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Washington 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program Evaluation

2018–19 Program Year

APRIL 2020

Samantha Sniegowski | Neil Naftzger | Matt Vinson

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Contents

Page

Executive Summary 1
Evaluation Questions 1
Findings on Program Characteristics 2
Findings on Quality Afterschool Practice Implementation 3
Findings on Youth Program Experiences and Social and Emotional Learning Outcomes 5
Findings on Multiyear Participation Characteristics 6

Introduction 8
A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Afterschool Impact 8
Evaluation Questions 11

Chapter 1. Program Characteristics 12
Grantee Characteristics 13
Center Characteristics 15
Center Attendance 19
Enrollment Policies and Recruitment Approaches 27

Chapter 2. Implementation of Quality Afterschool Practice 29
Overview of Leading Indicators 31
Selected Leading Indicators 32
Organization of This Chapter 33
Organizational Practices 34
Instructional Practices 41
Partnership Practices 51

Chapter 3. Youth Motivation, Engagement, and Beliefs Survey 62
Overview 63

Chapter 4. Multiyear Participation Characteristics 69
Overview 70

References 82

Appendix A. Technical Appendix A-1

Appendix B. Youth Motivation, Engagement, and Beliefs Survey Measure B-1

Executive Summary

The Washington Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI) contracted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct an evaluation of the statewide 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program in Washington state. For more than a decade, 21st CCLC programs in Washington have provided afterschool and expanded learning programming to enhance the academic well-being of students in high-poverty communities.

Specifically, we conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the 21st CCLC program, which included data collection and support for the existing continuous quality improvement process. AIR built and monitored online data collection modules that not only supported program improvement efforts but also facilitated the ability to report required federal data, monitor programs at the state level, and collect data necessary for evaluation activities that culminated in an annual report.

Evaluation Questions

AIR's evaluation activities during the contract period were intended to help answer the following questions:

1. What were the primary characteristics associated with the grants and centers funded by 21st CCLC and the student population served by the program? (Chapter 1)
2. To what extent was there evidence that centers funded by 21st CCLC implement research-supported practices related to quality afterschool programming? (Chapter 2)
3. What does youth completion of the Youth Motivation, Engagement, and Beliefs Survey indicate about youth experiences in programming plus youth functioning on social and emotional skills and competencies and noncognitive factors? (Chapter 3)
4. To what extent do youth remain in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years? (Chapter 4)
5. What are the differences between students who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years and those who do not on student characteristics? (Chapter 4)
6. What are the characteristics of programs that have high levels of cross-year retention in programming? (Chapter 4)
7. To what extent do youth who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming show growth on the youth development-related outcomes measured on the youth survey? (Chapter 4)
8. To what extent are 21st CCLC programs in Washington meeting their local, state, and federal targets and goals? (Chapter 4)

The rest of this report provides our answers to each of these questions, with the remainder of this executive summary highlighting key findings and recommendations from each chapter.

Findings on Program Characteristics

One hallmark of the 21st CCLC program is the wide diversity (a) of organizations involved in the provision of 21st CCLC programming, (b) of approaches to the way programs deliver services and activities, and (c) in the nature of the student population served.

Summary of Findings

During the 2018–19 program year, 127 centers were associated with 51 active 21st CCLC grantees that served 13,848 youth in Grades K–12, of whom 8,177 were regular attendees. Generally, the domain of Washington 21st CCLC grantees and centers operating during 2018–19 were similar to prior years in terms of organizational and operational characteristics.

- Most of the programs occurred in school-based locations.
- All Washington centers offered academic enrichment activities to students as well as some sort of programming to adult family members.
- Centers in Washington continue to mainly serve students in elementary (50%) and middle school grade levels (13%).
- Most centers were considered mid-cycle (i.e., in the second to fourth year of their funding cycle); a smaller proportion of the centers (20%) were new (i.e., in their first year of funding).
- Although there has been a downward trend in the number of students served during the past several years, the students who did attend did so more frequently.
- Most students were from low-income families and were either Hispanic or White.

Aligned Recommendations

1. Consider the different training and technical assistance needs of grantees based on their maturity so that programs receive the supports they need.
2. Explore why more students are attending programs more frequently and what percentage of students are attending for multiple years to understand what types of activities are keeping students engaged in the programs.
3. Implement data collection capacity to collect more detailed information on adult family member participation, including the types of activities in which they participate.

Findings on Quality Afterschool Practice Implementation

A primary goal of the statewide evaluation of 21st CCLC programs in Washington was to provide grantees with data to inform program improvement efforts regarding their implementation of research-supported best practices. AIR, the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality (Weikart Center), and OSPI worked collaboratively to define a series of leading indicators predicated on data collected as part of the statewide evaluation.

Summary of Findings

Organizational Practices

Organizational Practices are a key component of implementing quality afterschool programming and often serve as the foundation on which all other quality practices rest. Practices related to continuous quality improvement and leadership and management remained consistent with findings we have seen in the past:

- Most staff reported supportive and collaborative program climates, but they also cited that having adequate time to plan and focus on individual student needs are areas that they still struggle with.
- Both site coordinators and staff reported that they have frequent internal communication regarding program planning, setting goals, and reviewing progress but noted that they least frequently observed other afterschool staff to provide feedback on their practice.
- The majority of centers reported that they (a) have qualified staff working in their programs who have established relationships with youth, (b) are committed to staff development and program improvement, and (c) solicit feedback regarding the program.

Instructional Practices

Of all the leading indicators, those within the Instructional Practices domain could be considered of the greatest importance in ensuring high-quality programming because the point of service is where youth experience programming and arguably receive the most benefit.

- Site coordinators and staff reported that they are either frequently or always leading activities that support student growth and development in reading or mathematics by providing activities that are well planned, are tied to specific learning goals, build skills across multiple sessions, and promote skill building and mastery of state standards. Staff are more apt than site coordinators to report that they are always carrying out these practices.
- Point-of-service quality remained consistent with years past: Programs are doing very well in providing safe and supportive environments on a consistent basis for the students who attend their programs. As expected, there is room for improvement in consistently providing interesting and especially engaging opportunities that allow students to be active participants in their own learning.
- Youth-centered policies and practices remained relatively stable—incorporating youth interests, building multiple skills, and allowing students to have an influence on both the setting and activities of the program and the structure and policy of the organization.

Partnership Practices

Of the indicators represented in the Partnership Practices domain, the evaluation team believes that School Context is of the greatest importance for ensuring high-quality 21st CCLC programming aligned with the goal of supporting student growth and development in reading and mathematics. As with most indicators highlighted thus far in the report, there are areas of strength and opportunities for growth.

- Site coordinators reported having communication sometimes or frequently with family members of the students they serve, but they could improve on how often they send information home about how students are progressing, asking for input from family members on what and how activities should be provided and encouraging family members to participate in center-provided programming directed at adult learning.
- Site coordinators reported facilitating linkages to the school day by aligning programs to the school-day curriculum, helping students with their homework, regularly communicating with school-day staff and other school personnel, and monitoring student progress as major strategies. The least common strategy was hiring regular school-day teachers as staff to work in the program.
- Similarly, staff reported participating in efforts to align to the school day by knowing what academic content is being covered during the school day and linking programming to that content, monitoring student progress, and communicating with school personnel.
- Both site coordinators and staff reported using student data to inform how they adjust their programs throughout the year; however, a much larger number of staff members reported not having access to these data compared with site coordinators.
- Most programs consistently adopt policies and practices supportive of family engagement by addressing barriers to participation and building linkages with family and the community.

Aligned Recommendations

1. Consider providing a forum or a formal process for project directors to discuss the results of their leading indicators regionally, share stories of successes and challenges, brainstorm solutions to common problems, and build community among programs.
2. Dig deeper into who, at the center level, is participating in the program self-assessment process.
3. Consider defining the supports available to grantees regarding access to and use of local student data to support program planning and design.
4. Consider clarifying definitions and expectations on what constitutes family engagement for the purpose of adult attendance tracking and implementing a better data collection strategy for adult participants.
5. Consider additional ways to collect more objective information on relationships with community partners.

Findings on Youth Program Experiences and Social and Emotional Learning Outcomes

Although school-related outcomes have been commonly employed to assess the impact of 21st CCLC programming on participating youth, most 21st CCLC programs across the United States and specifically in Washington implement programming designed to support a broader array of more immediate youth development outcomes, including those related to the formation of positive mindsets and beliefs and social and emotional skills and competencies.

Summary of Findings

- The majority of youth respondents on the Youth Motivation, Engagement, and Beliefs (YMEB) Survey expressed having a positive, engaging, and supportive experience when attending programming. In addition, the majority of responding youth indicated that the 21st CCLC program they attended helped them improve academically and on social and emotional skills. We found a similar trend in relation to youth-reported program impact in the area of self-management. In this case, 70% of the youth indicated that they had been impacted in a positive way in this area by participating in the program.
- The evaluation team also explored change across time on youth functioning on their skills and beliefs. AIR hypothesized that youth with the most room for improvement during the 2018–19 program year would show more growth than those who were already performing well. The findings support this hypothesis.
- Our conclusion based on the domain of results summarized in this report is that some scales on the YMEB Survey continue to be promising for measuring many important elements of youth functioning that afterschool and youth development programs are seeking to cultivate and are important to youth success in school and life more broadly; however, given the latest research, OSPI might consider revamping the survey.

Aligned Recommendations

1. Explore the connection between quality practice and social and emotional competencies and skills as measured on the YMEB Survey. Understanding this connection would help ensure a pathway from program quality to changes in youth beliefs, skills, and knowledge to school-related outcomes. Understanding how this pathway works and where it fails to produce the desired results would help when making needed tweaks and adjustments to optimize the outcomes derived from the 21st CCLC system.
2. The YMEB Survey is intended for use with students who are in Grades 4–12. This leaves the direct program outcomes for students in Grades K–3 largely unexplored. Consider other measures more applicable to the K–3 population to understand how the 21st CCLC program is impacting these students.
3. Revamp the YMEB Survey to include scales that have been performing well in other states in terms of predicting growth on school-related outcomes. Consider the use of retrospective pretest items on the survey.

Findings on Multiyear Participation Characteristics

Findings presented here are based on descriptive analyses conducted on the five evaluation questions outlined below and are meant to provide a starting point for further exploration and analyses to inform outcome analyses carried out in future years.

Summary of Findings

To what extent do youth remain in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years?

- Between the 2014–15 and 2018–19 program years, 49,181 students participated in at least one year of programming. Nearly 36% of students participated for more than one year.
- The distribution of students participating in multiple years fluctuates across each of the program years, which may be, in part, due to programs cycling on and off of funding.

What are the differences between students who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years and those who do not on student characteristics?

- There were very small differences on the demographic characteristics, indicating that there are no apparent observable differences between the students who attend for multiple consecutive years versus those who do not.
- However, there is a large difference on the average number of days a student attends within a program year between those who attend for multiple consecutive years and those who do not. Those who attend for multiple consecutive years attend, on average, approximately 15 more days within a given year than their counterparts.

What are the characteristics of programs that have high levels of cross-year retention in programming?

- There were no large differences between these two groups on many of the center characteristics such as overall demographics.
- The largest differences appear to be related to levels of program attendance and number of students served.
- Average point-of-service and organizational quality is higher for programs with high levels of cross-year retention as opposed to those who had lower levels of cross-year retention.

To what extent do youth who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming show growth on the youth development-related outcomes measured on the youth survey?

- Differences between these two groups ranged from .09 to .73 on the YMEB Survey scales, with most of the significant differences appearing for students who participated in the survey for two or three consecutive years.
- When examining change across multiple years of consecutive participation, average change on the survey scales was positive, with the largest differences recorded for students participating in the survey for four or five years. However, because of the low sample sizes, caution should be used when interpreting results.

To what extent are 21st CCLC programs in Washington meeting their local, state, and federal targets and goals?

- Most programs are on track for Program Implementation targets, but results on indicators related to program quality and program attendance highlight a need for further review. For example, all programs are expected to participate fully in all activities related to program quality listed in these indicators, but not all programs are doing so.

Aligned Recommendations

1. Continue to build a multiyear data set for students participating in programming and reanalyze demographic and youth experience characteristics to understand any shifts that may contribute to cross- and multiple-year retention.
2. Explore how sustained participation in 21st CCLC programs for more than 2 years affects youth development and school-related outcomes and how youth experiences in programming are related to these impacts.
3. Explore how youth with sustained participation in 21st CCLC programs for more than 2 years perform on a series of school-related outcomes up to 2 years *after* participating in the program compared with similar youth not participating in the program.

Introduction

Beginning in the 2013–14 program year, the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) contracted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct an evaluation of the statewide 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program in Washington state. For more than a decade, 21st CCLC programs in Washington have provided afterschool and expanded learning programming to enhance the academic well-being of students in high-poverty communities.

Specifically, we conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the 21st CCLC program, which included data collection and support for the existing continuous quality improvement process (the Youth Program Quality Intervention [YPQI]) by providing center-level data back to grantees. AIR built and monitored online data collection modules that not only supported program improvement efforts but also facilitated the ability to report required federal data, monitor programs at the state level, and collect data necessary for evaluation activities that culminated in an annual report. To facilitate these efforts, the work was organized under three primary areas to support purposes associated with program design, implementation, and the evaluation of outcomes:

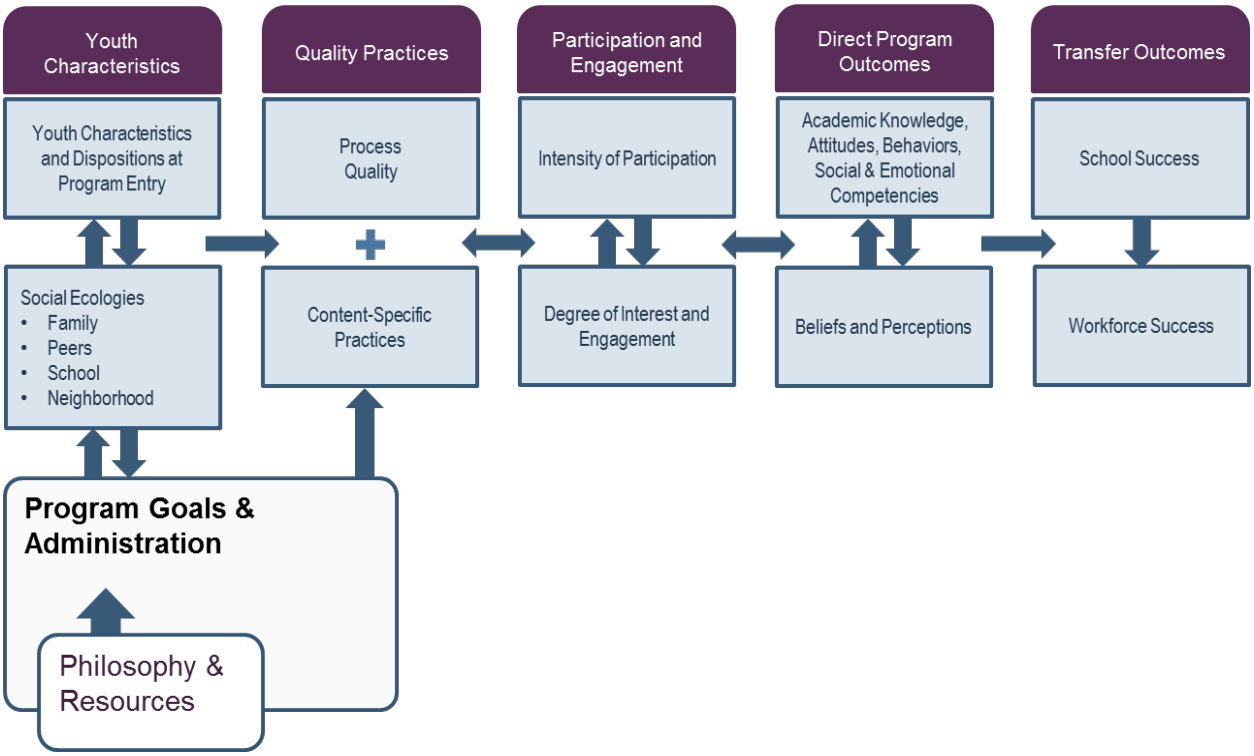
1. Support learning about program quality.
2. Monitor progress on youth outcomes and refine programming.
3. Assess program impact.

These three primary evaluation areas align with our conceptual framework for how change happens in 21st CCLC, to which we turn next.

A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Afterschool Impact

AIR's evaluation activities were grounded in a research-based theory regarding how afterschool programs can have an impact on youth. For more than a decade, researchers have explored how youth benefit from participation in high-quality afterschool programs (Auger, Pierce, & Vandell, 2013; Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Vandell, Reisner, & Pierce, 2007). Based on this work, AIR created a conceptual framework that outlines the key elements that must exist for afterschool programs to have an impact. This conceptual framework, which is outlined in Figure 1, guides the approach we use to carry out the statewide evaluation of the 21st CCLC program in Washington.

Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework for How Afterschool Programs Can Have an Impact on Youth Participants



The framework starts with the youth themselves and how they are influenced and supported by the environments in which they live and go to school. Past programming experiences, relationships with peers and teachers, the level of interest in programming topics and content, expectations regarding program experience, and the level of choice in attending all have a bearing on how youth will engage in and experience 21st CCLC programming (Durlak, Mahoney, Bohnert, & Parente, 2010). Typically, we rely on two primary sources of information to explore youth characteristics at program entry and their levels of interest and motivation to participate in 21st CCLC programming: (a) reports by school-day teachers on how youth are faring in the school-day classroom and (b) information provided by the youth themselves on youth surveys.

After considering the predispositions and contextual factors influencing youth before they even enter a program, several factors influence the experiences that youth have once they are in the program. First, programs must be of high quality to have an impact. The two broad categories of quality are process quality and content-specific practices. Process quality refers to the adoption of practices and approaches to service delivery that ultimately create a developmentally appropriate setting for youth, where participants feel safe and supported and have opportunities to form meaningful relationships, experience belonging, and be active participants

in their own learning and development. These practices are universal because they apply to any type of youth programming, regardless of content, approach, grade level, or setting.

