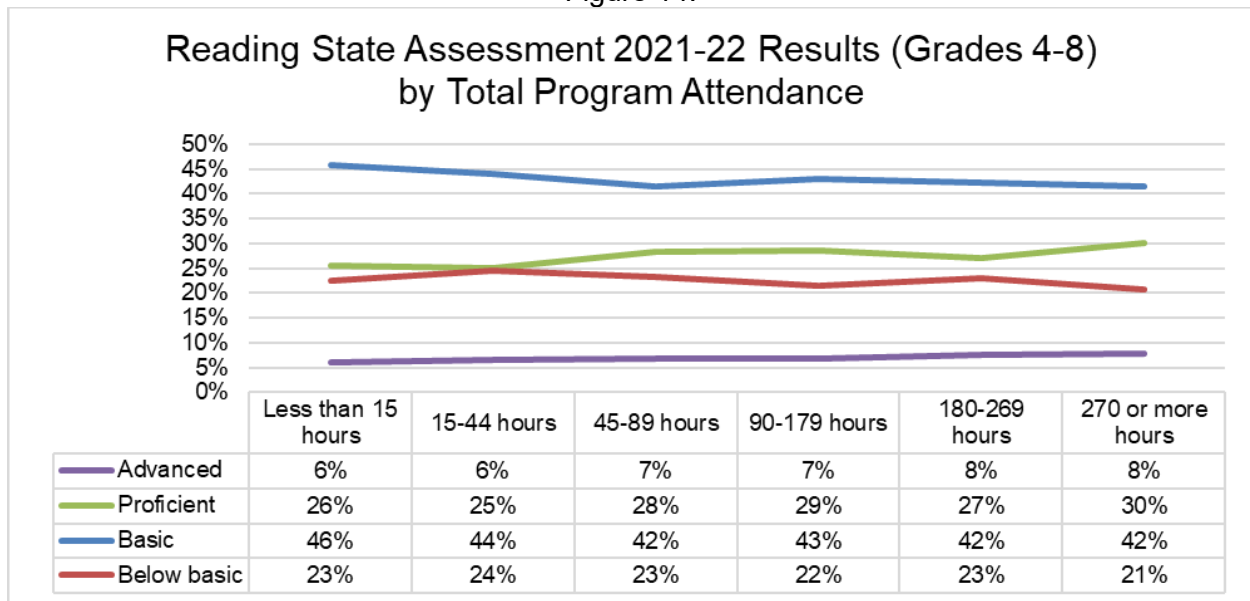


Figure 14.



State assessment scores and improvement percentages were also analyzed by each program cohort. Cohort results reflected those of the entire student population, and there were no overarching trends or outliers.

Student GPA Results

Grantees reported individual student GPAs using the state de-identified student data workbook. In cases where a school provided only report card grades, grantees were required to convert those grades into a GPA using a provided calculator or their own method.

To make an improvement, students had to increase their GPA by one-tenth between school year 2020-21 and 2021-22. As determined by the federal GPRA measure, students who had a GPA of 3.0 or greater did not need to improve.

A total of 5,245 students in grades 7-8 and 10-12 had GPA data that could be compared, which is 52 percent of students reported in those grades. Between 2020-21 and 2021-22, the average GPA of these students increased from 1.9 to 2.1, a 10 percent increase. Across all cohorts, students' average GPA increased with the exception of Cohort 9, which saw no change. Cohort 8 students saw the largest change in GPA with a 19 percent increase. However, Cohort 8 students had the lowest average GPA in both the prior and current year. Table 7 gives the complete results.

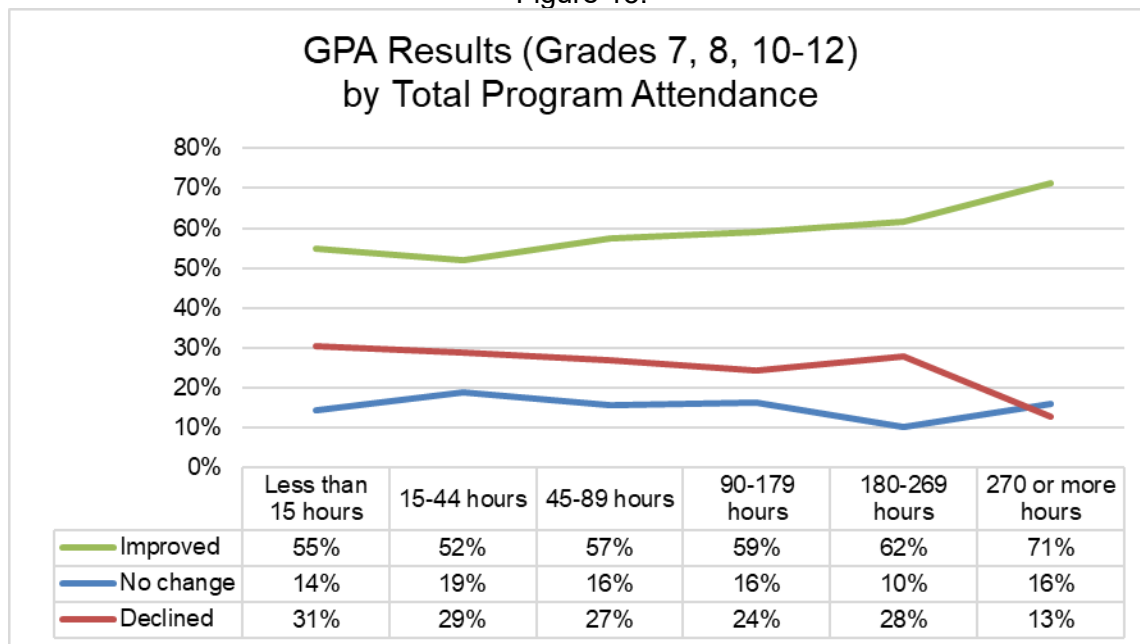
Table 7. Change in average GPA for students in grades 7, 8, and 10-12

	2020-21	2021-22	GPA Change	Percent Change
All Students	1.9	2.1	0.2	11%
Cohort 8	1.6	1.9	0.3	19%
Cohort 9	2.3	2.3	0	0%
Cohort 10	1.9	2.1	0.2	11%

Of the students having comparable GPA data (5,245), 24 percent did not need to improve their GPA from 2020-21 to 2021-22, and 43 percent of students improved. The next largest percentage, at 21 percent, declined, and 13 percent had no change in their GPA. Excluding the did not need to improve group, 56 percent of students improved their GPA.

Results were disaggregated by program attendance category. After excluding students who did not need to improve, students who attended greater attendance hours were more likely to have improved their GPA and less likely to have declined, as shown in Figure 15. This trend is most obvious once students reach the 270 or more hours band, where 71 percent of students improved and 13 percent declined. Comparatively, 55 percent of students at the less than 15 hours band improved and 31 percent declined. Complete results are provided in the data table of Figure 15.

Figure 15.



Student GPA results were also analyzed by cohort, which found that students in Cohort 8 were more likely to have made no changes in their GPA and less likely to have improved or declined than the overall population or than Cohorts 9 and 10 students. This is to be expected as Cohort 8 ended mid-year, thus limiting the impact the program could have had on their GPA. Results of Cohorts 9 and 10 reflected those of the entire program population.

There is some evidence that attendance term – summer only, school year only, and both summer and school year – may have an impact on student GPA results. Only 39 percent of students who attended summer programming improved their GPA, compared to 62 percent of school year only students and 60 percent of students who attended both terms. Percentages of decline were similar across program terms. Summer only students were also more likely to experience no change in their GPA (30 percent) compared to the other two term types (11 percent each). They were also less likely to have not needed to improve (8 percent) compared to school year only (29 percent) and full year students (20 percent).

Overall, 7,253 students in grades 7, 8, or 10-12 had 2021-22 GPA data, representing 72 percent of all students in those grades. Of these students, 77 percent (5,555) completed the 2021-22 school year with a passing GPA (1.3/C-). By cohort, Cohort 9 students had the largest proportion of passing students with 83 percent, followed by Cohort 9 with 77 percent, and Cohort 8 with 70 percent. It should be noted that more students may have passed their courses, as these calculations are based on conversions to the standard 4.0 GPA scale with a C- grade considered passing.