Content-specific program practices intentionally cultivate a specific set of skills, beliefs, or knowledge. Often, such practices closely align with the direct outcomes a program is seeking to cultivate in participating youth. For example, content-specific practices include specific approaches to cultivating literacy skills, formal curricula for social and emotional learning, or methods for teaching technology skills. Content-specific practices adopted by the 21st CCLC grantees are remarkably diverse. We employ two approaches to collect information about content-specific practices: (a) reports directly by site coordinators on the types of approaches used to develop content-specific skills and (b) data on youth participation in specific types of activities with a specific content focus.

Of course, for youth to benefit from programming, they need to attend programming, ideally at high frequencies across multiple years and in a variety of distinct types of activities. Being "present" in the program is not enough, however, to ensure that youth will benefit from the activities. Youth need to experience engagement and interest during their activities to develop the beliefs, skills, and knowledge that can help them in school and beyond. In theory, the extent to which programs effectively adopt practices related to process quality and content-specific practices should heavily influence the degree of engagement and interest that youth experience while participating in 21st CCLC programming.

Once youth are engaged and participating, it is expected that they will begin to develop key skills, beliefs, and knowledge based on their participation in program activities. These features are termed *direct program outcomes* in the conceptual framework outlined in Figure 1. Based on AIR's research into 21st CCLC programs during the past decade, direct program outcomes fall into two categories: (a) academic knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors plus (b) social and emotional skills and competencies. These types of skills, beliefs, and knowledge are the most immediate outcomes that can emerge from participation in high-quality afterschool programs. That is, youth growth and development across these outcomes happens within the confines of the program and often can be observed directly by the staff leading afterschool activities.

Finally, the skills, beliefs, and knowledge that youth develop by participating in high-quality 21st CCLC programming may be used in other settings outside the program to drive achievement and success in the school and the workplace—a concept commonly referred to as transfer. These outcomes are typically measured by 21st CCLC programs by connecting participation data with school-related data available at the state or local level.

Evaluation Questions

Given the three evaluation purposes noted previously and the conceptual framework just described, AIR's evaluation activities during the 5-year contract period were intended to help us answer the following questions:

1. What were the primary characteristics associated with the grants and centers funded by 21st CCLC and the student population served by the program? (Chapter 1)
2. To what extent was there evidence that centers funded by 21st CCLC implement research-supported practices related to quality afterschool programming? (Chapter 2)
3. What does youth completion of the Youth Motivation, Engagement, and Beliefs Survey indicate about youth experiences in programming plus youth functioning on social and emotional skills and competencies and noncognitive factors? (Chapter 3)
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8. To what extent are 21st CCLC programs in Washington meeting their local, state, and federal targets and goals? (Chapter 4)

The rest of this report provides our answers to each of these questions, with findings for each question presented in the chapters indicated in parentheses. Note that we also provide additional information about data sources and methodology in Appendix A.

Chapter 1. Program Characteristics

> *Evaluation Question 1: What were the primary characteristics associated with the grants and centers funded by 21st CCLC and the student population served by the program?*

One hallmark of the 21st CCLC program is the wide diversity (a) of organizations involved in the provision of 21st CCLC programming, (b) of approaches to the way programs deliver services and activities, and (c) in the nature of the student population served. This chapter outlines the primary characteristics associated with grantees and centers funded by 21st CCLC and the student population served by the program for the 2018–19 program year.

Summary of Findings

During the 2018–19 program year, 127 centers were associated with 51 active 21st CCLC grantees that served 13,848 youth in Grades K–12, of whom 8,177 were regular attendees. Generally, the domain of Washington 21st CCLC grantees and centers operating during 2018–19 were similar to prior years in terms of organizational and operational characteristics.

- Most of the programs occurred in school-based locations.
- All Washington centers offered academic enrichment activities to students as well as some sort of programming to adult family members.
- Centers in Washington continue to mainly serve students in the elementary (50%) and middle (13%) grades.
- Most centers were considered mid-cycle (i.e., in the second to fourth year of their funding cycle); a smaller proportion of the centers (20%) were new (i.e., in their first year of funding).
- Although there has been a downward trend in the number of students served during the past several years, the students who did attend did so more frequently.
- Most students were from low-income families and were either Hispanic or White.

Aligned Recommendations

1. Consider the different training and technical assistance needs of grantees based on their maturity so that programs receive the supports they need.
2. Explore why more students are attending programs more frequently and what percentage of students are attending for multiple years to understand what types of activities are keeping students engaged in the programs.
3. Implement data collection capacity to collect more detailed information on adult family member participation, including the types of activities in which they participate.

Grantee Characteristics

OSPI is responsible for distributing the 21st CCLC funds it receives from the U.S. Department of Education through a competitive bidding process that results in awarding new grants to entities that propose to operate centers in high-poverty communities. Grants active during the 2018–19 programming period were initially awarded in 2014 (n = 19), 2015 (n = 5), 2016 (n = 4), 2017 (n = 12), and 2018 (n = 11). The term *grantee* in this report refers to an entity that applied for and received a 21st CCLC grant from OSPI and serves as the fiscal agent for the grant in question. This section considers elements examined only at the grant level, notably grantee maturity, organization type, and first-year award amounts.

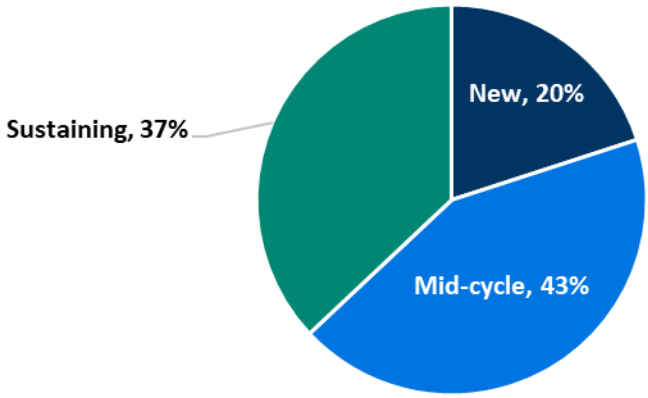
Grantee Maturity

The evaluation team examined grantee maturity to investigate the hypothesis that, because of their experience, mature centers found ways to provide higher quality services, adapt more readily to budget reductions, and have plans in place to sustain the programs after the grant funding ends. We classified Washington grantees into three possible maturity categories:

- **New**—grantees in their first year of 21st CCLC funding
- **Mid-cycle**—grantees not in their first year but also not in their last year of funding
- **Sustaining**—grantees in their last year of 21st CCLC funding

Figure 2 shows the percentage of grantees that exist in each maturity category. During the 2018–19 programming period, of the 51 Washington state grantees, 20% were new, 43% were mid-cycle, and 37% were sustaining.

Figure 2. Percentage of Centers Labeled New, Mid-Cycle, and Sustaining



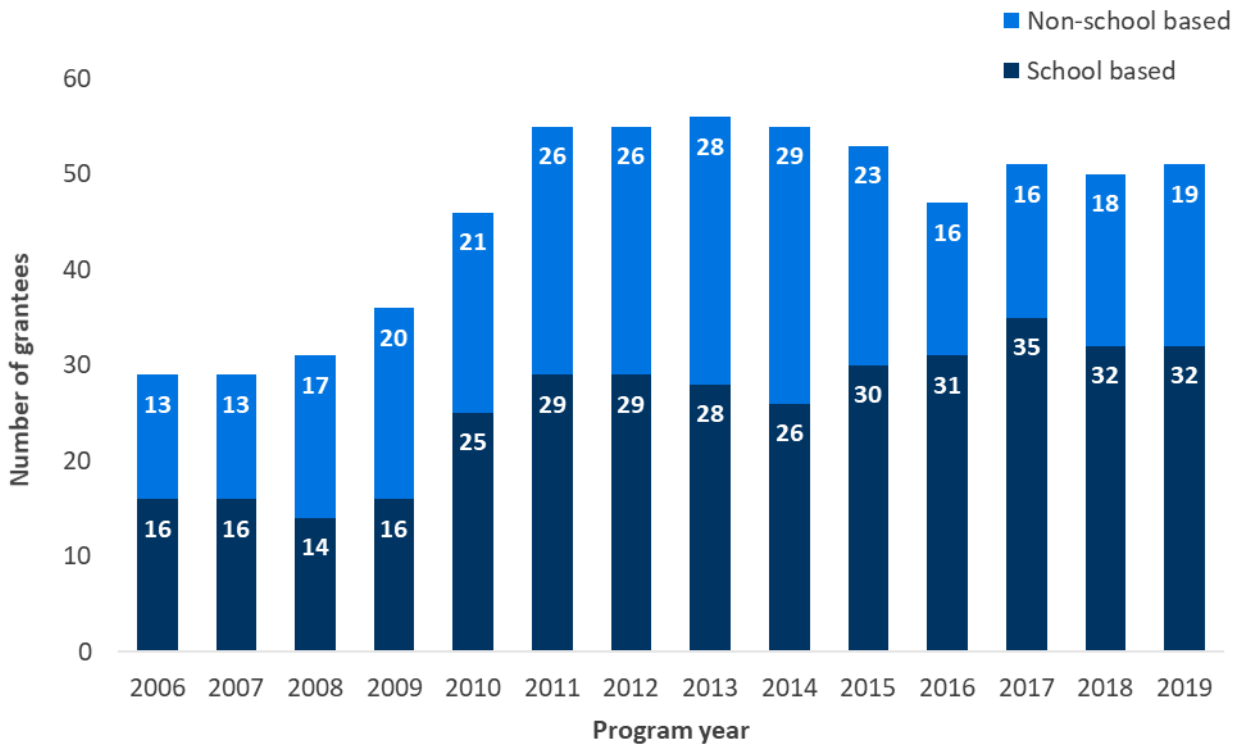
Note. OSPI awarded grants for a 5-year period.
Source. OSPI records.

Grantee Organization Type

As established in the authorizing legislation for 21st CCLC programming, several types of grantee agencies may administer programs. The most relevant distinction is whether the grantee organization is a school-based entity. School-based organizations include public districts, charter schools, and private schools. Non-school-based organizations include, among other entities, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, health-based organizations, and park districts. Both school-based and non-school-based organizations can look different in their staffing models, how they recruit and enroll youth in their program, and how they communicate with the school day.

Of the 21st CCLC grantees funded by Washington, school-based and non-school-based organizations have historically been represented roughly equally since the state-administered program began. However, this trend began to change in the 2014–15 program year (Figure 3). During the most recent program year (2018–19), most grantees were funded through school-based entities.

Figure 3. Number of School-Based and Non-School-Based Grantees by Year, 2006–2019



Source. OSPI records.

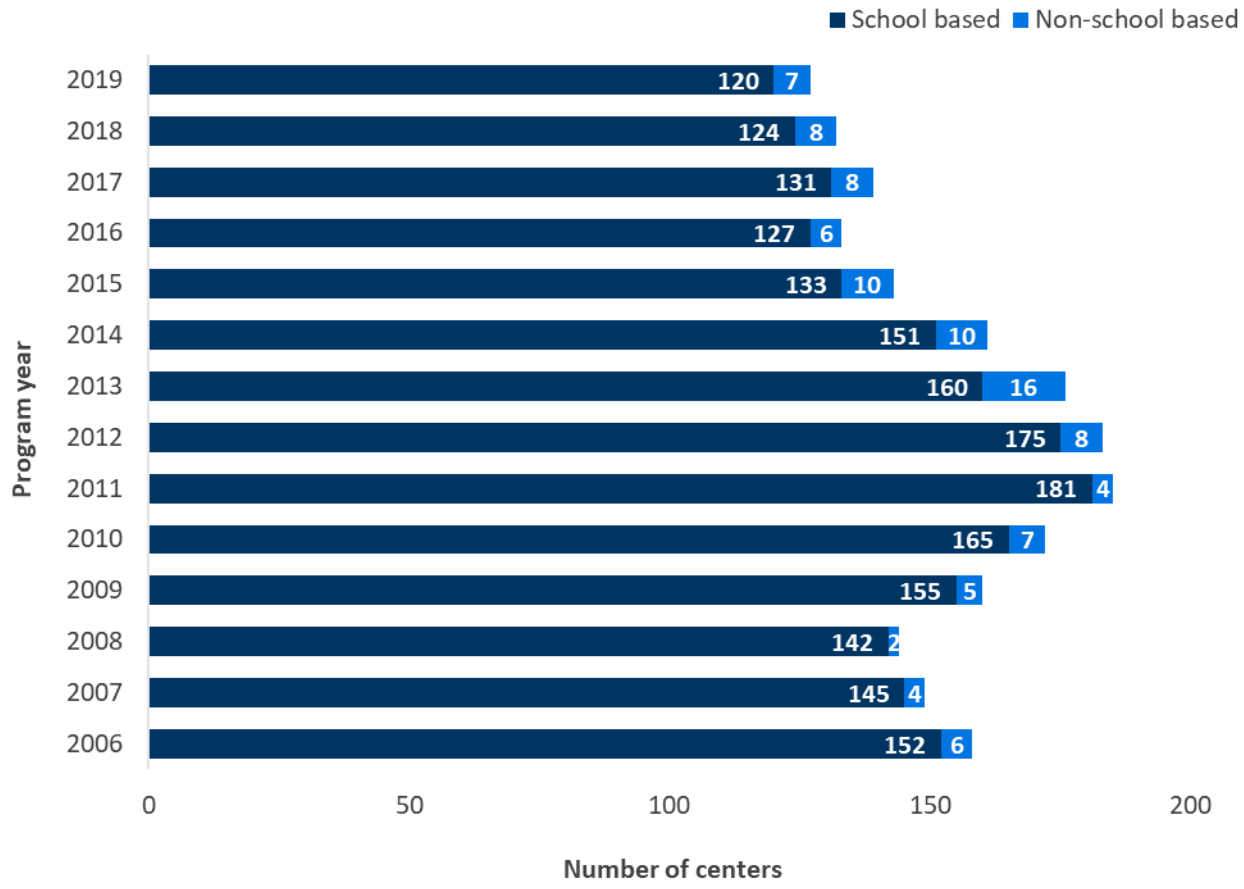
Center Characteristics

In this report, we use the term *center* to refer to the physical location where 21st CCLC-funded services and activities take place. Centers are characterized by defined hours of operation, have dedicated staff members, and usually have site coordinator positions. Each 21st CCLC grantee in Washington has at least one center; many grantees have more than one center. During the 2018–19 program year, 127 centers provided 21st CCLC-funded activities and services.

Center Organization Type

Like grantees, centers are classified as either school based or non-school based (Figure 4). During the 2018–19 program year, most of Washington's 127 centers were located in schools.

Figure 4. Number of School-Based and Non-School-Based Centers by Year, 2006–2019

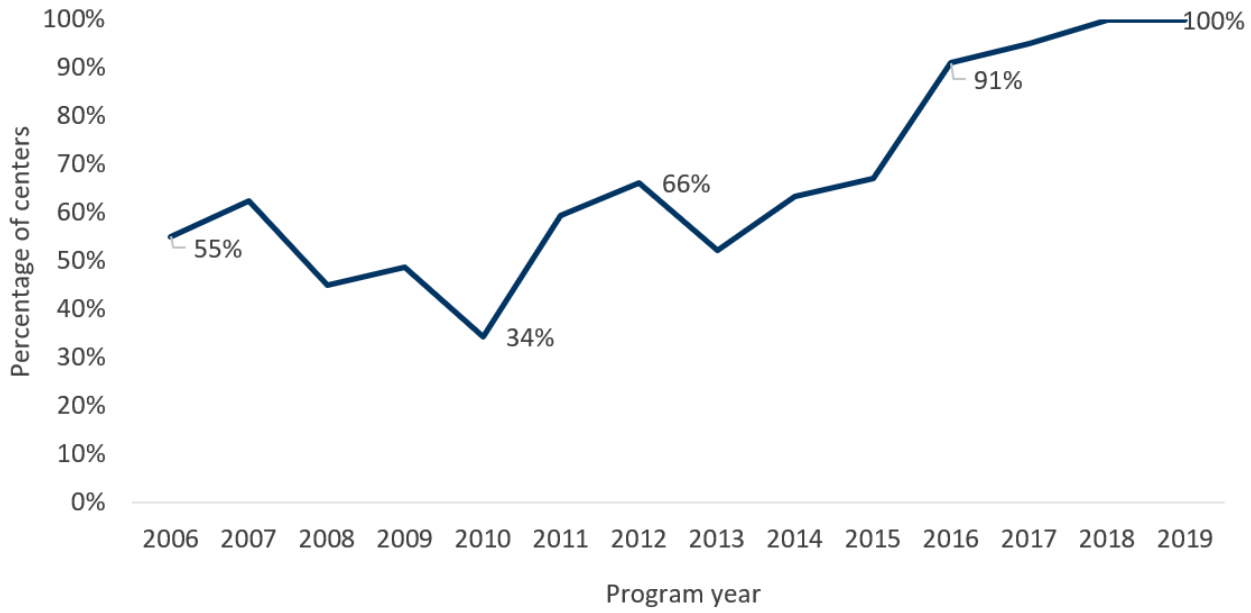


Source. OSPI records.

Summer and School Year Operations

The number of 21st CCLCs in Washington that offered summer programming increased from previous years, likely resulting from a policy shift that all funded projects must offer summer programming (Figure 5). For most programs, this shift yielded almost five additional weeks of programming (Table 1). During the 2018–19 program year, 100% of Washington's centers that were required to provide summer programming did (*n* = 98). Cohort 15 centers were not required to offer summer programming during summer 2018 because they were not yet funded. Washington centers operated on average 33 weeks in the school year; if they held summer programming, this added another 4.7 weeks.

Figure 5. Percentage of Centers Offering Summer Programming, 2006–2019



Source. Continuation reports. *N* = 127 centers.