Academic Performance

In the Teacher Survey, teachers were asked to report on students' overall academic performance. For this measure, 62 percent of students who needed to improve did so, while 4 percent declined, and 34 percent showed no change. Nineteen percent of all students with data did not need to

improve and were excluded from these calculations. For a complete analysis of this measure, please see the [Teacher Survey](#) section of this report.

Behavior

Results provided in this section address the following program performance measures:

1. Participants in 21st Century programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes and
2. Students participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance, and reduced disciplinary referrals.

21st Century Teacher Survey

The 21st Century Teacher Survey included indicators for classroom teachers to report on change in behavior based on his/her professional opinion and experience with each student. The survey provided a scale that included “did not need to improve,” “improved,” “no change,” and “declined.” Surveys were only required to be completed for students in grades 1-5 (14,328).

21st Century Teacher Survey data for each element includes between 7,439 and 7,635 52 to 53 percent of attendees in grades 1-5. The percentage differs by survey item as some teachers may not have provided a response for all items for all students who were included in grantee-submitted data.

The following graphic illustrates the overall percentage of students improving based on each survey question after excluding students who did not need to improve.

Figure 16.



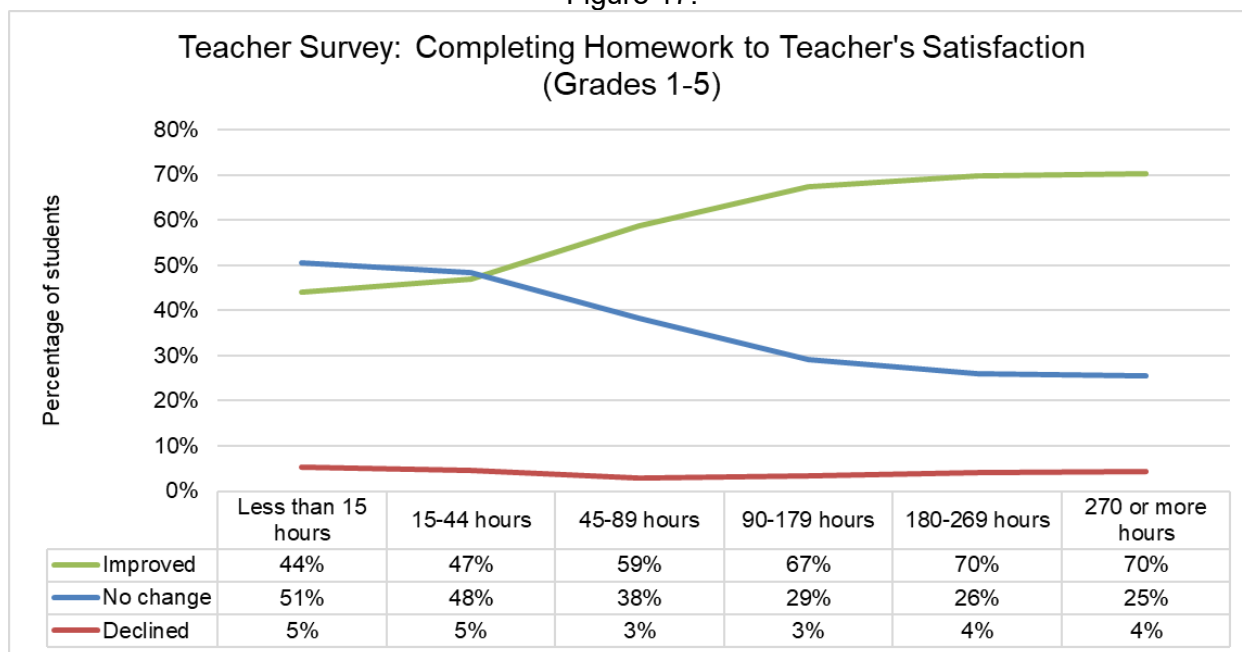
For the indicator of satisfactory homework completion, 64 percent of students who needed to improve did so, while 32 percent experienced no change and 4 percent declined. Student who did not need to improve were excluded from these calculations and accounted for 26 percent of all students with data.

The count of students improving (3,525) was more than 16 times greater than the count declining (213).

Cohort results were similar to each other and the overall state results, with improvement percentages by cohort ranging from 62 percent for Cohort 8 to 67 percent for Cohort 9. Percentages of decline were the same across cohorts and the state at 4 percent. For each cohort, roughly one quarter of all students with data did not need to improve.

Overall, the percentage of improvement steadily increased with the number of hours a student attended programming. The most significant difference is between students who attended 270 or more hours, of which 70 percent improved, and those who attended less than 15 hours, of which 44 percent improved. Percentages of decline were similar across hour bands, and the percentage of students who experienced no change decreased with more program hours. Complete results are provided in Figure 17.

Figure 17.



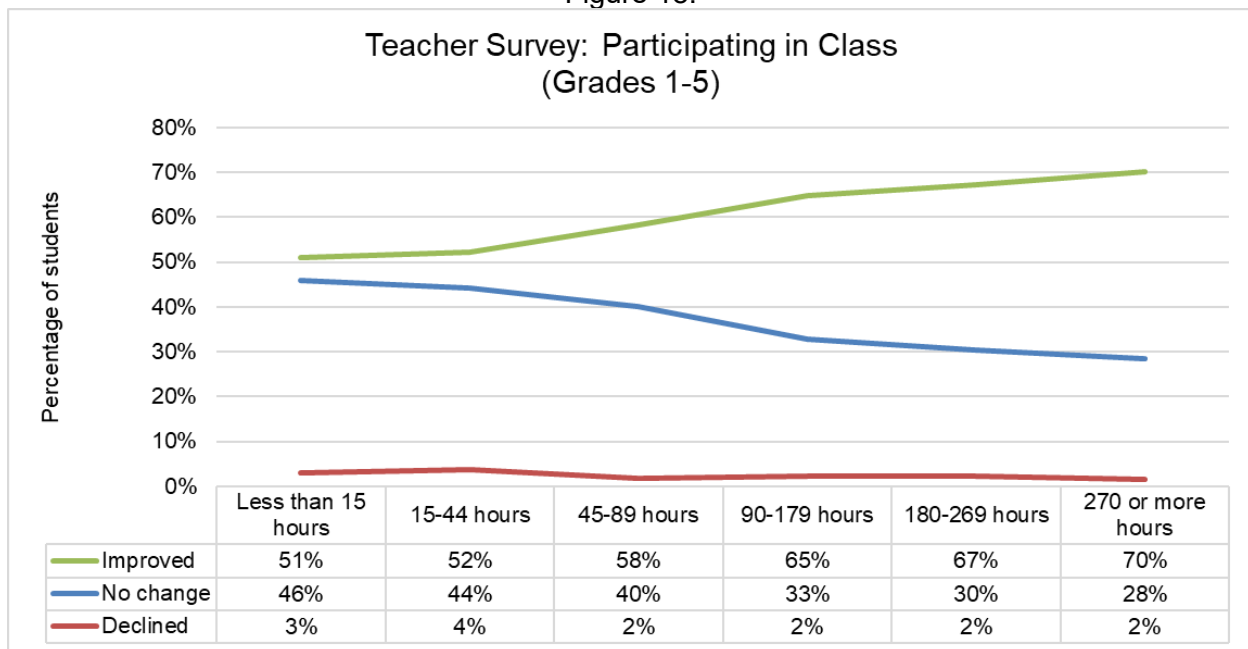
For the indicator of class participation, 63 percent of students who needed to improve did so, while 2 percent declined, and 34 percent showed no change. Twenty-three percent of all students with data did not need to improve and were excluded from these calculations.

The count of students improving (3,715) was nearly 28 times greater than the count declining (133).

Cohort results were similar for percentages of improvement, decline, and no change.

Overall, the percentage of improvement steadily increased with the number of hours a student attended programming. The most significant difference is between students who attended 270 or more hours, of which 70 percent improved, and those who attended less than 15 hours, of which 51 percent improved. Percentages of decline were similar across hour bands, and the percentage of students who experienced no change decreased with more program hours. Complete results are provided in Figure 18.

Figure 18.



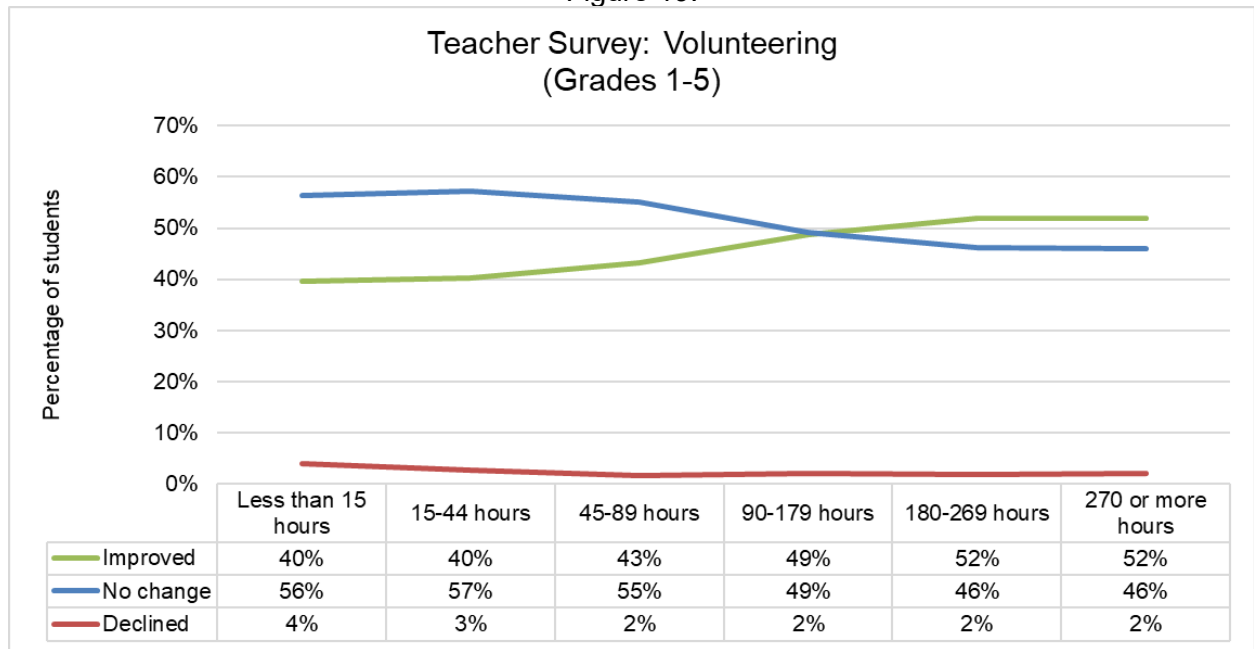
For the indicator of volunteering in class (i.e., for extra credit or more responsibilities), 48 percent of students who needed to improve did so, while 2 percent declined, and 50 percent showed no change. Twenty-four percent of all students with data did not need to improve and were excluded from these calculations.

The count of students improving (2,756) was more than 22 times greater than the count declining (123).

Cohort results were similar to the state results, though students in Cohort 9 were somewhat more likely to have improved compared to the state results and across the six hour bands. Percentages of decline were very similar, only differing one to two percentage points from the state calculation.

Overall, the percentage of improvement steadily increased with the number of hours a student attended programming. The most significant difference is between students who attended 270 or more hours, of which 70 percent improved, and those who attended less than 15 hours, of which 46 percent improved. Percentages of decline were similar across hour bands, and the percentage of students who experienced no change decreased with more program hours. Complete results are provided in Figure 19.

Figure 19.



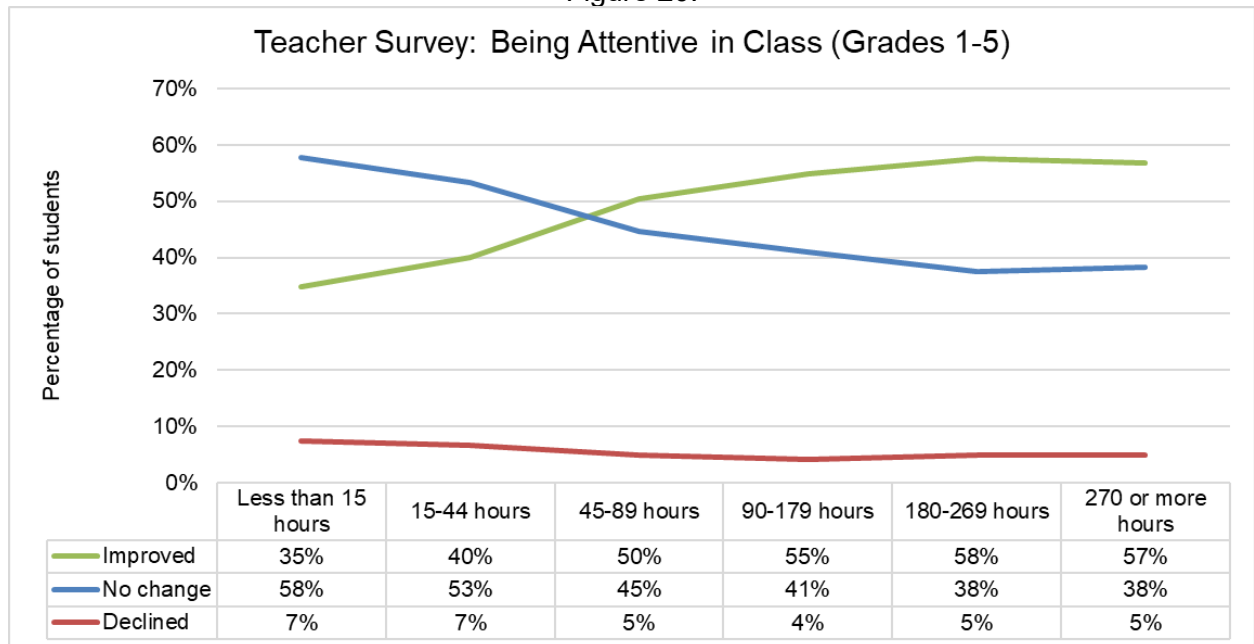
After excluding those who did not need to improve, class attentiveness results showed that 48 percent of students improved, 45 percent showed no change, and 7 percent declined.

The count of students improving (3,038) was more than 10 times greater than the count declining (286).

Cohort results were similar to the state results, though students in Cohort 9 were somewhat more likely improve across the hour bands and all students. Percentages of decline and no change were similar across cohorts.

Overall, the percentage of improvement steadily increased with the number of hours a student attended programming. The most significant difference is between students who attended 270 or more hours, of which 57 percent improved, and those who attended less than 15 hours, of which 35 percent improved. Percentages of decline were similar across hour bands, and the percentage of students who experienced no change decreased with more program hours. Complete results are provided in Figure 20.

Figure 20.