Table 1. Program Operations by Summer and School Year

Program Operations	Summer (*N* = 98)	School Year (*N* = 127)
Programming **hours per week**	20.7	13.4
Program **days per week**	4.4	4.7
Program **weeks per school year**	4.7	33.0

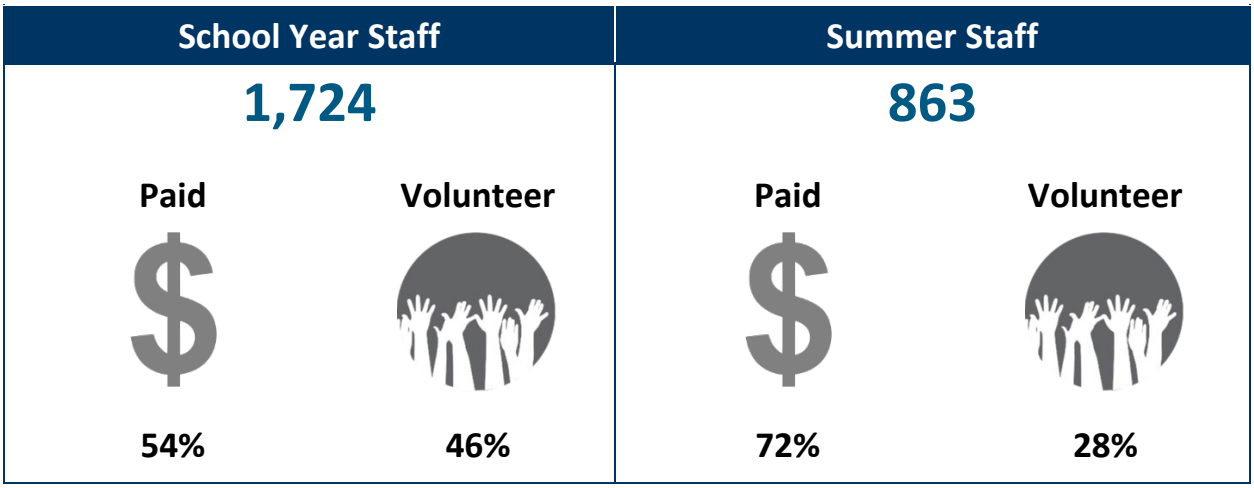
Source. Continuation reports.

Center Staffing

The quality of center staffing is crucial to the success of afterschool programming (Vandell et al., 2004). Many of the program improvement approaches used in the field emphasize the importance of staff for creating positive developmental settings for youth. The success of afterschool programs is critically dependent on students forming personal connections with the staff—especially for programs serving older students, in which a much wider spectrum of activities and options is available to youth (Eccles & Gootman, 2002).

Traditionally, Washington 21st CCLC programs have employed a variety of staff, including academic teachers, nonacademic teachers, college and high school students, counselors, paraprofessionals from the school day, and other program staff with a wide spectrum of backgrounds and training. Figure 6 shows the number of staff members who were paid and volunteered during the school year and the summer. Approximately 54% of staff working in the school year were paid, whereas 72% of staff working during the summer were paid.

Figure 6. Number of School Year and Summer Staff



Source. Continuation reports. *N* = 127 centers.

Center Activities

The staff working at a given 21st CCLC program and the activities offered to students attending it are critical elements for how youth experience and potentially benefit from their participation in 21st CCLC programs. Nationally, the goal of the 21st CCLC program is to provide academic and nonacademic enrichment programs that reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students. This overarching charge is broad and encompasses multiple types of activities. Most centers offer parent involvement activities but are much less apt to offer career or job skills training activities to families (Figure 7). Most centers offer reading, mathematics, and science activities, while all offered enrichment activities for students.

Figure 7. Activities Offered to Students and Families

Student Activities				Family Activities		
Reading	Math	Science	Enrichment	Parent Involvement	Family Literacy	Career or Job Skills Training
99%	98%	93%	100%	100%	90%	34%

Source. Continuation reports. *N* = 127 centers.

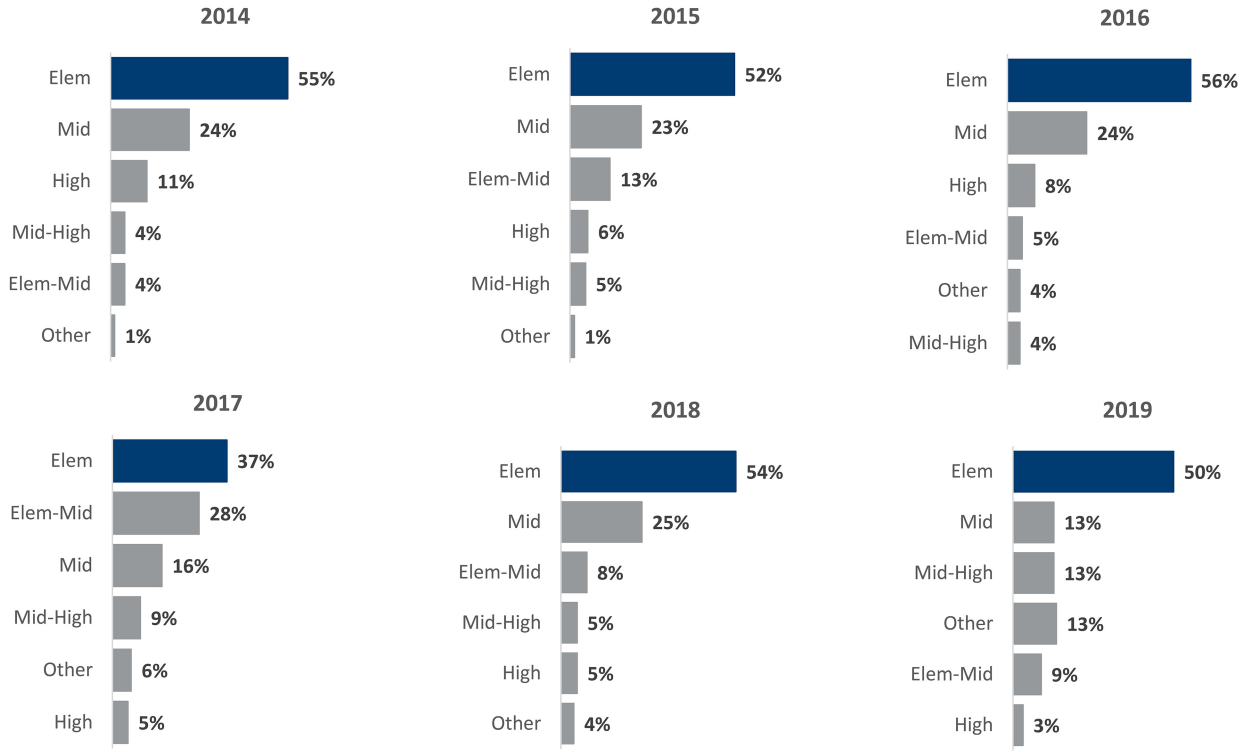
Grade Level Served

Using student-level data about the grade levels of students attending a program, 21st CCLC programs were classified as follows:

- Elementary only—centers serving students up to Grade 6
- Elementary/middle school—centers serving students up to Grade 8
- Middle school only—centers serving students in Grades 5–8
- Middle/high school—centers serving students in Grades 6–12
- High school only—centers serving students in Grades 9–12
- Other—centers that did not fit into one of the other categories

Figure 8 shows a consistent trend of centers serving elementary-school-age youth across the last six program years. In 2017, there was a dip in the percentage of centers serving elementary-age only students, but this increased once again in 2018. During the programming period ending in 2019, the majority of centers in Washington served elementary school students exclusively; 50% of all centers are classified as elementary only.

Figure 8. Percentage of Centers Serving Different Age Groups by Year, 2014–2019



Note. We did not report data from the 2006–2013 program years in this figure to maximize readability.
Source. Washington Attendee Module & Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS).

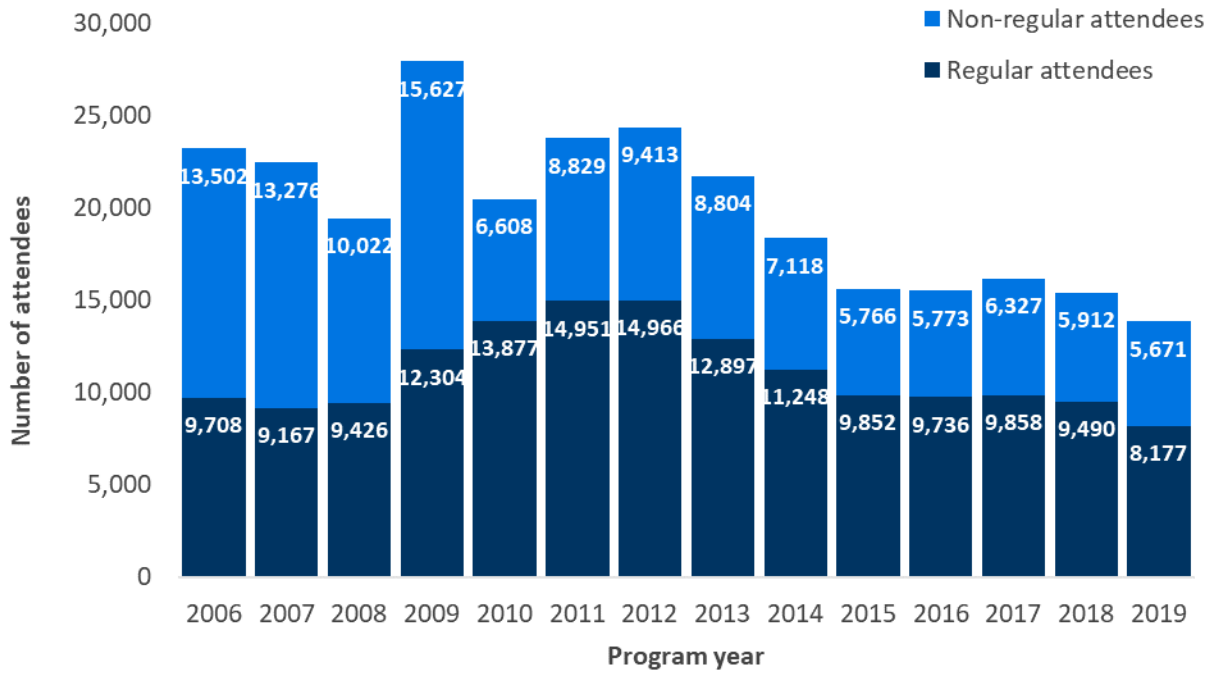
It is important to note that changes in the grade levels served (as well as changes in the number of overall students served) across years could be a direct result of the funding cycles operating within Washington. As large cohorts of programs shift out of and into their 5-year grant cycles, the number of centers serving students also changes.

Center Attendance

It often has been said that "youth vote with their feet." This becomes apparent when we examine attendance levels for CCLC programming. Program attendance is an intermediate outcome indicator that reflects the potential breadth and depth of exposure to afterschool programming. In this regard, we consider attendance in terms of (a) the total number of students who participated in the center's programming throughout the year and (b) the frequency and intensity with which students attended programming when it was offered. The total number of students who participated measures the breadth of a center's reach, whereas the frequency and intensity measures how successful the center was in retaining students in

center-provided services and activities. Figure 9 shows the number of attendees across program years. Of the 13,848 students served during the 2018–19 program year, 59% were regular attendees (students who attended a total of 30 days or more during the reporting period). The percentage of regular attendees is consistent across the 2011–2018 program periods.

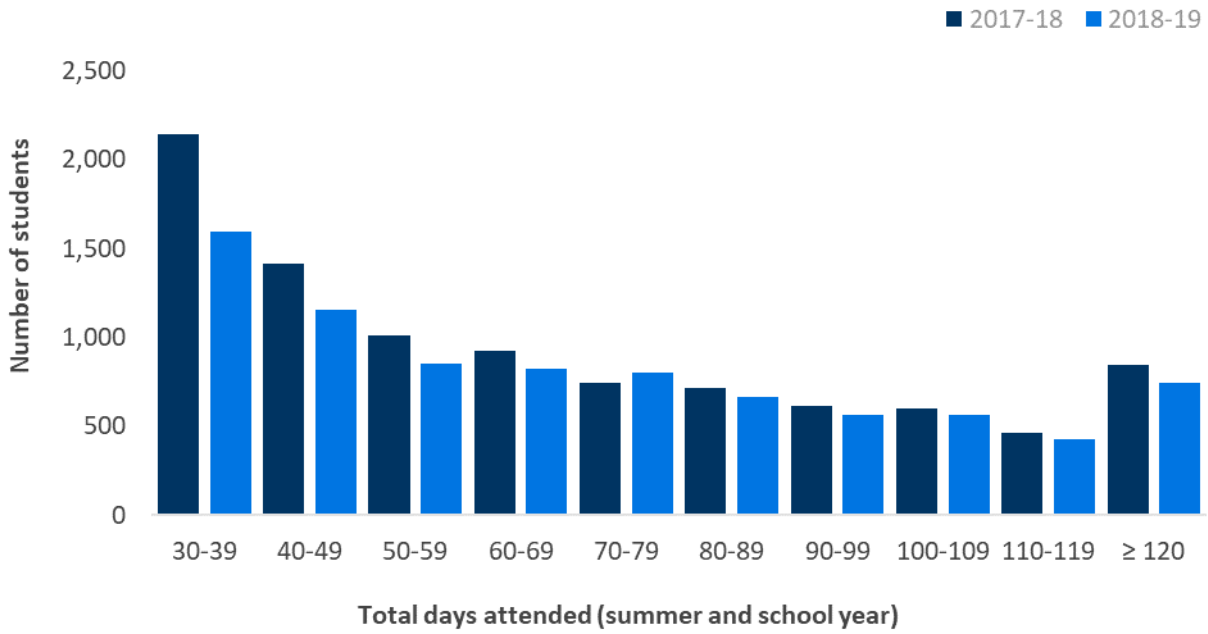
Figure 9. Number of Regular Versus Non-Regular Attendees by Program Year



Note. The decline in attendance levels between 2009 and 2010 is representative of a policy change adopted by OSPI, which increased the number of days a student would need to attend to be counted as a participant. Subsequent declines in overall attendance are perhaps related to the decline in the number of grantees and centers awarded.
Source. Washington Attendee Module.

Figure 10 shows that the number of students attending 21st CCLC programming declined steadily with each increasing 10-day attendance band, except for the more than 120 days attendance band, which increased to 848 students in 2017–18 and 741 students in 2018–19. Approximately 23% of regular attendees participated in 21st CCLC programming for 30 to 39 days in 2017–18 and 19% in 2018–19. This trend has been consistent across several years.

Figure 10. Number of Students by Attendance Band



Source. Washington Attendee Module.

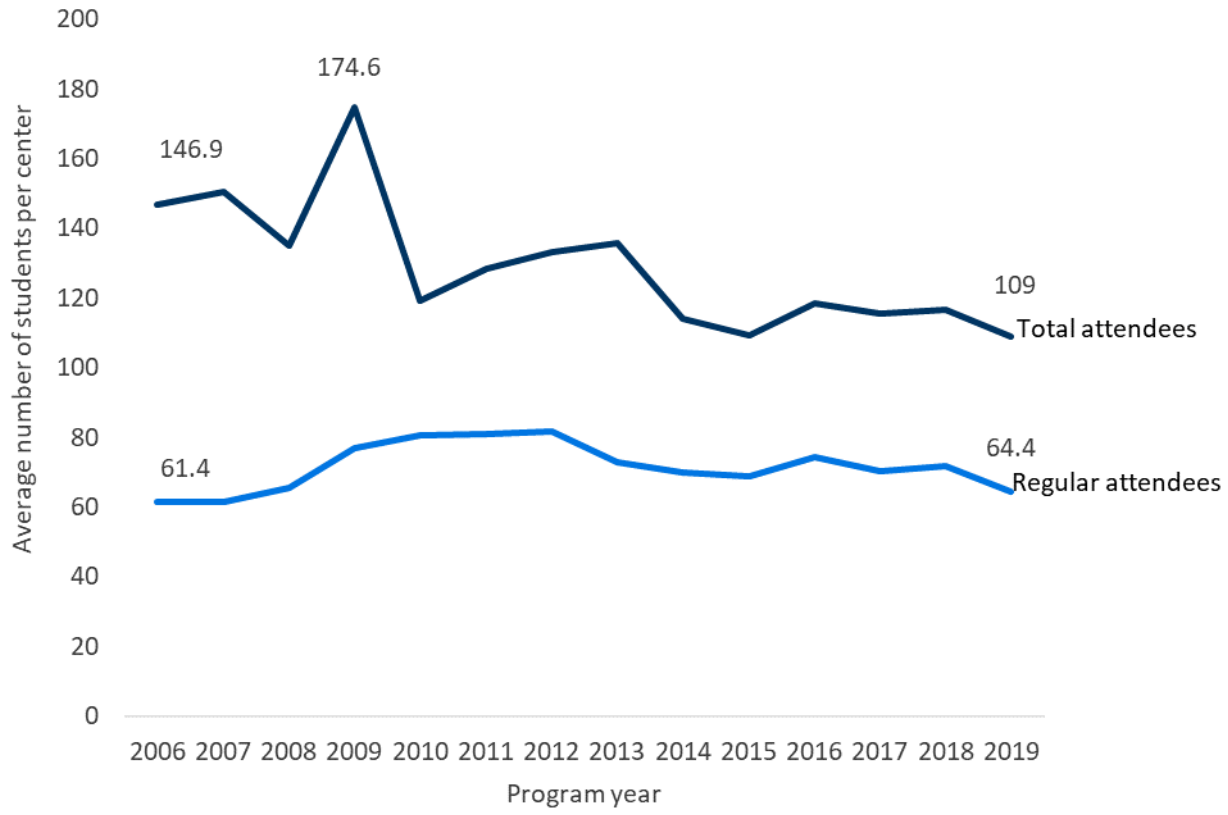
Overall, the mean school year attendance for regular attendees was 67 days in 2019, with a median of 62 days. For summer, the average number of days of attendance for regular attendees was 15.4 days, with a median of 15 days.