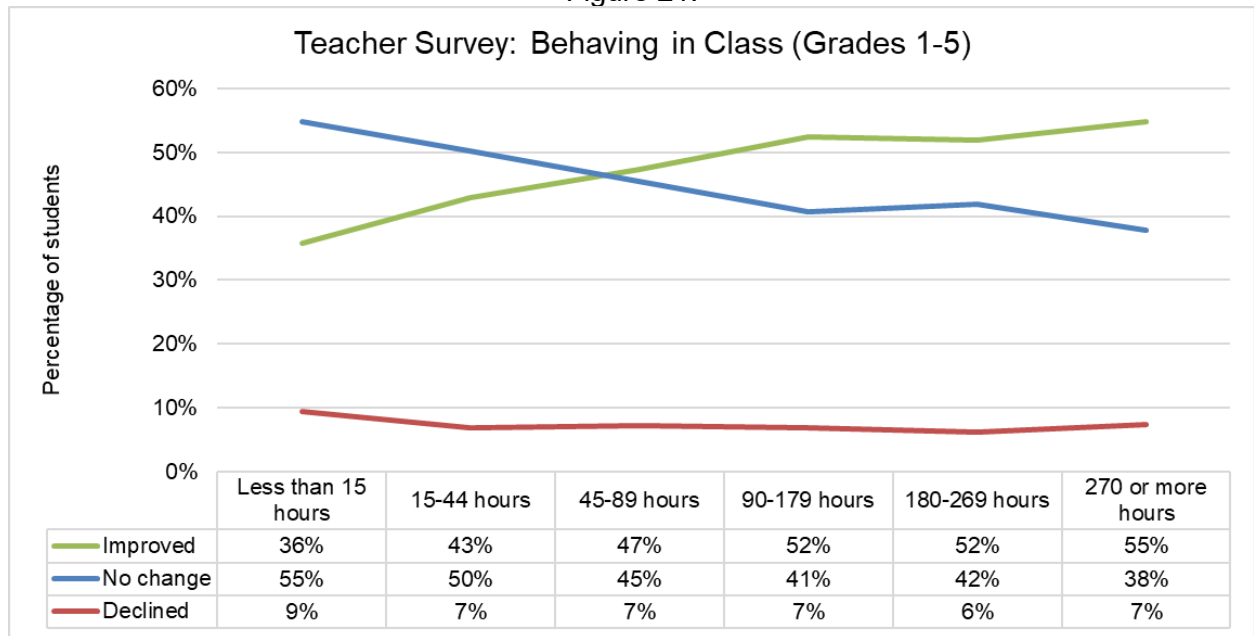
After excluding those who did not need to improve, class behavior results showed that 50 percent of students improved, 43 percent showed no change, and 7 percent declined. Thirty-four percent of all students with data did not need to improve and were excluded from these calculations.

The count of students improving (2,521) was more than 7 times greater than the count declining (353).

Cohort results were similar to the state results, though students in Cohort 9 were somewhat more likely to improve. Percentages of decline and no change were similar across cohorts.

Overall, the percentage of improvement increased with the number of hours a student attended programming. The most significant difference is between students who attended 270 or more hours, of which 55 percent improved, and those who attended less than 15 hours, of which 36 percent improved. Percentages of decline were similar across hour bands, and the percentage of students who experienced no change decreased with more program hours. Complete results are provided in Figure 21.

Figure 21.



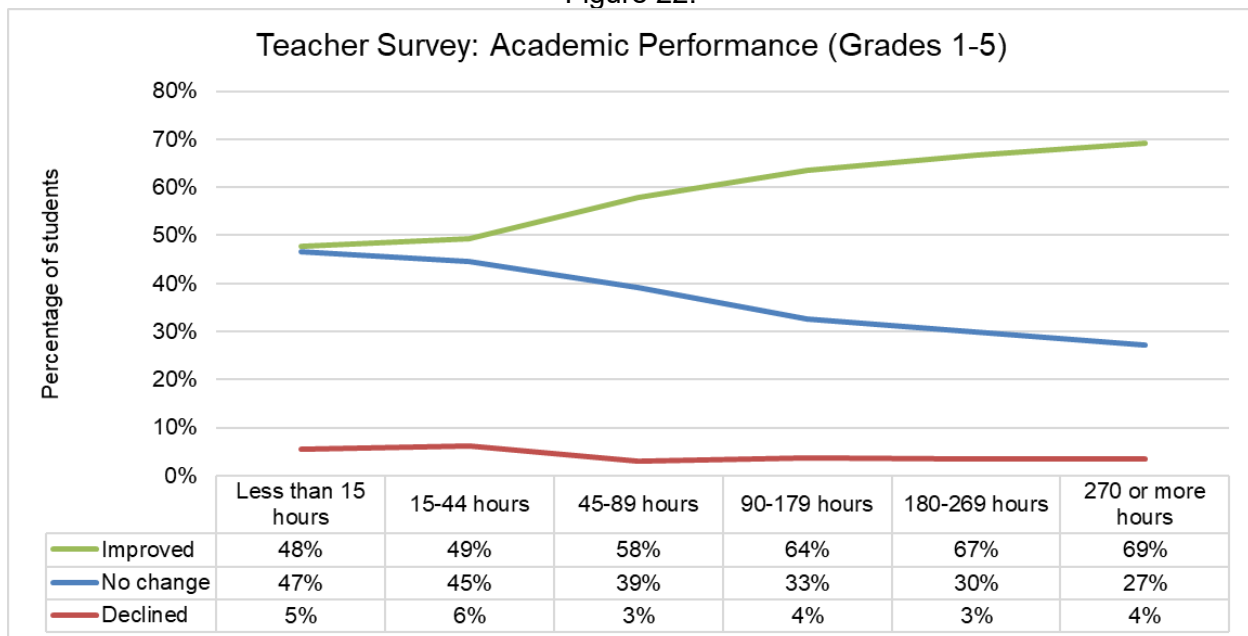
For the indicator of academic performance, 62 percent of students who needed to improve did so, while 4 percent declined, and 34 percent showed no change. Nineteen percent of all students with data did not need to improve and were excluded from these calculations.

The count of students improving (3,821) was more than 16 times greater than the count declining (234).

Cohort results were similar to the state results for percentages of improvement, no change, and of decline.

Overall, the percentage of improvement steadily increased with the number of hours a student attended programming. The most significant difference is between students who attended 270 or more hours, of which 69 percent improved, and those who attended less than 15 hours, of which 48 percent improved. Percentages of decline were similar across hour bands, and the percentage of students who experienced no change decreased with more program hours. Complete results are provided in Figure 22.

Figure 22.



Of students who needed to improve on the measure of coming to school motivated to learn, 55 percent did so, 41 percent showed no change, and 4 percent declined.

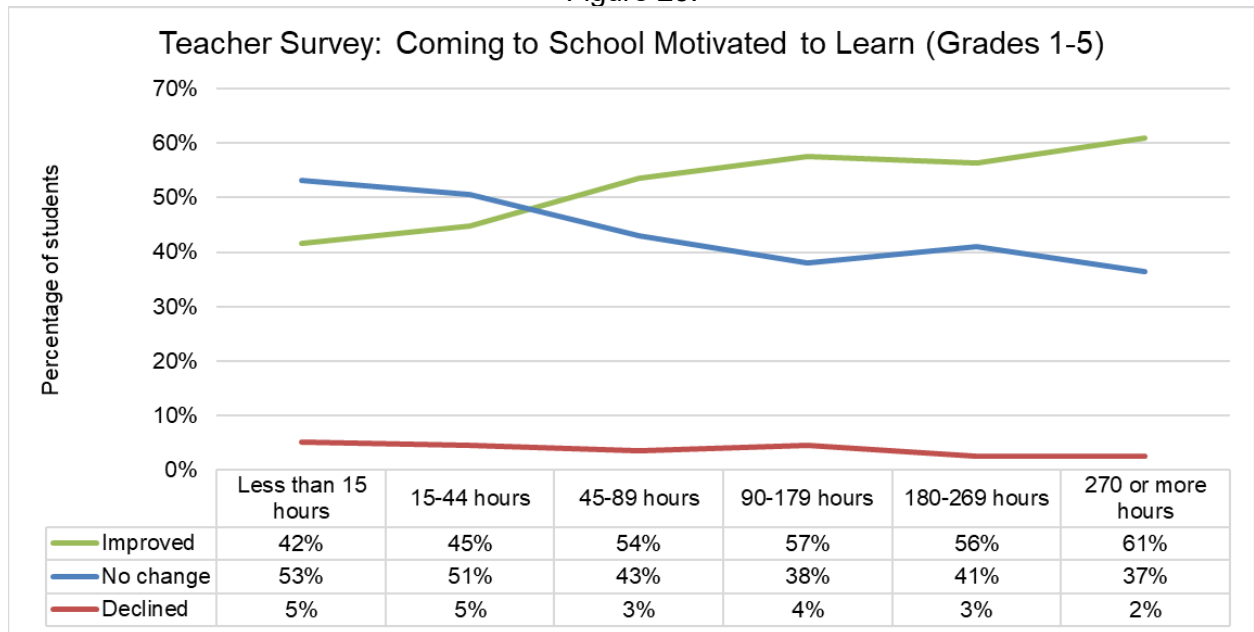
The count of students improving (3,111) was more than 15 times greater than the count of students declining (201).

Cohort results were similar to the state results for percentages of improvement, no change, and of decline.

The percentage of students improving steadily increased with the number of hours a student attended programming. The most significant difference is between students who attended 270 or more hours, of which 61 percent improved, and those who attended less than 15 hours, of which 42 percent improved. Percentages of decline were similar across hour bands, and the percentage of students who experienced no change decreased with more program hours.

Complete results are provided in Figure 23.

Figure 23.



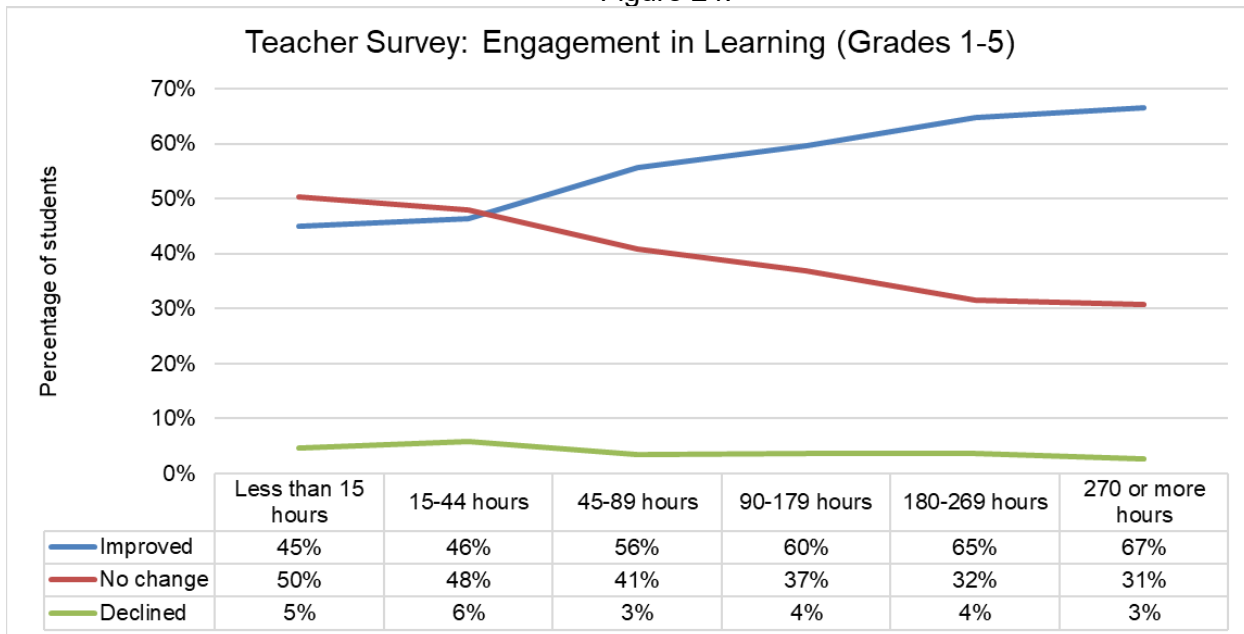
For the indicator of engagement in learning, which is one of the five GPRA measures, 59 percent of students who needed to improve did so. Four percent of students declined, and 37 percent showed no change. Twenty-three percent of all students with data did not need to improve and were excluded from these calculations.

The count of students improving (3,405) was more than 16 times greater than the count declining (212).

Cohort results were similar to the state results for both percentages of improvement, no change, and of decline.

Overall, the percentage of improvement steadily increased with the number of hours a student attended programming. The most significant difference is between students who attended 270 or more hours, of which 67 percent improved, and those who attended less than 15 hours, of which 45 percent improved. Percentages of decline were similar across hour bands, and the percentage of students who experienced no change decreased with more program hours. Complete results are provided in Figure 24.

Figure 24.



School Behavior/Discipline and Attendance

Results provided in this section address the program performance measure “Students participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance, and reduced disciplinary referrals.” This performance measure was evaluated using the following two GPRA measures:

- **GPRA #3. School Day Attendance** - *Percentage of students in grades 1-12 participating in 21st CCLC during the school year who had a school day attendance rate at or below 90% in the prior school year and demonstrated an improved attendance rate in the current school year.*
- **GPRA #4. Behavior** - *Percentage of students in grades 1-12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer who experienced a decrease in in-school suspensions compared to the previous school year.*

A decrease in in-school suspensions is likely not a strong measure to determine student behavioral gains, as only one percent of 21st Century students in grades 1-12 were issued an in-school suspension during 2020-21. Due to COVID-19, many schools did not operate in person during the prior school year, thus were not able to issue in-school suspensions. Additionally, in-school suspensions are an overall uncommon punitive measure in Pennsylvania’s schools. Of the 251 students who did receive an in-school suspension in 2020-21, 62 percent decreased their number of suspensions and 51 percent received no suspensions in 2021-22. Since these students account for such a small number of the population, it cannot be said with confidence that there is a correlation between 21st Century participation and reduction in in-school suspensions.

For additional context, 6 percent of students received at least one suspension during 2021-22. Again, it is unclear if a low number of in-school suspensions were issued due to positive student behavioral gains or because schools did not issue them as a disciplinary measure. For a more

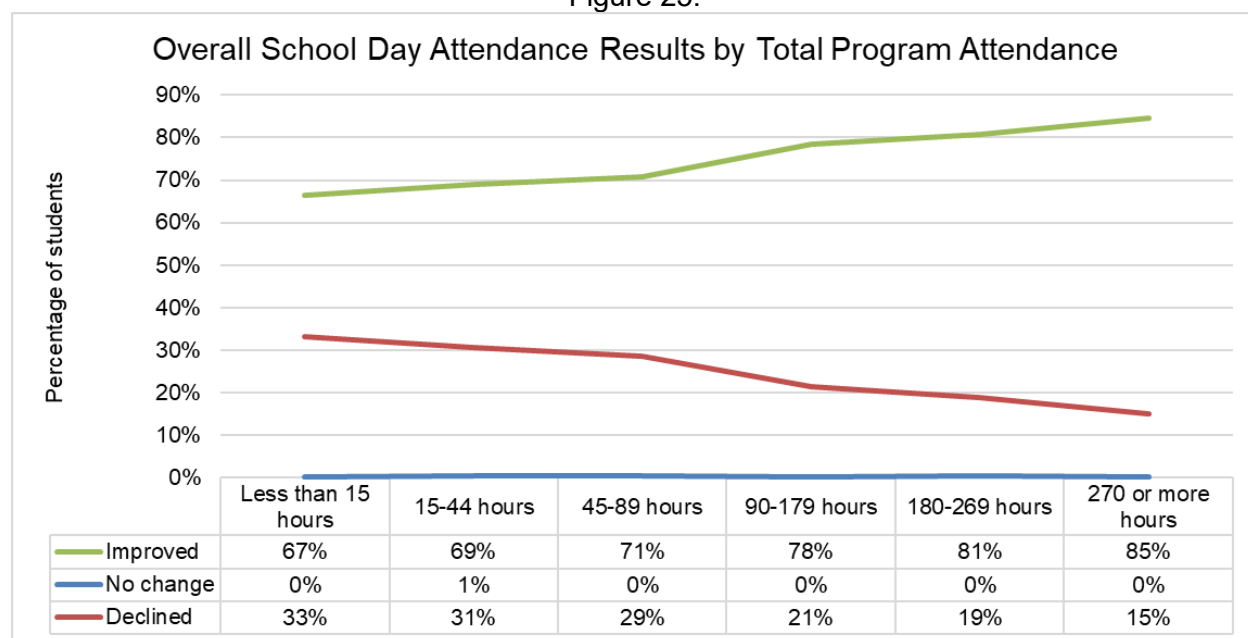
Pennsylvania 21st Century Community Learning Centers
 2021-22 State Evaluation Report
 Originated May 12, 2023

relevant analysis of student behavior, please refer to the behavior question in the [Teacher Survey](#) section of this report.