It is important to highlight the fact that more students attended programming during the 2018–19 program year on a more frequent basis. Research shows that the more a young person attends afterschool programming, the more his or her outcomes improve. The federal 21st CCLC program uses 30, 60, and 90 days as the benchmarks for which programs are held accountable. Research supports these benchmarks, showing that young people can have improved outcomes after 30 days, but those who participate for 60 or more days tend to have even greater outcomes (Chaput, Little, & Weiss, 2004; Kauh, 2011; Naftzger et al., 2013).

On average, each 21st CCLC center in Washington had approximately 109 total students and 64 regular attendees during 2019. There was a slight increase in total attendance and regular

attendance from 2015 to 2016, and then it levels off in the following two years, with a slight decline from 2018 to 2019 (see Figure 11).

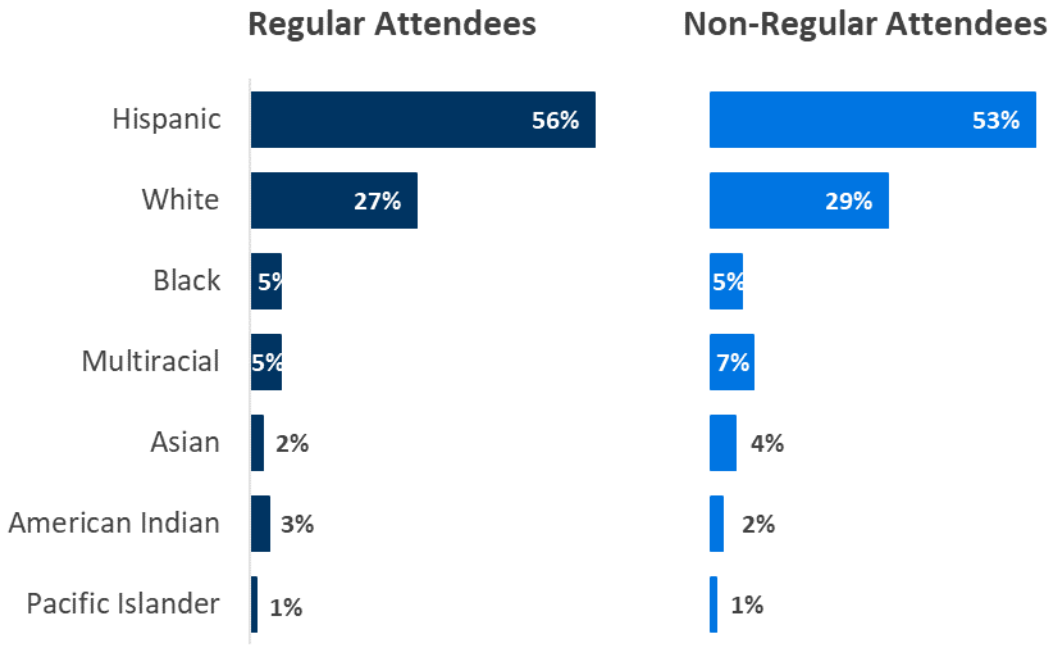
Figure 11. Average Number of Total Attendees and Regular Attendees per Center by Year, 2006–2019



Source. Washington Attendee Module.

Approximately 56% of all regular attendees were identified as Hispanic, and 27% of regular attendees were identified as White. Figure 12 outlines the racial/ethnic backgrounds of 21st CCLC attendees in Washington.[1]

Figure 12. Number of Regular Attendees and Non-Regular Attendees by Race/Ethnic Category for the 2018–19 Program Year

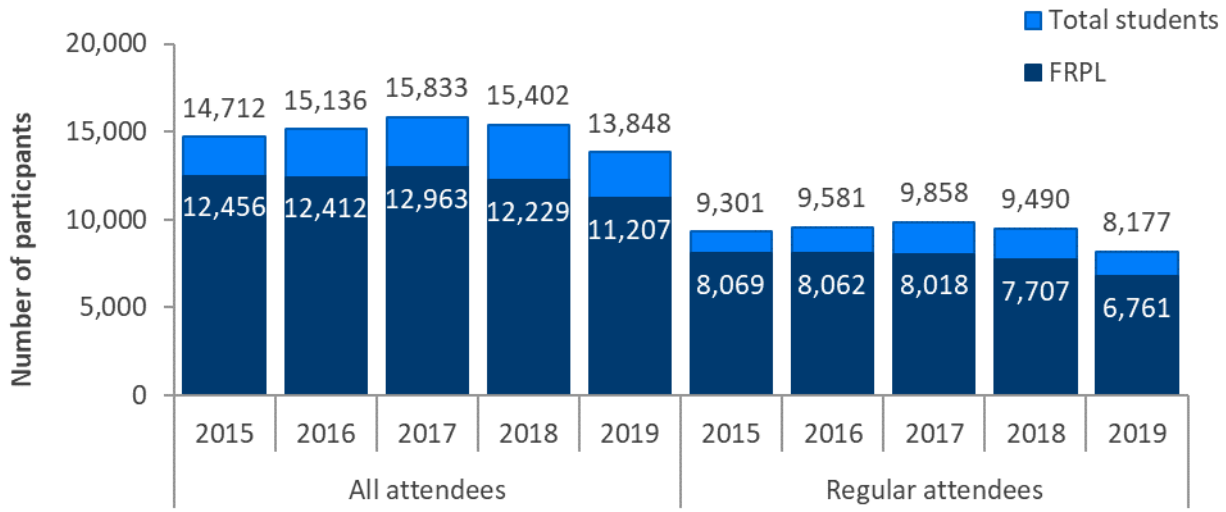


Source. Washington Attendee Module and CEDARS.

[1] Please note that the data represented in Exhibits 13 through 16 are inclusive only of students we could match in the CEDARS data system (*n* = 13,619; 98%).

The 21st CCLC program is specifically designed to provide afterschool activities and services to students living in high-poverty communities. Typically, states rely on student eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch as the metric to assess how well states and grantees are reaching this target population. The number of attendees eligible for free or reduced-price lunch is shown in Figure 13. Roughly 81% of all attendees and 83% of regular attendees were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch during the 2018–19 programming period. This value increased slightly from the previous year (79% of all attendees and 81% of regular attendees).

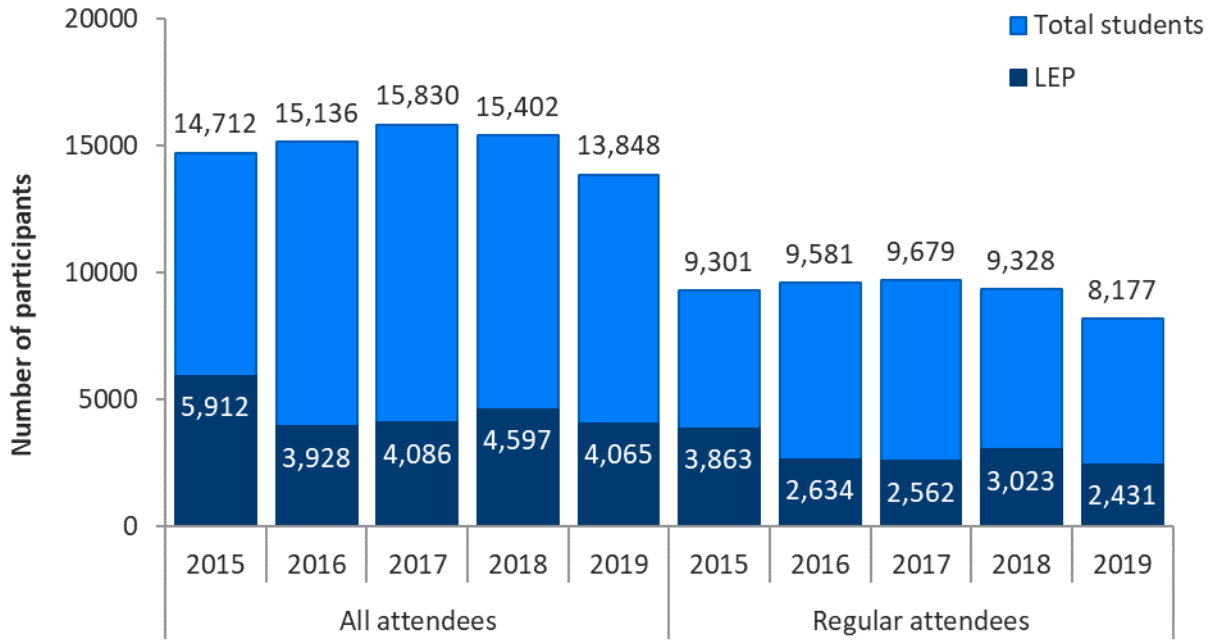
Figure 13. Number of All Attendees and Regular Attendees Receiving Free or Reduced-Priced Lunch by Year, 2015–2019



Note. FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch. We do not show the number of students whose FRPL status was unknown. We removed program year data for 2006–2014 from this figure to maximize readability.
Source. Washington Attendee Module and CEDARS.

In addition to free or reduced-price lunch eligibility, information about the student population served by 21st CCLC programming recorded in CEDARS includes students designated as being limited English proficient (LEP) or as having special needs. Although the number of students overall has declined, we still see that students in the target populations are being served. As shown in Figure 14, during 2018–19, 29% of all participants and 30% of regular attendees were limited English proficient, slightly down from the 2017–18 program year.

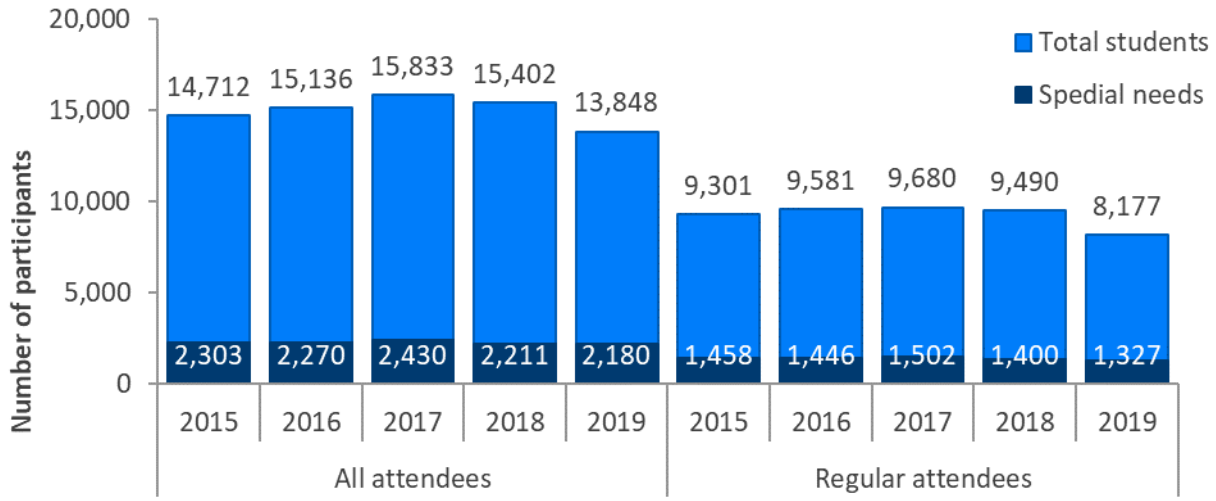
Figure 14. Number of All Attendees and Regular Attendees Classified as LEP by Year, 2015–2019



Note. We do not show the number of students whose LEP status was unknown. We removed program year data for 2006–2014 from this figure to maximize readability.
Source. Washington Attendee Module and CEDARS.

Figure 15 shows the total number of attendees, the total number of regular attendees, and the number of attendees who have special needs. During 2018–19, 16% of all attendees and 16% of regular attendees had a special need of some sort, up slightly from the previous year.

Figure 15. Number of All Attendees and Regular Attendees Classified as Special Needs, 2015–2019



Note. We do not show the number of students whose special needs status was unknown. We removed program year data for 2006–2013 from this figure to maximize readability.
Source. Washington Attendee Module and CEDARS.

Enrollment Policies and Recruitment Approaches

Enrollment policies and recruitment practices may have a substantial bearing on program design and delivery. For example, a program that targets a relatively small number of students with high academic needs and proposes to provide them with intensive support in one-on-one and small-group settings will have different strategies for recruitment and enrollment than a program that aims to serve as many students as possible and provide those students with a rich array of academic and nonacademic enrichment activities. The evaluation team asked questions related to each of these areas on the site coordinator survey administered in spring 2018.

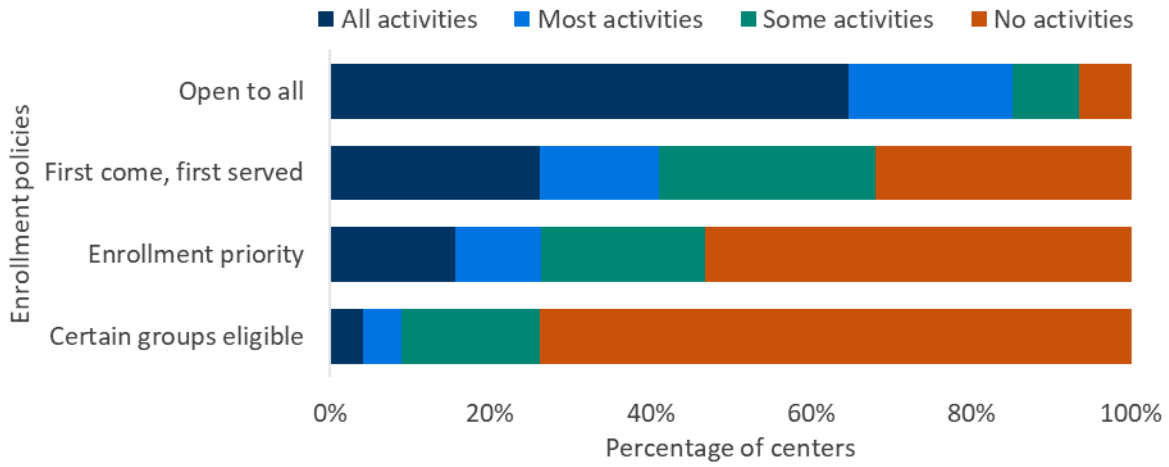
Enrollment Policies

Site coordinators indicated the degree to which activities provided at their site were

- open to all students who want to participate;
- based on giving enrollment priority to certain groups of students;
- able to support only limited enrollment and therefore filled on a first-come, first-served basis; and
- restricted in that only certain groups of students were eligible to participate.

Figure 16 shows the survey responses. Of the responding site coordinators, 65% indicated that all the activities provided at their site were open to all students who wanted to participate. Another 21% of the respondents indicated that most of their activities were open to all students.

Figure 16. Site Coordinator Survey Responses to Program Enrollment Policies



Source. Site coordinator survey.

In contrast, only 4% of the centers in 2018–19 indicated that all activities provided at their site were restricted in that only certain groups of students were eligible to participate, whereas another 5% of the centers indicated that most of the activities they provided were restricted.

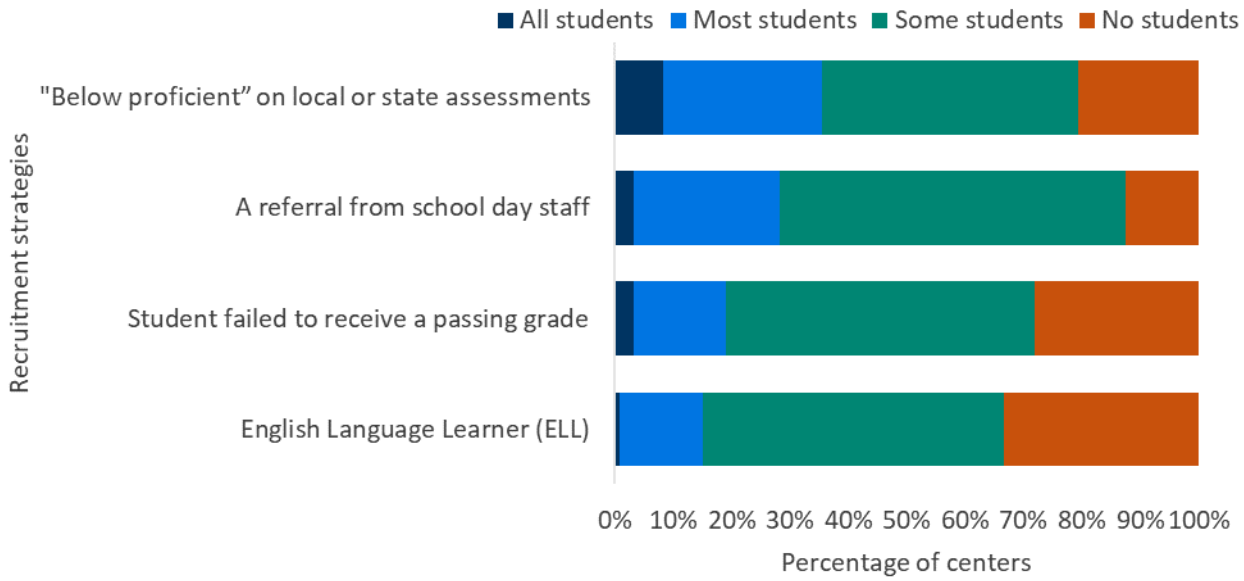
Figure 17 outlines students' academic and behavioral tendencies by percentage. These data show the general makeup of the participants at the centers. Approximately 36% of the responding site coordinators indicated that all or most students were recruited into the program because they had scored below proficient on local or state assessments, which is a significant drop from 58% in the prior year. One potential reason for this could be the fact that 20% of centers were new in this program year and had no prior year data review.

Recruitment Approaches

Site coordinators indicated the extent to which students served at their site were recruited for enrollment in the program based on the following:

- The student scored below proficient on local or state assessments.
- A referral from school-day staff because the student needed additional assistance in reading or mathematics.
- The student failed to receive a passing grade during a preceding grading period.
- The student was considered limited English proficient.

Figure 17. Site Coordinator Survey Responses to Recruitment Strategies



Source. Site coordinator survey.

Chapter 2. Implementation of Quality Afterschool Practice

> *Evaluation Question 2: To what extent was there evidence that centers funded by 21st CCLC implement research-supported practices related to quality afterschool programming?*

A primary goal of the statewide evaluation of 21st CCLC programs in Washington was to provide grantees with data to inform program improvement efforts regarding their implementation of research-supported best practices. AIR, the Weikart Center, and OSPI worked collaboratively to define a series of leading indicators predicated on data collected as part of the statewide evaluation. The leading indicators intend to enhance existing information and data available to 21st CCLC grantees regarding how they fare in the adoption of program strategies and approaches associated with high-quality afterschool programming.

The leading indicator system is part of a larger infrastructure constructed by OSPI to support 21st CCLC-funded program improvement. This larger infrastructure includes the YPQI quality improvement process. During the 2018–19 program year, all centers participated in the YPQI initiative on a mandated basis, which, theoretically, contributes to the adoption of key organizational processes that are supportive of quality program implementation.

Summary of Findings

Organizational Practices

Organizational Practices are a key component of implementing quality afterschool programming and often serve as the foundation on which all other quality practices rest. Practices related to continuous quality improvement and leadership and management remained consistent with findings we have seen in the past:

- Most staff reported supportive and collaborative program climates, but they also cited that having adequate time to plan and focus on individual student needs are areas that they still struggle with.
- Both site coordinators and staff reported that they have frequent internal communication regarding program planning, setting goals, and reviewing progress but noted that they least frequently observed other afterschool staff to provide feedback on their practice.
- The majority of centers reported that they (a) have qualified staff working in their programs who have established relationships with youth, (b) are committed to staff development and program improvement, and (c) solicit feedback regarding the program.

Instructional Practices

Of all the leading indicators, those within the Instructional Practices domain could be considered of the greatest importance in ensuring high-quality programming because the point of service is where youth experience programming and arguably receive the most benefit.

- Site coordinators and staff reported that they are either frequently or always leading activities that support student growth and development in reading or mathematics by providing activities that are well planned, are tied to specific learning goals, build skills across multiple sessions, and

promote skill building and mastery of state standards. Staff are more apt than site coordinators to report that they are always carrying out these practices.

- Point-of-service quality remained consistent with years past: Programs are doing very well in providing safe and supportive environments on a consistent basis for the students who attend their programs. As expected, there is room for improvement in consistently providing interesting and especially engaging opportunities that allow students to be active participants in their own learning.
- Youth-centered policies and practices remained relatively stable—incorporating youth interests, building multiple skills, and allowing students to have an influence on both the setting and activities of the program and the structure and policy of the organization.

Partnership Practices

Of the indicators represented in the Partnership Practices domain, it's possible that School Context is of the greatest importance for ensuring high-quality 21st CCLC programming aligned with the goal of supporting student growth and development in reading and mathematics. As with most indicators highlighted thus far in the report, there are areas of strength and opportunities for growth.

- Site coordinators reported having communication sometimes or frequently with family members of the students they serve, but they could improve on how often they send information home about how students are progressing, asking for input from family members on what and how activities should be provided and encouraging family members to participate in center-provided programming directed at adult learning.
- Site coordinators reported facilitating linkages to the school day by aligning programs to the school-day curriculum, helping students with their homework, regularly communicating with school-day staff and other school personnel, and monitoring student progress as major strategies. The least common strategy was hiring regular school-day teachers as staff to work in the program.
- Similarly, staff reported participating in efforts to align to the school day by knowing what academic content is being covered during the school day and linking programming to that content, monitoring student progress, and communicating with school personnel.
- Both site coordinators and staff reported using student data to inform how they adjust their programs throughout the year; however, a much larger number of staff members reported not having access to these data compared with site coordinators.
- Most programs consistently adopt policies and practices supportive of family engagement by addressing barriers to participation and building linkages with family and the community.

Aligned Recommendations

1. Consider providing a forum or a formal process for project directors to discuss the results of their leading indicators regionally, share stories of successes and challenges, brainstorm solutions to common problems, and build community among programs.
2. Dig deeper into who, at the center level, is participating in the program self-assessment process.
3. Consider defining the supports available to grantees regarding access to and use of local student data to support program planning and design.

4. Consider clarifying definitions and expectations on what constitutes family engagement for the purpose of adult attendance tracking and implementing a better data collection strategy for adult participants.
5. Consider additional ways to collect more objective information on relationships with community partners.

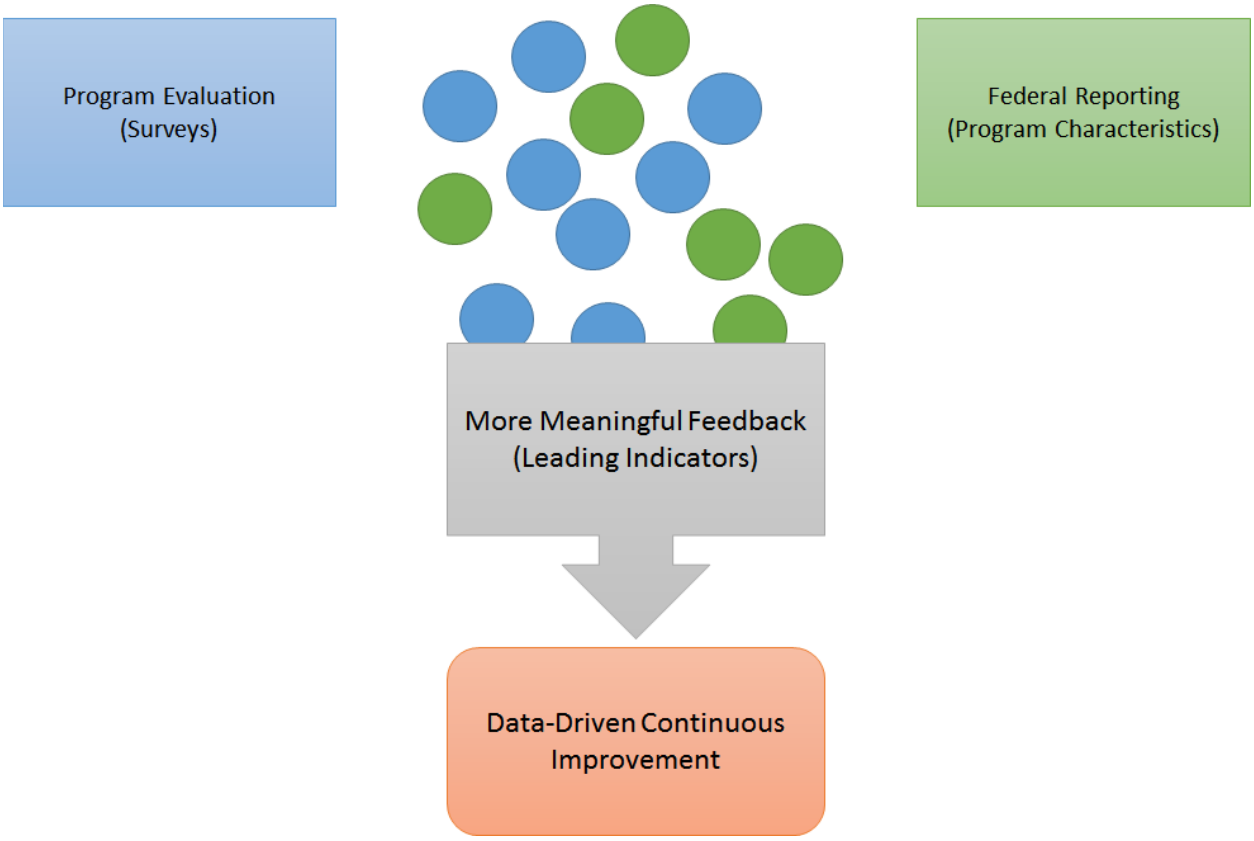
Overview of Leading Indicators

As noted earlier, the leading indicators are designed to enhance existing information and data available to 21st CCLC grantees regarding how they fare in the adoption of program strategies and approaches associated with high-quality afterschool programming. Specifically, the evaluation team designed the leading indicator system to do the following:

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

The leading indicator system primarily focuses on quality program implementation versus youth or program outcomes. It is designed to provide existing data and program evaluation data back to programs regarding the adoption of research-supported practices so that programs can identify strengths and weaknesses and reflect on areas of program design and delivery in need of further growth and development. Figure 18 provides an overall depiction of the intention, purpose, and process of the leading indicator system. Theoretically, more consistent implementation of research-supported best practices will support the attainment of desired youth outcomes.

Figure 18. Leading Indicator Data Flow for Continuous Program Quality Improvement



Selected Leading Indicators

The seven adopted leading indicators are organized into three overarching domains or sets of practices:

- **Organizational Practices,** which are focused on practices that occur among staff and management
- **Instructional Practices,** which are focused on practices that occur at the point of service, where staff and youth directly interact
- **Partnership Practices,** which are focused on practices related to coordinating and aligning afterschool programming and activities with the regular school day, family, and community contexts

The evaluation team also included some data on youth outcomes in the leading indicator reports; however, this chapter will not address information on youth outcome indicators because those will be examined more closely in Chapter 4. Table 2 lists the leading indicators within each practice.

Table 2. Leading Indicator Practice Domains

1. Organizational Practices	
Leading Indicator 1.1	Continuous Improvement
Leading Indicator 1.2	Leadership and Management
2. Instructional Practices	
Leading Indicator 2.1	Instructional Quality (Content)
Leading Indicator 2.2	Instructional Quality (Processes)
3. Partnership Practices	
Leading Indicator 3.1	Family Engagement
Leading Indicator 3.2	School Context
Leading Indicator 3.3	Community Context

Although we draw these measures from the research literature, the evidence base linking performance on these measures with the achievement of desired student outcomes is limited. In addition, we base many of the measures on self-reported data and perceptions of program implementation provided by 21st CCLC staff. Therefore, readers should treat the results with caution and not use them to draw definitive conclusions about the quality, approaches, and practices adopted by centers in 2018–19. Technical details regarding data sources, analyses, and methods are in Appendix A.

Organization of This Chapter

We organize this chapter first by the three broad contexts. Within each context, we summarize data associated with each leading indicator (for Washington centers overall). We used the following two primary approaches to summarize state-level leading indicator data:

- **Scaled Items.** Many questions on the site coordinator and staff surveys are part of a series of questions designed to assess an underlying construct or concept and result in a single scale score summarizing performance on aspects of a leading indicator (e.g., practices that support linkages to the school day). Site coordinator scale scores represent responses from one site coordinator, and center scale scores represent the average of scale scores for all staff respondents associated with a given center.
- **Descriptive Items.** Other leading indicators are based on data that are not appropriate for the type of scale construction just described. For example, program objectives are stand-alone items that do not necessarily contribute to an underlying construct or concept. We summarize items of this type descriptively.

Each of the broad contexts are described in full detail below.

Organizational Practices

Leading indicators within the Organizational Practices domain examine internal communication and collaboration among program staff. Organizational Practices that support staff in reflecting on and continually improving program quality are key components of effective youth development programs (Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, & Mielke, 2005; Glisson, 2007; Smith, 2007). Programs characterized by a supportive and collaborative climate permit staff to engage in self-reflective practice to improve overall program quality. Self-reflective practice is more likely to lead to high-quality programs that provide youth with positive and meaningful experiences. Two leading indicators fall under the Organizational Practices domain: (a) Continuous Improvement, which is assessed by scales measuring program climate, internal communication, and collaboration, and (b) Leadership and Management.

Leading Indicator 1.1: Continuous Improvement

The evaluation team calculated three scale scores for the Continuous Improvement indicator to summarize the following:

- **Program Climate.** The extent to which program staff report that a supportive and collaborative climate exists within the program (from the staff survey)
- **Internal Communication—Site Coordinator.** How frequently site coordinators engage in practices that support internal staff communication and collaboration (from the site coordinator survey)
- **Internal Communication—Staff.** How frequently staff engage in internal communication and collaboration (from the staff survey)

PROGRAM CLIMATE

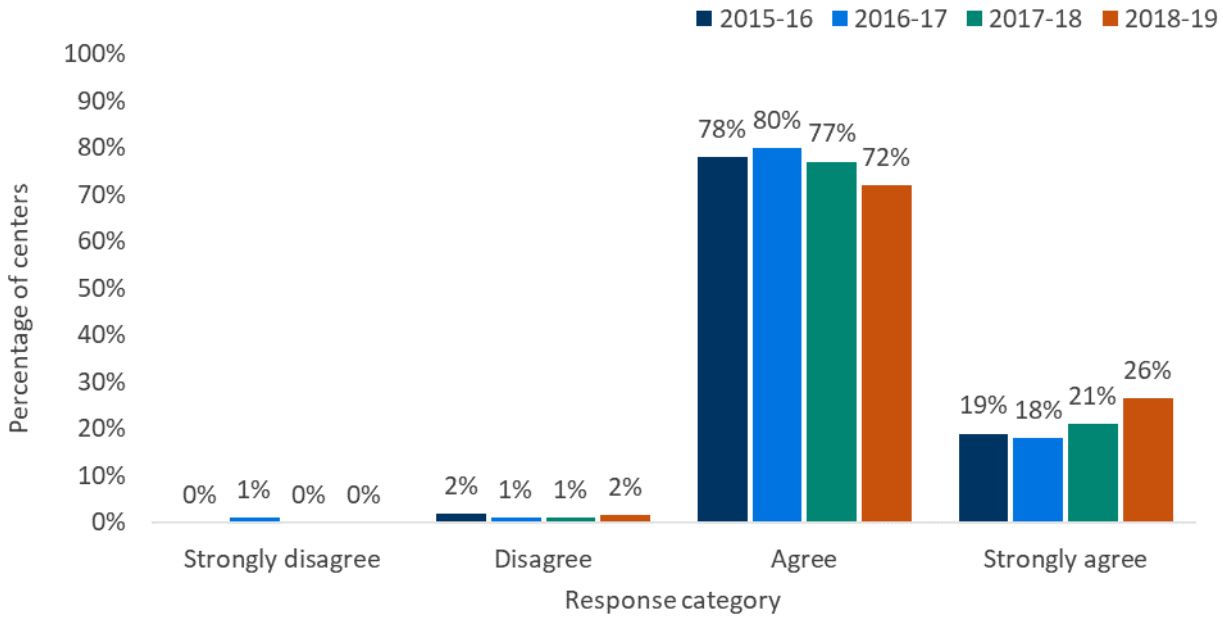
Scale scores for Program Climate are based on the following questions:

PROMPT: Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following:

- There is adequate time to focus on individual student needs within the program time frame.
- The program staff has shared control over the content.
- The staff is encouraged to try new and innovative approaches.
- Instructional collaboration among program staff is encouraged and supported.
- Staff are provided with training in current research on best practices in afterschool programs.
- Staff participate fully in program decision making.
- There is adequate time to plan individual activity sessions.

As Figure 19 shows, 72% of the centers had a mean Program Climate scale score that fell within the agree range of the scale, suggesting that most staff reported supportive, collaborative program climates. In addition, approximately 26% of the centers replied strongly agree.

Figure 19. Staff Reports of Program Climate



Source. Staff survey (774 responses from 133 centers in 2016, 804 responses from 141 centers in 2017, 773 responses from 132 centers in 2018, and 647 responses from 121 centers in 2019).

In 2018–19, staff most likely disagreed with statements that they had adequate time to focus on individual student needs and that they were provided with training in current research on best practices in afterschool programs.

These data suggest that implementation of these practices continues to be difficult. In these instances, OSPI can better support afterschool staff. For example, OSPI can modify future requests for proposal to require that programs build in time for session planning or offer and support staff participation in trainings targeting the adoption of research-supported practices. It also might be worth examining staffing models and student-to-staff ratios to make sure that afterschool staff members are best able to support students.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

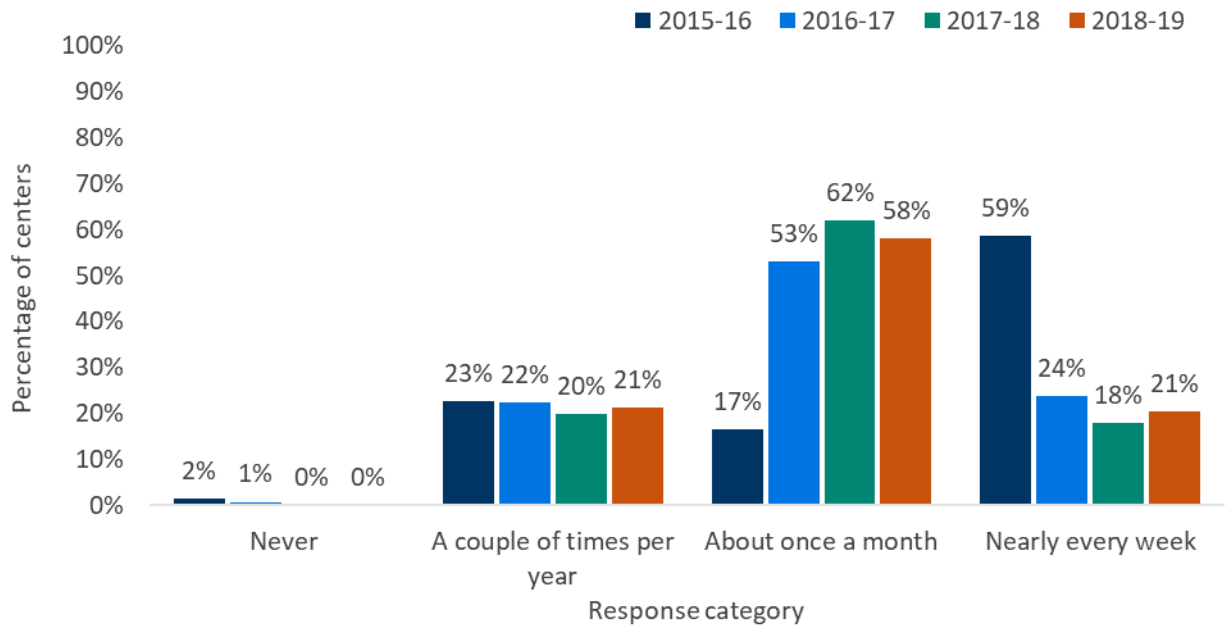
Scores for Internal Communication included staff and site coordinator responses to the following survey question:

PROMPT: How often do you engage in the following tasks with other staff working in the program?