Comparative school day attendance rates were available for 70 percent of students in grades 1-12. Of these students, thirty percent needed to improve, meaning they had a 2020-21 attendance rate at or below 90 percent. Of those students who needed to improve (6,141) 72 percent did so, 27 percent declined, and less than one percent experienced no change in attendance rate.

There is evidence that greater volume of 21st Century program attendance has had a positive effect on attendance rates, with percentages of improvement increasing and percentages of decline decreasing steadily with each hour band. This trend is most obvious between students who attended 270 or more hours, of which 85 percent improved their attendance, and students who attended less than 15 hours, of which 67 percent improved. Complete results by hour bands are provided in Figure 25.

Figure 25.



Results were also analyzed by cohort, grade level, and duration in 21st Century (years of participation). These factors, however, did not have any evidence that they impacted student attendance outcomes.

Promotion

Promotion status was available for 22,408 students (68 percent of all 21st CCLC participants). Of these students, 97 percent were promoted at the end of the 2021-22 school year. Because nearly all students were promoted, additional disaggregation was not conducted as part of the analysis as it would not add value to the finding.

High School Credit/Course Recovery

Credit recovery data was collected from the PA Implementation Survey and the grantee Student Data workbook. Overall, 27 grantees (19 percent of grantees) offered credit recovery programs in 2021-22 and reported that one or more high school students engaged in that type of programming; however, only 11 of these grantees (40 percent) provided additional student data about the number and type of credits recovered by individual students.

Grantees offered course/credit recovery instruction primarily through a blend of face-to-face instruction and computer-based instruction (73 percent), followed by primarily face-to-face instruction (15 percent), and primarily computer-based instruction (12 percent).

Eighteen grantees indicated that students who participated in credit recovery also participated in other 21st Century activities. The most common reasons provided for why students did not participate in other 21st Century activities were other family, home, school, or work obligations or that students had so many courses/credits to recover that there was not an opportunity for them to participate in other 21st CCLC activities.

Twenty-three grantees offered credit recovery programs during the summer. Just over half (57 percent) of these grantees reported that it typically took students the full summer term to recover one course/credit. Forty-three percent (10 grantees) reported that it typically took less than the length of the summer program for a student to recover a course/credit.

Twenty-four grantees offered credit recovery programs during the school year. Of these grantees, 46 percent reported that it typically took students less than a semester to recover a single credit, while the remaining grantees reported that students took less than a full school year (six grantees), less than one month (four grantees), or a full program year (three grantees).

Of the 27 grantees who offered credit recovery programs, 11 (40 percent) reported additional details for 1,503 students (4.5 percent). Overall, 1,164 (77 percent) students recovered one or more credits, which is 4 percent more than the previous program year. The total number of credits recovered was 1,875.

Some students were also able to recover credits in more than one subject area. Of the 1,503 students:

- 519 (35 percent) recovered literacy-related credits;
- 412 (27 percent) recovered math-related credits; and
- 672 (45 percent) recovered credits for other subjects.

Results by Locale Type

With a recent priority focus on engaging rural and underserved portions of the commonwealth in the 21st Century program, the question of results by different program locale types became relevant. As outlined earlier in this report, 58 percent of grantees identified their program as operating in an urban setting, 24 percent identified their program as operating in a rural setting, 6 percent reported their program as suburban, and 13 percent reported their program operated in a combination of these settings.

The proportionality of 21st Century programs by locale type varied somewhat from the proportionality of Pennsylvania school-age youth by such classifications. According to locale classifications by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data,¹⁶ 54 percent of students are from suburban settings, 22 percent are from city/urban settings, and 24 percent are from town/rural settings. A comparison of these locale designation distributions with those in the previous paragraph suggests that 21st Century programs were successful in reaching students in urban and rural settings. However, it is important to remember that student need is a greater factor in grantee selection than locale distribution.

Grantees were asked to make this determination rather than use a grantee's or program's mailing address to determine setting type because programs may operate in a different location than the grantee; a school district may operate in some, but not all schools; and different schools may have different settings. Also, this provided some insight into how the programs may classify their identity, versus how they may be classified by others.

Academic performance was assessed by each locale type. Only students who needed to improve were included in these calculations. With the exception of math state assessments, suburban grantees had the highest percentage of students improving and the lowest percentage declining for each measure (three out of four). Grantees with a combination of locale types most often had the lowest percentage of students improving, and urban grantees most often had the highest percentage of students declining (two out of four measures, each). There is some evidence that students in suburban areas may be more likely to improve, especially in their GPA and on academic performance as determined by their teacher. Students from urban grantees seem more likely to decline on these two measures. Given that many students opted out of state testing in 2020-21, it is difficult to make comparisons on these measures across locales. Additionally, the majority of students made no change in their score level on state assessments across all locales. Ultimately, further analysis is needed to investigate the potential correlation between student performance and locale.

- For math state assessments, rural grantees had the highest improvement percentage (22 percent) and urban grantees had the lowest (15 percent). Urban grantees also had the lowest decline percentage (9 percent) but also the highest percentage of students who made no changes in their score level (76 percent).
- For reading state assessments, percentages of improvement, no change, and decline varied only one to two percentage points across grantees by locale type. Suburban grantees had the highest improvement percentage (24 percent) and lowest decline percentage (16 percent).
- For student GPAs, suburban grantees had the highest percentage of improvement (62 percent) and lowest percentage of decline (19 percent). Urban grantees and those with a combination of locales had the lowest improvement percentage at 54 percent; urban grantees had the highest decline percentage at 31 percent.
- For the teacher survey question on academic performance, suburban grantees had the highest percentage of improvement (71 percent) and the lowest percentage of decline (1 percent). Rural grantees had the lowest improvement percentage (60 percent), and urban grantees and grantees with a combination of locales had the highest percentage of students declining (4 percent).

¹⁶ Source: [School Locales](#). 'Rural' and 'town' designations were combined into 'rural' for analysis.
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Graphs of each result are included in the following pages.

Figure 26.

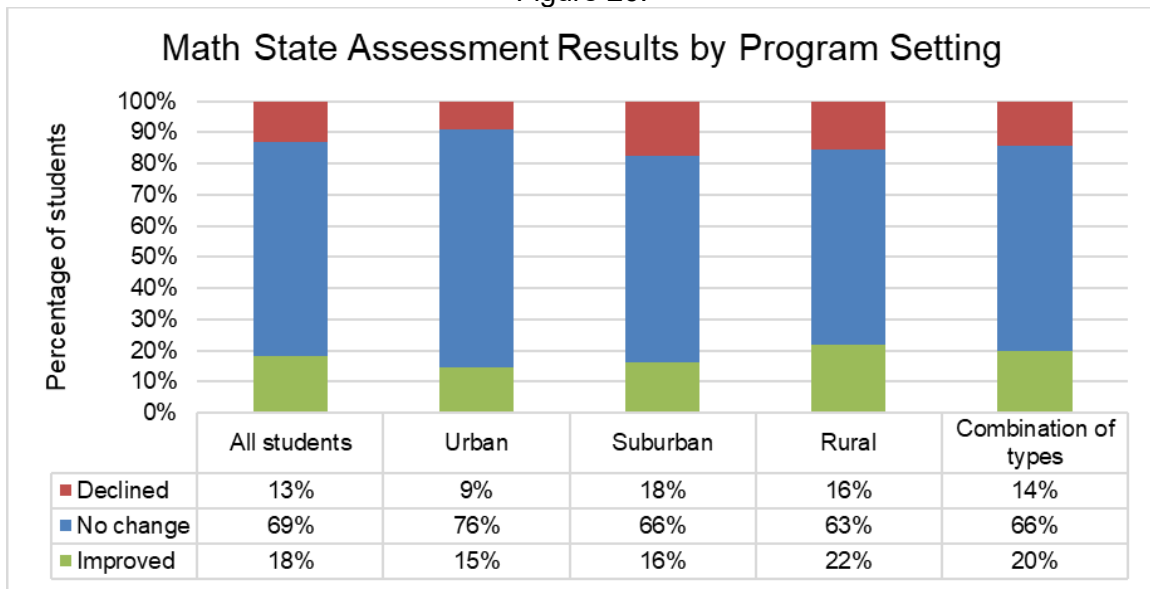


Figure 27.