- Conduct program planning based on a review of program data with other staff.
- Use data to set program improvement goals with other staff.
- Discuss progress on meeting program improvement goals with other staff.
- Observe other afterschool staff delivering programming in order to provide feedback on their practice.
- Conduct program planning with other staff in order to meet specific learning goals in coordinated ways across multiple activities.

On the Internal Communication portion of the survey, staff answered questions about planning, data use, and observations. Figure 20 shows the percentage of site coordinators who replied in each category. In 2018–19, 21% of the centers had site coordinators who reported internal communication taking place nearly every week, which is up from the previous year.

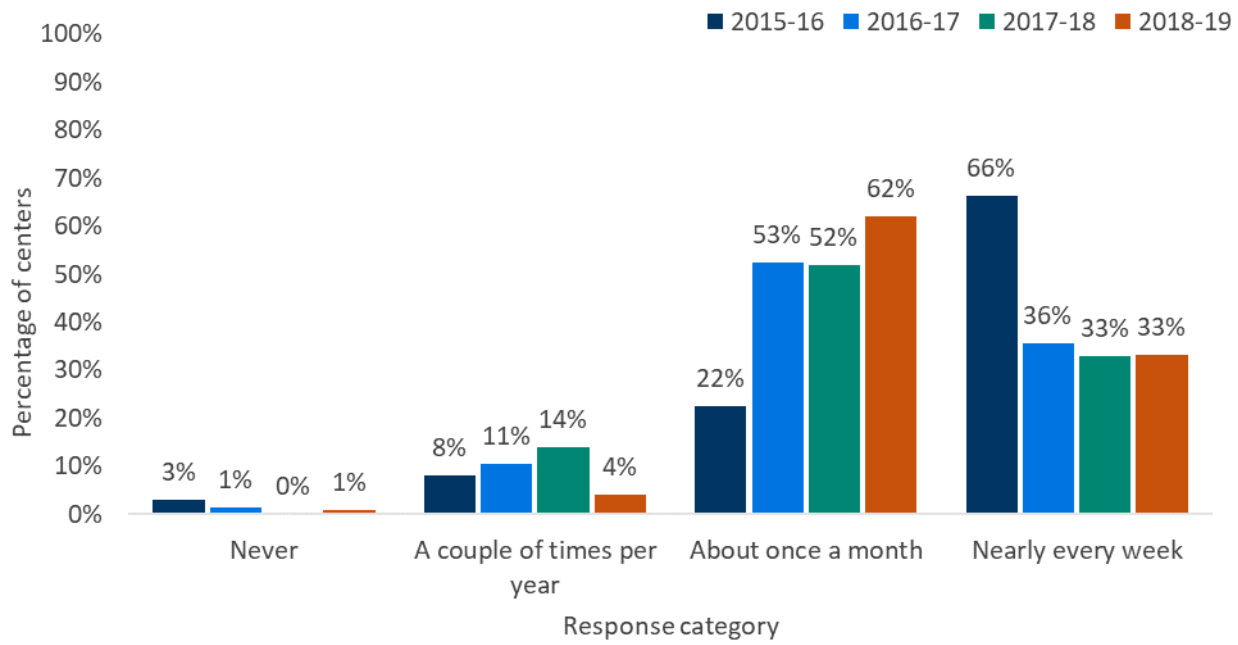
Figure 20. Site Coordinator Reports of Internal Communication



Source. Site coordinator survey (136 responses from 133 centers in 2016, 139 responses from 130 centers in 2017, 140 responses from 132 centers in 2018, and 132 responses from 122 centers in 2019).

Figure 21 shows the responses from staff members. Similarly, 33% of the centers had staff survey respondents who reported internal communication taking place nearly every week, which stayed consistent with the previous year.

Figure 21. Staff Reports of Internal Communication



Source. Staff survey (774 responses from 133 centers in 2016, 804 responses from 141 centers in 2017, 773 responses from 132 centers in 2018, and 647 responses from 121 centers in 2019).

Most responses to the prompts were about once a month for both site coordinators and staff; there is little discrepancy on the second most frequently selected response category. This represents a shift from what we have seen in previous years, when staff members reported engaging in frequent internal communication.

In 2018–19, staff reported that the following internal communication activities were the least frequently implemented:

- Observe other afterschool staff delivering programming to provide feedback on their practice.
- Participate in training and professional development with other staff on how to better serve youth.
- Discuss research-based instructional practices with other staff.
- Use data to set program improvement goals with other staff.

The first three activities also were noted as areas that were least implemented in 2015–16 and 2016–17. Observing other afterschool staff has been an area for improvement since 2010–11. These findings are noteworthy because OSPI has mandated that all 21st CCLC programs in Washington participate in a quality improvement process (the YPQI) as a requirement of their funding, and observation of other afterschool staff is central to this process. It is possible that these activities are being carried out at the site coordinator or project director level, not cascading down to direct service staff.

Leading Indicator 1.2: Leadership and Management

Leadership and Management captures the degree to which the program has taken steps to hire qualified staff, promote staff development, support program improvement, and solicit feedback. Some of these areas overlap with previously identified indicators in the Organizational Practices domain, but the data presented for this indicator directly represent how the program believes it is doing in carrying out leadership and management tasks. This indicator uses data obtained from program self-assessment on Form B of the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA). Form B uses a 3-point rating scale to assign scores to a given element (1, 3, and 5). However, unlike Form A, the 3-point rating scale was found to be viable for Form B scales.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

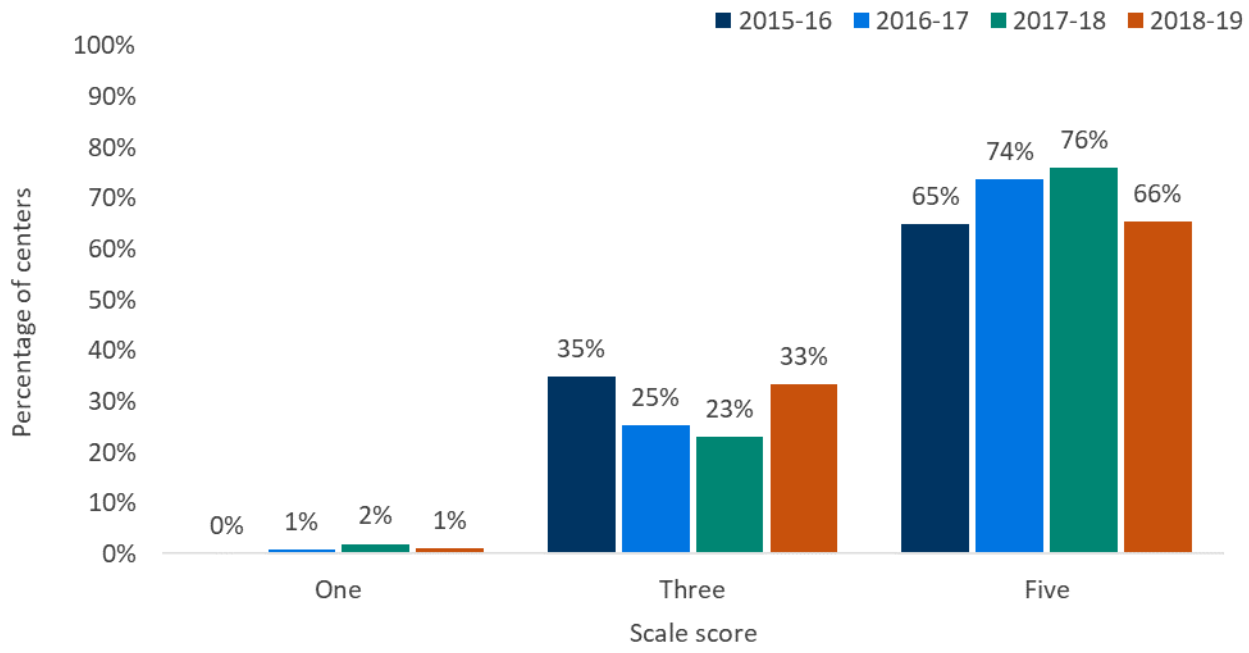
YPQA FORM B

Leadership and Management Scales

- Staff availability and longevity with the organization support youth-staff relationships.
- Staff qualifications support a positive youth development focus.
- Organization promotes staff development.
- Organization is committed to ongoing program improvement.
- Organization solicits feedback.

We asked staff a series of questions regarding staff availability and longevity with the center, qualifications, staff development, and ongoing program improvement. Figure 22 shows the percentage of centers that received a score of 1, 3, or 5 in 2015–16 through 2018–19. Most centers received a score of 5 in all four program years. These results seem to suggest that most staff reported that leadership and management practices within the center support youth-staff relationships and a positive development focus, promote staff development, and are committed to ongoing program improvement. Only 84 of the 127 centers completed the YPQA Form B for the 2018–19 program year.

Figure 22. Center-Level Scores for Leadership and Management



Source. YPQA Form B (from 127 centers in 2016, 118 centers in 2017, 124 centers in 2018, and 84 centers in 2019).

Instructional Practices

Leading indicators in the Instructional Practices domain focus on the practices and approaches adopted by frontline staff to design and deliver activity sessions that intentionally support youth skill building and mastery that align with the center's objectives and principles of youth development. A strong connection exists between the leading indicators in the Instructional Practices domain and components of the YPQI program improvement process. For example, the YPQI process assesses and supports staff practices at the point of service related to creating safe, supportive, interactive, and engaging environments. Effective afterschool programs commonly provide activities that were sequenced, involve active forms of learning, and focus on cultivating particular skills (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007), which highlights the importance of intentional program design. The two leading indicators in the Instructional Practices domain are Instructional Quality (Content) and Instructional Quality (Processes).

Leading Indicator 2.1: Instructional Quality (Content)

Instructional Quality (Content) captures the degree to which the time spent on activities corresponds to program objectives as identified by the site coordinators and how intentionally they designed and delivered activities. We used both descriptive and Rasch scaling approaches (see Appendix A) for these data. We calculated two separate metrics to describe aspects of this indicator, which are as follows:

Intentionality in Program Design—Site Coordinator Survey. The frequency with which staff engage in practices that indicate intentionality in activity and session design for the delivery of activities meant to support student growth and development in reading and mathematics

Intentionality in Program Design—Staff Survey. The frequency with which staff engage in practices that indicate intentionality in activity and session design for the delivery of activities meant to support student growth and development

As previously noted, a growing body of research suggests that program outcomes in the form of enhanced student academic achievement outcomes are realized by simply paying attention to how programming is delivered—specifically, whether programming is delivered in developmentally appropriate settings and grounded in core principles of youth development (Birmingham et al., 2005; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). In addition to youth development principles, afterschool programs are more likely to attain desired student academic outcomes if staff members responsible for planning the session content incorporate certain practices and strategies into their planning efforts. Both the site coordinator and staff surveys asked a series of questions about intentional program design.

INTENTIONALITY IN PROGRAM DESIGN

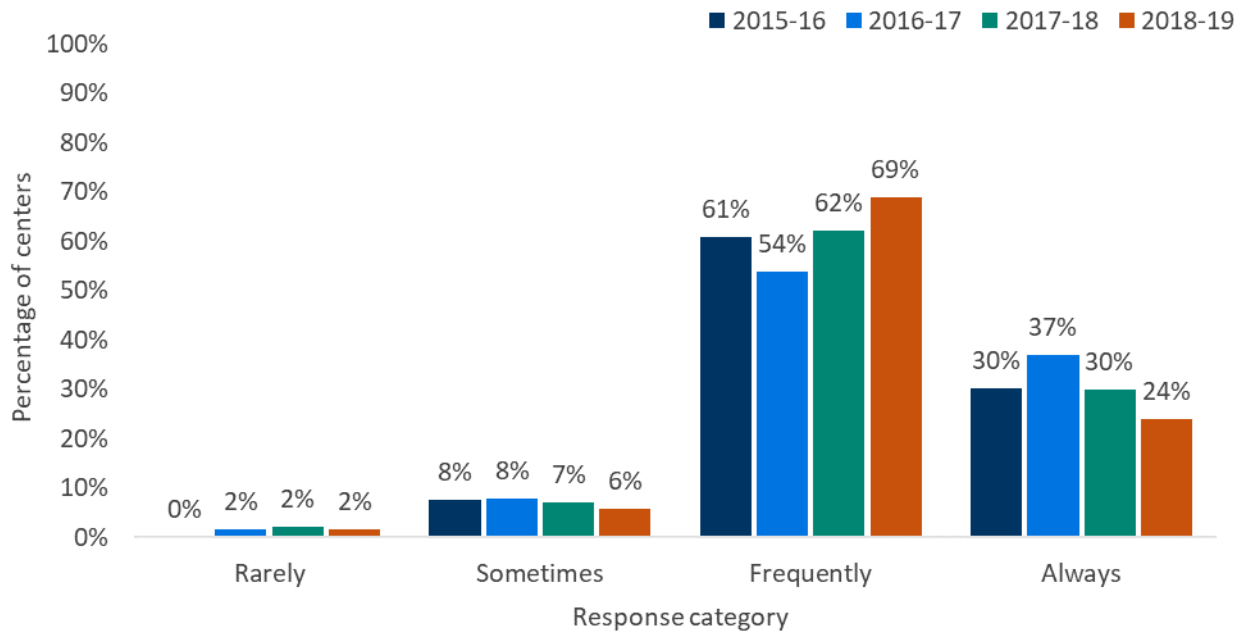
Scale scores for Intentionality in Program Design included staff and site coordinator responses to the following survey questions:

PROMPT: How often do staff lead activities that are especially meant to support student growth and development in reading or mathematics and provide program activities that are...

- Based on written plans for the session, assignments, and projects?
- Well planned in advance?
- Tied to specific learning goals?
- Meant to build upon skills cultivated in a prior activity or session?
- Explicitly meant to promote skill building and mastery in relation to one or more state standards?
- Explicitly meant to address a specific developmental domain (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional, civic, physical)?
- Structured to respond to youth feedback on what the content or format of the activity should be?
- Informed by the express interests, preferences, or satisfaction of participating youth?

We asked site coordinators to indicate how frequently the staff who lead activities support skill building in reading or mathematics engaged in the previously discussed practices (Figure 23). Ninety-three percent of the centers had site coordinators who reported frequently or always implementing program design strategies.

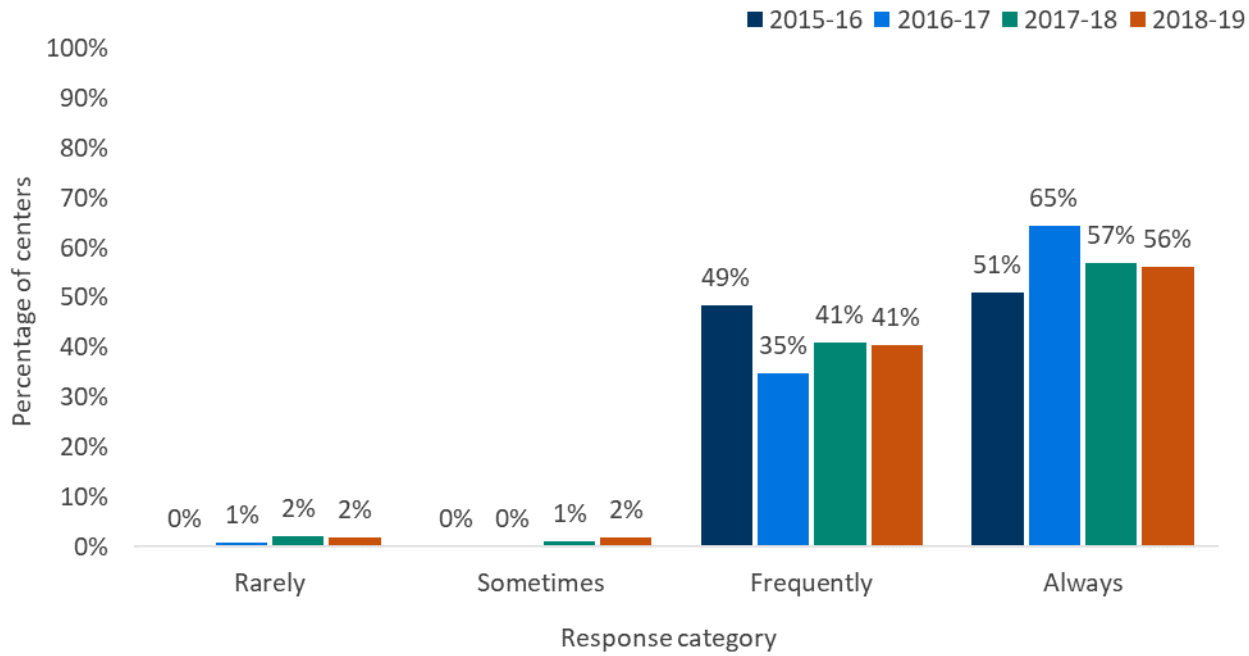
Figure 23. Site Coordinator Responses to Questions About Program Design



Source. Site coordinator survey (136 responses from 133 centers in 2016, 139 responses from 130 centers in 2017, 140 responses from 132 centers in 2018, and 132 responses from 122 centers in 2019).

Staff were asked how frequently they engaged in these practices. Most centers had staff who described themselves as always adopting practices related to program design and delivery. Some differences between the site coordinator and staff responses to the survey questions may be associated with the fact that staff who are not responsible for leading activities that support skill building and mastery in reading and mathematics also completed surveys and were included in the analysis (Figure 24). These results indicate that staff were more likely to report engaging in practices related to intentional program design than were site coordinators. Fifty-seven percent of the centers had a mean staff scale score on the Intentionality in Program Design scale that fell within the always portion of the scale.

Figure 24. Staff Responses to Questions About Program Design



Source. Staff survey (774 responses from 133 centers in 2016, 804 responses from 141 centers in 2017, 773 responses from 132 centers in 2018, and 647 responses from 121 centers in 2019).

Leading Indicator 2.2: Instructional Quality (Processes)

Instructional Quality (Processes) captures the processes and practices that staff members use and are consistent with high-quality instruction and core youth development principles. These processes and practices also emphasize providing developmentally appropriate activities at the point of service (see the conceptual framework in Figure 1). Conceptually, many practices associated with this indicator relate to concepts embedded in the YPQA. We calculated the following scale scores to assess aspects of this leading indicator:

- **Point-of-Service Quality—YPQA Form A (program external and self-assessment).** The extent to which program staff provide supports and opportunities to create safe, supportive, interactive, and engaging settings for participating youth
- **Youth-Centered Policies and Practices—YPQA Form B (program self-assessment).** The extent to which the program adopts youth-centered policies and practices conducive to a supportive learning environment

Point-of-Service Quality consists of scales measuring safety, a supportive environment, interaction, and engagement. The data outlined in this section display both self-assessment and external assessment data obtained by scoring the YPQA Form A or the School-Age Program Quality Assessment observational tool. We calibrated scores using many-facet Rasch measurement approaches and adjusted them to account for the bias introduced by the type of assessment (i.e., external or self-assessment) and the type of activity observed (i.e., enrichment, tutoring and homework help, or recreation). The goal in making these adjustments was to eliminate the systematic impact on scores that may be related to the type of assessment done and the type of activity observed.

POINT-OF-SERVICE QUALITY – YPQA FORM A

Safe Environment Scales

- Emotional Safety
- Healthy Environment
- Emergency Preparedness
- Accommodating Environment
- Nourishment

Supportive Environment Scales

- Warm Welcome
- Session Flow
- Active Engagement
- Skill Building
- Encouragement
- Reframing Conflict

Interaction Scales

- Belonging
- Collaboration
- Leadership
- Adult Partners

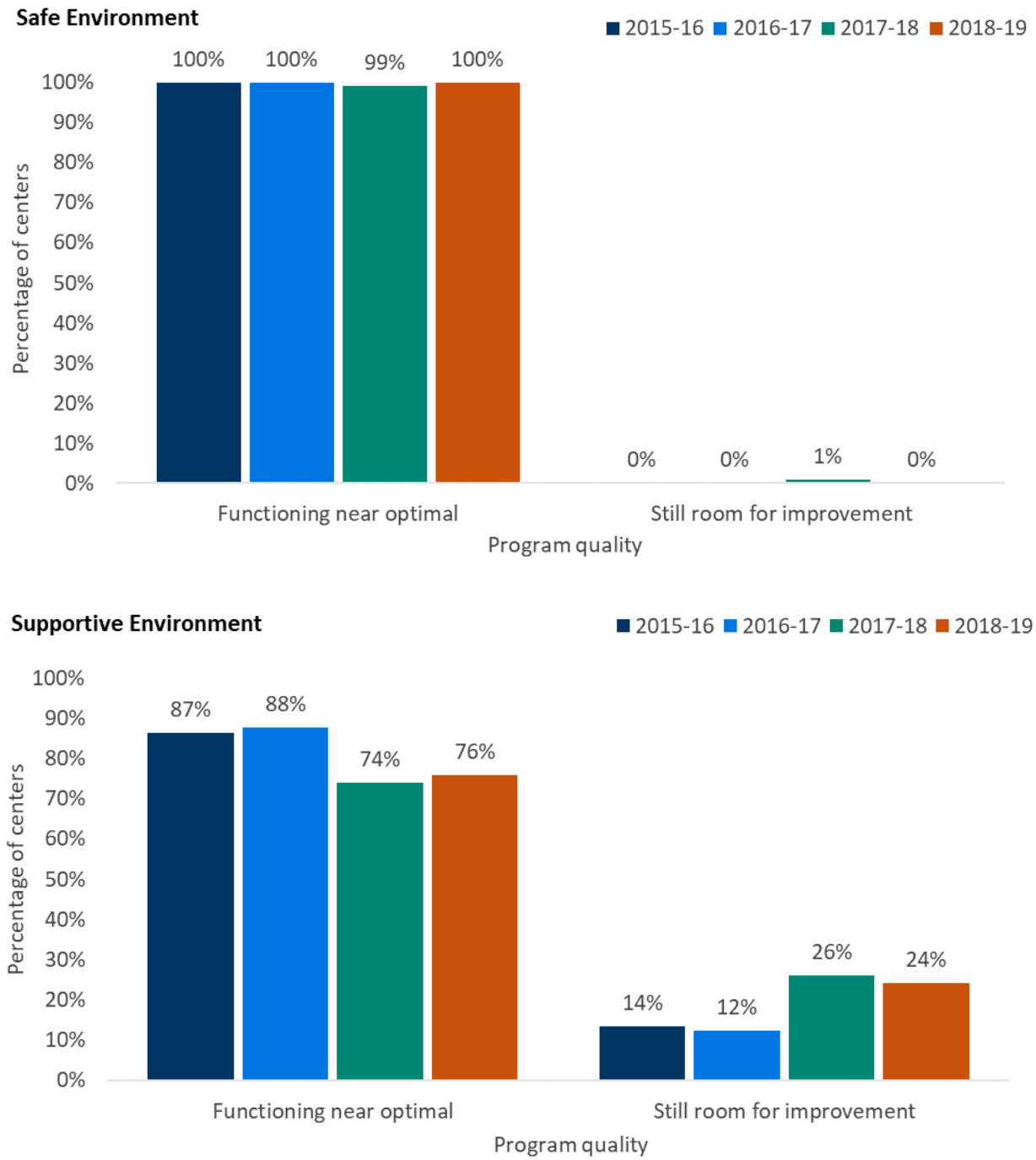
Engagement Scales

- Planning
- Choice
- Reflection

These analyses showed that although the YPQA uses a 3-point scale (1, 3, and 5), the tool appears to function more reliably for the 21st CCLC context in Washington if the 1 and 3 scores are collapsed into a single category. In this sense, although the YPQA scores are typically reported using the 1, 3, and 5 scale associated with the tool, in Figures 25 and 26, we report results using the collapsed 1 and 3 score categories (still room for improvement) and the 5 category (functioning near optimal).

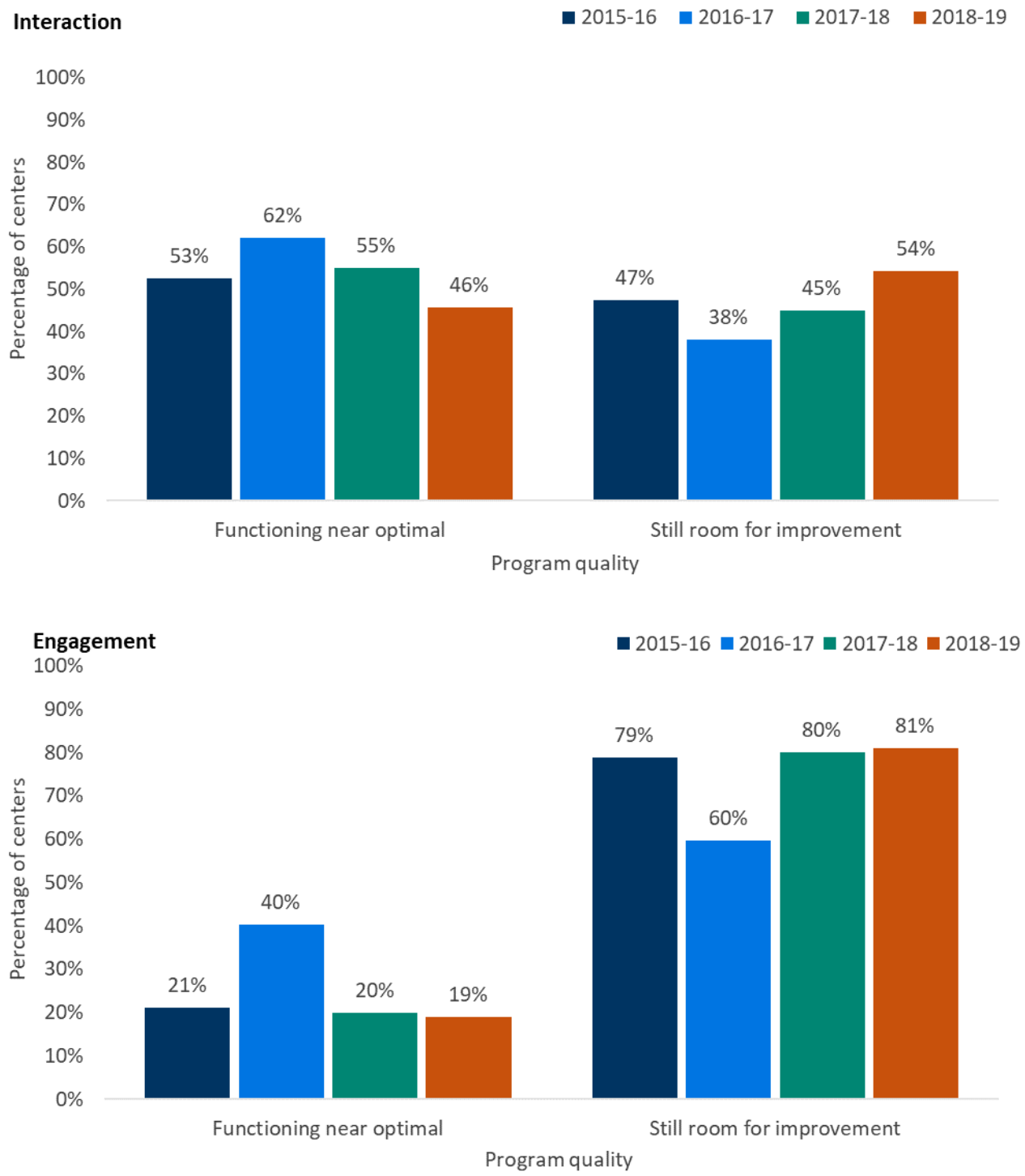
According to the survey results, most respondents indicated that the program provides a safe environment for students (Figure 25). Most programs also offer a supportive environment on a consistent basis. Figure 26 shows the survey results for the interaction and engagement scales; survey respondents indicated that there is room for improvement on these measures.

Figure 25. Center-Level Functioning on Safe and Supportive Environment



Source. YPQA Form A (from 133 centers in 2016, 129 centers in 2017, 127 centers in 2018, and 116 centers in 2019).

Figure 26. Center-Level Functioning on Interaction and Engagement



Source. YPQA Form A (from 133 centers in 2016, 129 centers in 2017, 127 centers in 2018, and 116 centers in 2019).

The findings in Figure 26 are not surprising because many programs often have more difficulty consistently implementing quality practices related to Interaction and Engagement. Centers had room for improvement in both the Interaction and Engagement domains across all three program years, with a larger percentage of centers needing improvement in the Engagement domain.

Youth-Centered Policies and Practices capture the degree to which the program adopts youth-centered policies and practices conducive to a supportive learning environment. The data presented for this indicator are based on data obtained from YPQA Form B. We asked staff a series of questions about the program's relevance to youth interests and skills, as well as youth's influence on the setting, activities, structure, and policy of the center. Like Form A, Form B uses a 3-point rating scale to assign scores to a given element (1, 3, and 5). However, unlike Form A, the 3-point rating scale was found to be viable for the program self-assessment on the YPQA Form B scales, so the findings reported in Figure 27 use the 1, 3, and 5 convention, with a 5 indicating more consistent application of the practice.

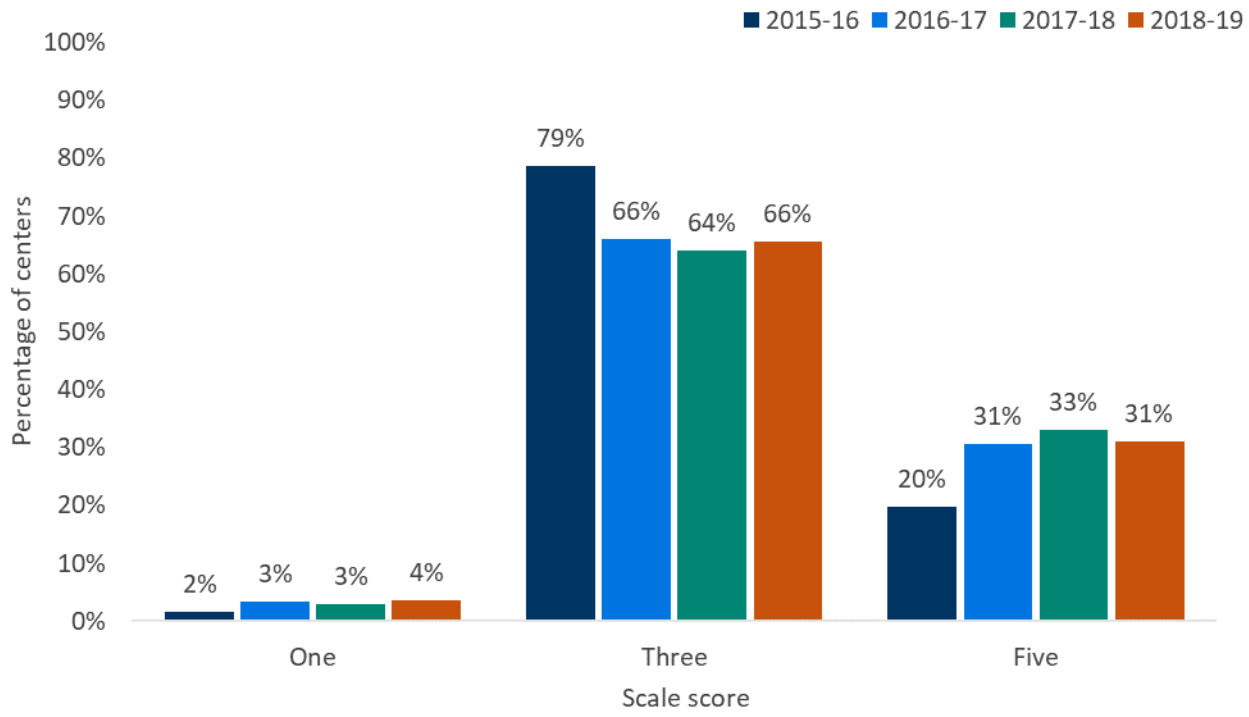
YOUTH-CENTERED POLICIES & PRACTICES

YPQA FORM B

- Programs tap youth interests and build multiple skills.
- Youth have an influence on the setting and activities in the organization.
- Youth have an influence on the structure and policy of the organization.

Overall, all or nearly all the responses were in the 3-point or 5-point category (Figure 27). This finding signals a very small decrease in the percentage of centers that fell within the 5-point category from the previous program year. These data indicate that some centers reported that programs tap youth interests; build multiple skills; and involve youth in the settings, activities, structure, and policy of the program, but there is room for improvement for those that report implementing these practices less consistently.

Figure 27. Center-Level Scores on Youth-Centered Policies and Practices



Source. YPQA Form B (from 127 centers in 2016, 118 centers in 2017, 124 centers in 2018, and 84 centers in 2019).

Partnership Practices

The Partnership Practices domain focuses on relationships between the 21st CCLC program and contexts external to the program that significantly impact the success of the program. Community partners, families, and schools play a vital role in 21st CCLC programs by expanding program activities, facilitating program sustainability, and providing essential information about student needs. Three leading indicators are associated with the Partnership Practices domain: Family Engagement, School Context, and Community Context.

Indicator 3.1: Family Engagement

Engaging families in programming and providing family learning events is a key component of 21st CCLC programs. Programs may engage families by communicating with them about center programming and events, collaborating to enhance their child's educational success, and providing family literacy or social events. Survey questions on the site coordinator survey measured the center's approaches to family communication.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

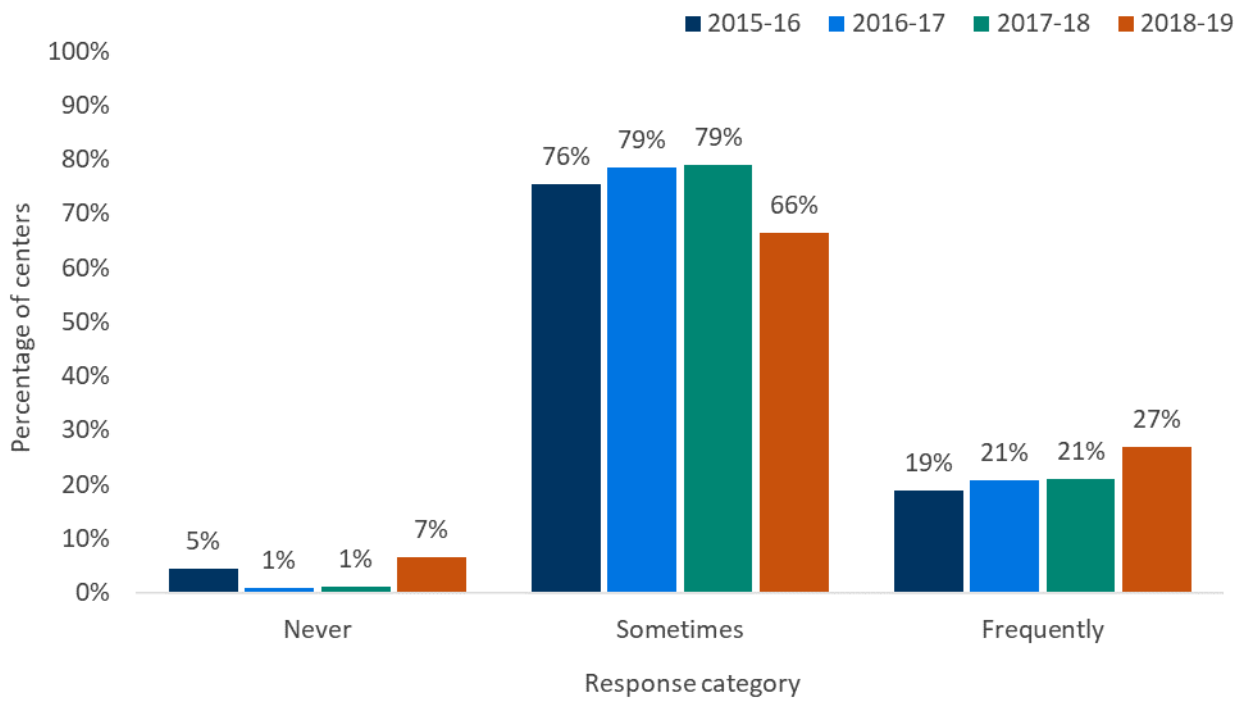
Scale scores for Family Engagement included the following:

PROMPT: How often do you…

- Send materials about program offerings home to parents or adult family members?
- Send information home about how the student is progressing in the program?
- Hold events or meetings to which parents or adult family members are invited?
- Have conversations with parents or adult family members on the phone?
- Meet with one or more parents or adult family members?
- Ask for input from parents or adult family members on what and how activities should be provided?
- Encourage parents or adult family members to participate in center-provided programming meant to support their acquisition of knowledge or skills?
- Encourage parents or adult family members to participate in center-provided programming with their children?