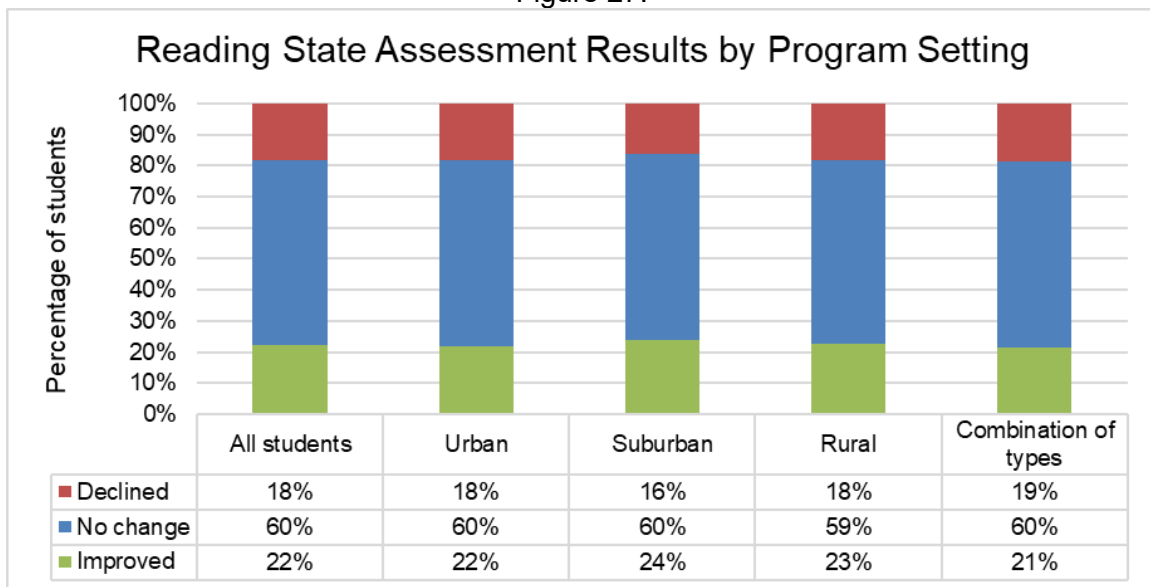


Figure 28.

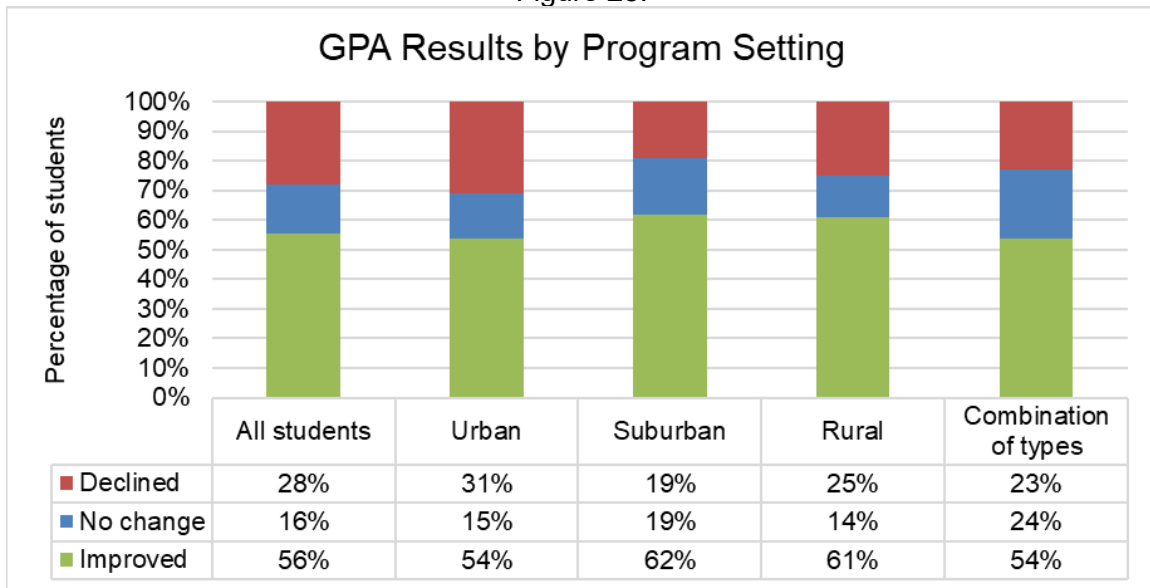
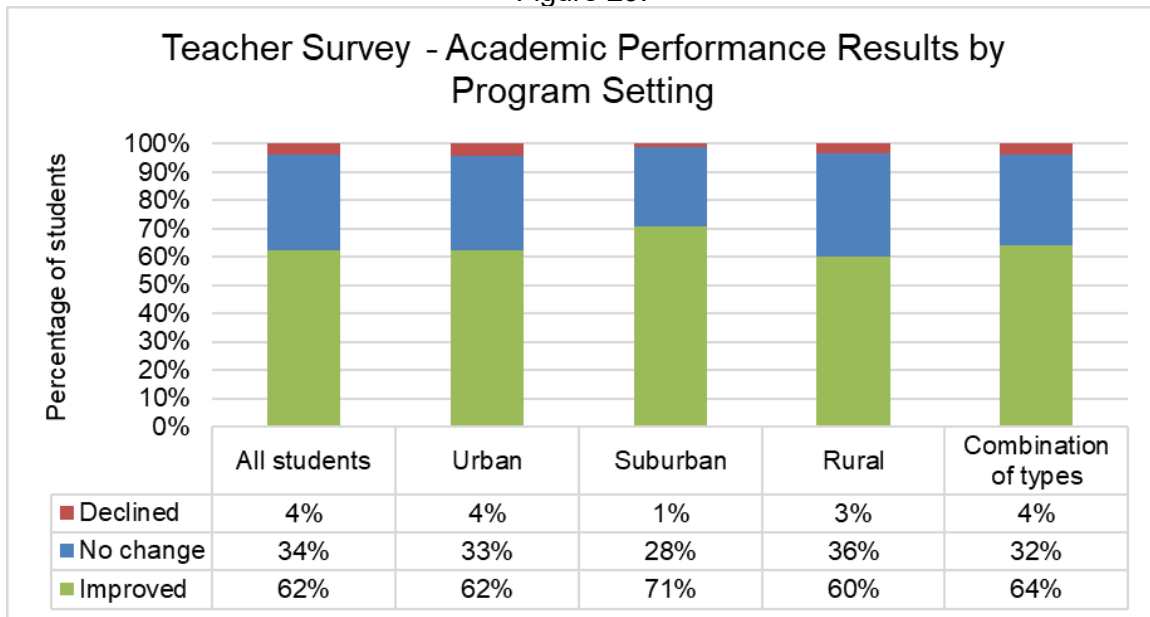


Figure 29.



2021-22 Government Performance and Results Act

The federal 21st Century program established **performance objectives** as part of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).

The indicators addressed here are related to and could be addressed within **Pennsylvania's three performance measures:**

1. Participants in 21st Century programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes;-
2. Increasing percentages of students **regularly**¹⁷ participating in the program will meet or exceed state and local academic achievement standards in reading and math; and
3. Students participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance, and reduced disciplinary referrals.

These results are based upon state calculations and may differ from federal calculations, as state evaluators collected and analyzed individual student data submitted by grantees, while grantees reported counts of students by category in the 21APR system. Analysis methods may differ slightly from federal methods, as analysis methods or logic used at the federal level have not been made available to Pennsylvania.¹⁸ As grantee-entered data are not exportable in an analysis-friendly format from 21APR, it is not possible at this time to determine the extent to which grantee-reported counts in 21APR are similar to individual student data grantees submitted to state evaluators.

Federal Performance Objective 1: Participants in 21st Century Community Learning Center programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes.

Table 8: GPRA Results (2021-22)*

GPRA Measure	2021-22 Result (Baseline)
1.1 Percentage of students in grades 4-8 participating in 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer who demonstrate growth in reading and language arts on state assessments.	22%
1.2 Percentage of students in grades 4-8 participating in 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer who demonstrate growth in mathematics on state assessments.	18%
2.1 Percentage of students in grades 7-8 and 10-12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer with a prior-year unweighted Grade Point Average (GPA) of less than 3.0 who demonstrated an improved GPA.	56%

¹⁷ Beginning with 2021-22, the concept of regular attendees is no longer used for the federal GPRA measures. This objective will be updated for 2022-23.

¹⁸ The PA evaluation team used analysis methods provided under the previous federal evaluator American Institutes for Research.

GPRA Measure	2021-22 Result (Baseline)
3.1 Percentage of students in grades 1-12 participating in 21st CCLC during the school year who had a school day attendance rate at or below 90% in the prior school year and demonstrated an improved attendance rate in the current school year.	72%
4.1 Percentage of students in grades 1-12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer who experienced a decrease in in-school suspensions compared to the previous school year.	62%
5.1 Percentage of 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.	46%

*This table will be updated each year for comparison.

Federal Performance Objective 2: 21st Century Community Learning Centers will offer high-quality enrichment opportunities that positively affect student outcomes, such as school attendance and academic performance, and result in decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors.

Indicator 2.1: The percentage of 21st Century centers reporting emphasis in at least one core academic area.

Indicator 2.2: The percentage of 21st Century centers offering enrichment and support activities in other areas.

Information for these indicators has not been available in previous years because of changes in federal reporting. These elements are not explicitly included in 21APR reports. However, based on Implementation Survey data, 97 percent of grantees offered programming related to academic enrichment and 93 percent of programming related to STEM content. The second indicator is particularly broad. As such, it could be argued that 100 percent of grantees offer enrichment and support activities. Further definition is needed.

Reflections, Implications, and Recommendations for Improvement

The 2021-22 21st Century program evaluation revealed many positive outcomes achieved by students and staff. Findings also revealed several areas that state and local program implementation teams can focus on to continue to improve the quality of programming in the coming year. The following recommendations were determined based on trends discussed in meetings throughout the year and on reflection of the data presented in this report.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE STATE TEAM

1. Pennsylvania's state performance measures have not been updated in several years, despite the implementation of the new GPRA's beginning in 2021-22.

Recommendation: The state team and evaluators should adjust the three state performance measures, as necessary, to align with the new GPRA's. Additionally, the state should consider setting benchmarks for each GPRA measure and a target timeline for completion, so evaluators may better assess the program's performance and trends over time.

2. Some grantees lack the capacity and knowledge to effectively identify and mitigate issues in their program implementation. Additionally, limited capacity at the state level to thoroughly assess each grantee and offer assistance is often a challenge. Data collection and reporting is completed following the end of each program year, meaning that issues are already being addressed on a delayed basis. Any changes that could make the grantee performance review process more efficient would likely be beneficial to program performance.

Recommendation: The state team should consider reducing the data collection and reporting burden on grantees by asking them, with the help of their evaluator, to complete a grantee report card annually rather than a comprehensive local evaluation report, which could be completed biennially. A more systemic approach to local evaluation may allow the state to make comparisons more efficiently and effectively across grantees and highlight areas of success and those in need of improvement. Additionally, the state team should consider revisions to the current monitoring tool to make it more systemic and score based. Aggregated results of monitoring visits could also be incorporated into the annual report. More consistent and objective monitoring would be beneficial in assessing grantee performance.

3. Evidence in this report indicates that a greater volume of program attendance may have a positive impact on several student outcomes.

Recommendation: The state team should consider prioritizing guidance and training for grantees in best practices to encourage consistent and repeated attendance. The state should work closely with grantees to identify barriers to attendance and develop evidence-based, creative solutions to address them. Solutions should also be developed to better allow grantees to accurately track their daily attendance. Additionally, state

evaluators should incorporate longitudinal analysis of individual students' outcomes to better assess the correlation between volume of program attendance and positive results.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR GRANTEES

1. Grantees reported that they most often use school, teacher, or parent recommendations to identify and enroll students in programs and similar sources when identifying student needs.

Recommendation: While programs are designed to serve primarily high-needs schools with high-needs students, grantees should consider using more objective sources of data and/or determine the extent to which objective sources of data are the basis for school, teacher, or parent recommendations. Data-sourced identification information can be used as baseline information to provide targeted student instruction and evaluate outcomes more accurately. Grantees should also ensure they are targeting students who do not have access to a similar afterschool program in their area.

2. Only 40 percent of students attended Pennsylvania's 21st Century program for 90 hours or more, which captures students who would have been considered regular attendees (30 or more attendance days under the old GPRA). This means that more than half of 21st Century students are not attending the federally recommended, researched-based hours dosage (90 or more). Additionally, Pennsylvania's 21st Century outcomes indicate that students show greater percentages of improvement at higher attendance hours.

Recommendation: Grantees should put more emphasis on student retention and repeated attendance. It may be to students' and programs' advantage to serve slightly fewer students with greater intensity and duration. The state team and grantees should work closely together to develop creative solutions for consistent attendance. Despite room for improvement, attendance has improved since the prior year and is similar to pre-pandemic levels. Grantees should identify which strategies are most effective in recruiting students back to 21st Century and continue to implement them.

3. Student improvement percentages on state assessments were lower than in prior years and the lowest amongst the five GPRA measures. Of students in grades 4-8 needing to improve on state assessments, 18 percent improved on their math assessment and 22 percent improved in reading. This may be due to pandemic-related learning loss.

Recommendation: Grantees should consider prioritizing programming that addresses student learning loss and prepares them for future state assessments. Grantees should also compare their local evaluation results to state results to gauge how their students are performing on this measure and to determine if there are certain grade levels, cohorts, feeder schools, etc. that may benefit from greater support on state assessments.

3. Grantees have access to a wealth of data that can help identify areas of success and those in need of improvement. This data – analyzed in the local evaluation report – can be used to inform improved program implementation and identify best practices.

Recommendation: Grantees should review their local evaluation findings, perhaps with the assistance of their local evaluator, to ensure that they understand what their program results mean. They should then identify areas of strength – and ensure that those areas are continued and possibly expanded and replicated – as well as areas where results are not as positive and identify and implement strategies that are designed to influence positive outcomes for those areas. Grantees should take an active approach to using the wealth of program information and student data available to them as well as the expertise of their local evaluator to make informed decisions about program improvement. Grantees may also want to consider comparing their results to those presented in state evaluation reports for both context and determining areas of local interest that they may not currently examine. Grantees should consider stronger or more intensive activities/strategies that may be more likely to contribute to positive student outcomes and pay particular attention to students whose results show a decline and those with the most significant needs to provide targeted, intensive strategies designed to support improvement. A possible approach might include the following steps:

- a. Review the grantee's local evaluation report and/or results/data.
- b. Identify the areas where the grantee is seeing the most positive results. Explore what the grantee is doing specifically to influence that area or possible influences for the results if the grantee is not deliberately targeting that component. Take steps to ensure that the grantee continues to do what it may be doing that have a positive influence on results.
- c. Identify the areas where the grantee is seeing the least positive results or where larger portions of students are declining. Explore what the grantee is doing specifically to influence that area or possible influences for the results if the grantee is not deliberately targeting that component. Explore the extent to which the program's approach or instruction in that area is complementing or contradicting school-day instruction.
- d. Use findings or data to identify areas of continuing or new needs.
- e. Compare grantee results to performance indicators.
- f. List all concern areas from c, needs identified in d, and indicators not yet achieved from e, as well as any other items that concern the grantee or program staff. Organize these items by importance and assign a priority ranking to each item.
- g. Choose the top three or so items to focus on first. Focusing on just a few of the top priority items will prevent overwhelm that may stall progress.
- h. Develop an action plan for each of the selected priority items that outlines specific strategies that the grantee or program staff will take to positively influence that item. Include a timeline for completion and evidence source to examine progress and achievement. Consider developing SMART/IE goals for each item. Monitor progress and course correct as necessary.
- i. Once an item has been resolved, move on to the next priority item.
- j. Repeat as needed.