Figure 28 shows the frequency of respondents who answered never, sometimes, or frequently to the family engagement prompts. In all four program years, 90% or more of the respondents indicated sometimes or frequently; these results show that programs communicate with families once or twice a semester.

Figure 28. Site Coordinator Responses to Questions About Family Engagement



Source. Site coordinator survey (136 responses from 133 centers in 2016, 139 responses from 130 centers in 2017, 140 responses from 132 centers in 2018, and 132 responses from 122 centers in 2019).

The least common family communication strategies included sending information home about how the student is progressing in the program, asking for input from family members on what and how activities should be provided, and encouraging family members to participate in center-provided programming directed at adult learning. The former finding is not surprising given the difficulty associated with providing individual progress reports on specific students. However, the latter finding is more surprising considering that all programs are required to offer services to the family members of students who participate in the program. There might be an opportunity to do more outreach to parents or adult family members regarding the services offered by the program that are directed toward adult learning.

Indicator 3.2: School Context

School Context captures the degree to which 21st CCLC staff align the design and delivery of programming to the school day and individual student needs. These practices are particularly important to 21st CCLC program quality given the explicit goal of supporting low-performing students' growth in reading and mathematics. The evaluation team scored the data reported for this leading indicator with Rasch-created scale scores, in which higher scores indicate higher performance or endorsement on a given scale. We calculated the following scale scores for this indicator:

- **Linkages to the School Day—Site Coordinator Survey.** The extent to which the site coordinator reports taking steps to establish links to the school day and uses student data to inform programming
- **Linkages to the School Day—Staff Survey.** The extent to which program staff report taking steps to establish links to the school day and use student data to inform programming
- **Data Use—Site Coordinator Survey.** The extent to which the site coordinator reports the program using student data to inform programming
- **Data Use—Staff Survey.** The extent to which program staff report taking steps to use student data to inform programming

It is important to note that the items for Linkages to the School Day scales on the site coordinator and staff surveys were quite different. On the site coordinator survey, we designed items to ask about the specific strategies adopted by the program to establish meaningful links to the school day. We asked site coordinators to indicate whether the strategy described in a given item was a major strategy, a minor strategy, or not a strategy to support links with the school day. In contrast, the staff survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a series of items regarding their knowledge of school-day practices, student academic needs, the use of student data to inform programming, and communication with school-day staff to better support the design and delivery of afterschool programming.

LINKAGES TO THE SCHOOL DAY – SITE COORDINATOR RESPONSES

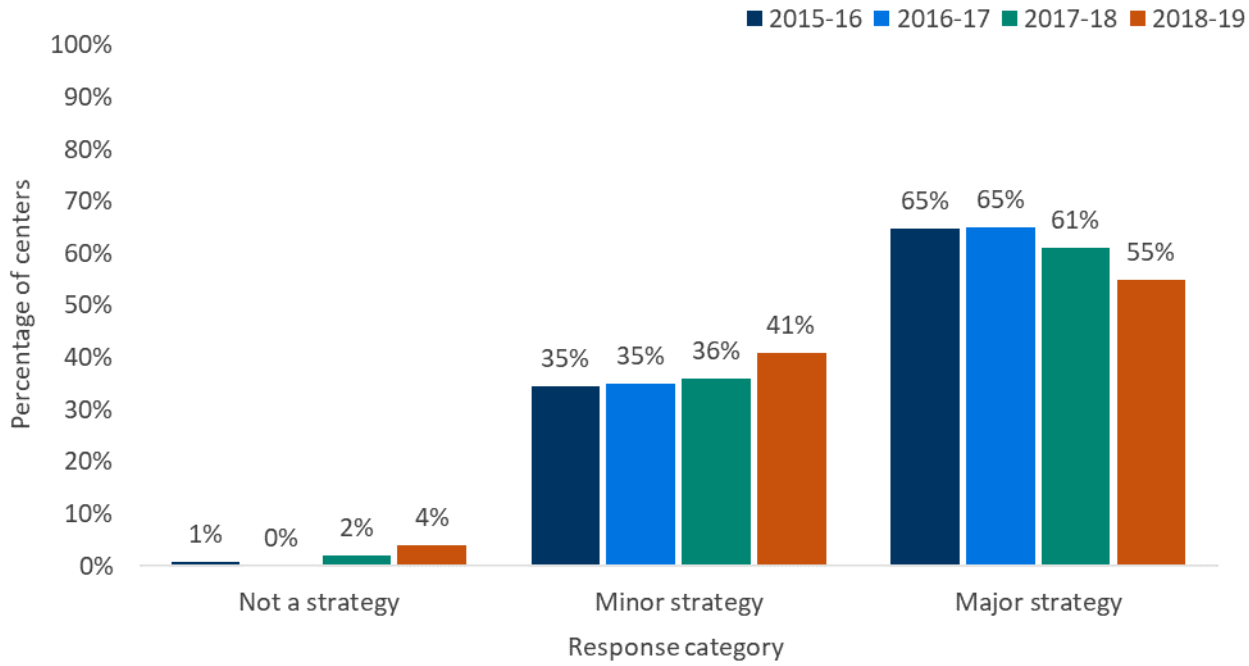
Scale scores included the following:

PROMPT: What strategies are used to link the program to the regular school day?

- Align programming to school-day curriculum and standards.
- Help with homework.
- Hire regular school-day teachers.
- Use student assessment or grades to inform programming.
- Meet face-to-face with school-day staff regularly.
- Communicate electronically with school-day staff regularly.
- Communicate electronically with principals and other school-day administrative staff regularly.
- Monitor students' academic performance on district- or building-level assessments across the school year regularly and use this information to inform activity provision.
- Ensure that activities are informed by and meant to support schoolwide improvement targets related to student performance.

The responses to the prompt about strategies used to link programming to the school day are shown in Figure 29. Nearly all site coordinators responded that the strategies were a minor or major strategy, although fewer site coordinators have been reporting these as major strategies during the past two years. This finding suggests that programs adopted multiple strategies during these periods. According to the survey results, the least frequently adopted strategy was hiring regular school-day teachers. The most common strategy was helping with homework.

Figure 29. Site Coordinator Responses to Questions About Linkages to the School Day



Source. Site coordinator survey (136 responses from 133 centers in 2016, 139 responses from 130 centers in 2017, 140 responses from 132 centers in 2018, and 132 responses from 122 centers in 2019).

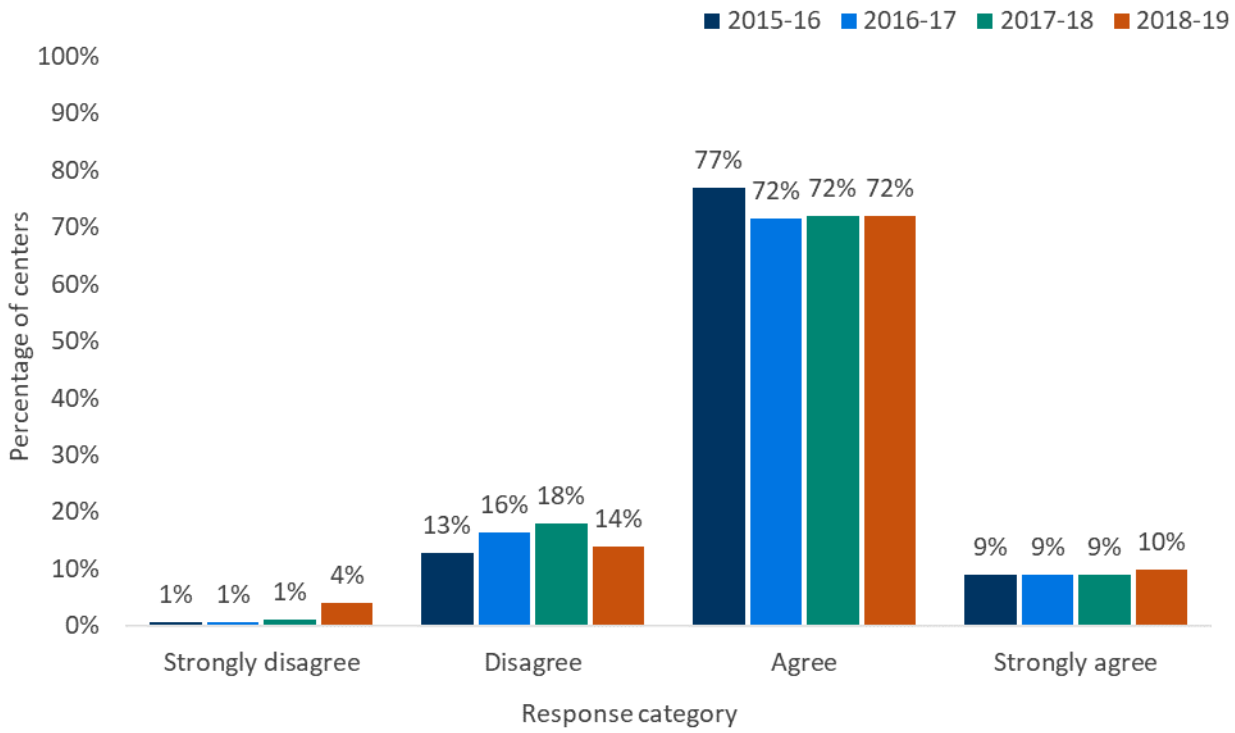
LINKAGES TO THE SCHOOL DAY – STAFF RESPONSES

PROMPT: Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding linkages to the school day:

- On a week-to-week basis, I know what academic content will be covered during the school day with the students they work with in the afterschool program.
- I coordinate the content of the afterschool activities they provide with my students' school-day homework.
- I know who to contact at their students' day school if they have a question about their progress or status.
- The activities I provide in the afterschool program are tied to specific learning goals that are related to the school-day curriculum.
- I use student assessment data to provide different types of instruction to students attending their afterschool activities based on their ability level.
- I monitor students' academic performance on district- or building-level assessments across the school year and use this information to inform activities they provide.
- I help manage a formal three-way communication system that links parents, program, and day school information.
- I participate in regular, joint staff meetings for afterschool and regular school-day staff where steps to further establish linkages between the school day and afterschool are discussed.
- I meet regularly with school-day staff not working in the afterschool program to review the academic progress of individual students.
- I participate in parent-teacher conferences to provide information about how individual students are faring in the afterschool program.

Responses to the survey suggest that, on average, most staff who seek to connect afterschool programing with school-day content have a good sense of both student academic needs and school-day curriculum or instruction (Figure 30). It is important to note that when reviewing the staff survey results, staff could indicate whether a given item was not related to their role in the program. In this sense, survey responses likely reflect those staff responsible for the delivery of academic content and who perceived a value in connecting their practice to what was happening during the school day.

Figure 30. Staff Responses to Questions About Linkages to the School Day



Source. Staff survey (774 responses from 133 centers in 2016, 804 responses from 141 centers in 2017, 773 responses from 132 centers in 2018, and 647 responses from 121 centers in 2019).

DATA USE – SITE COORDINATOR RESPONSES

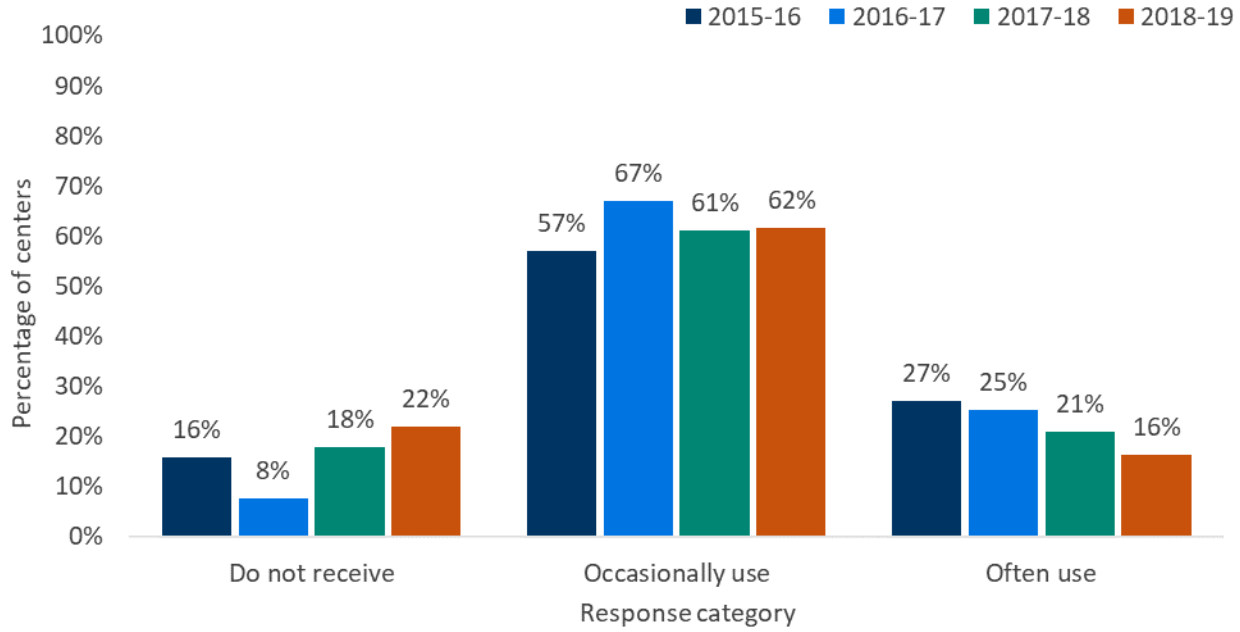
Questions appearing on the site coordinator and staff surveys included the following:

PROMPT: Please indicate whether you [program staff] receive each of the following, and to what extent you [program staff] use it in planning for the activities you provide:

- Individualized education plans
- Students' state assessment scores
- Students' scores on district- or building-level assessments
- Students' grades
- Teacher-provided student progress reports

The site coordinator and staff surveys included questions regarding the extent to which staff had access to and made use of student data. Figure 31 shows the data use results of the site coordinator survey. Most respondents indicated that they occasionally use the strategies. This number is consistent with the 2016–17 program year; however, there were more site coordinators reporting they do not receive data for these purposes as well as a decline in the "Often use" category.

Figure 31. Site Coordinator Responses to Questions About Data Use



Source. Site coordinator survey (136 responses from 133 centers in 2016, 139 responses from 130 centers in 2017, 140 responses from 132 centers in 2018, and 132 responses from 122 centers in 2019).

DATA USE – STAFF RESPONSES

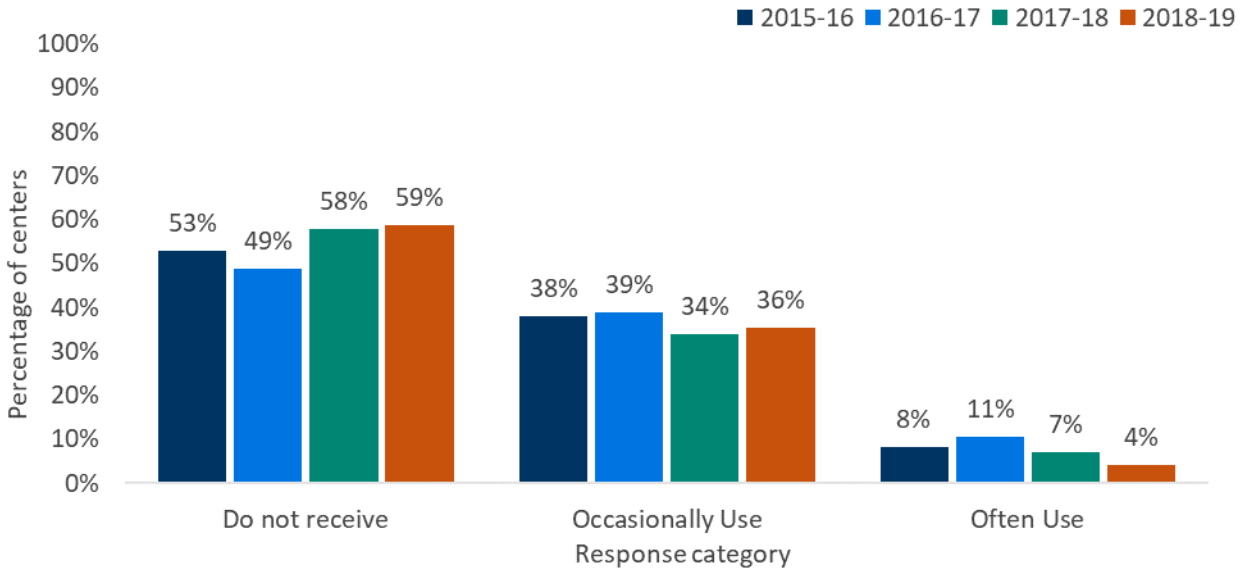
Questions appearing on the site coordinator and staff surveys included the following:

PROMPT: Please indicate whether you [program staff] receive each of the following, and to what extent you [program staff] use it in planning for the activities you provide:

- Individualized education plans
- Students' state assessment scores
- Students' scores on district- or building-level assessments
- Students' grades
- Teacher-provided student progress reports

The responses to survey items related to the use of student data to inform programming indicated that these practices were less likely to be used as a strategy by staff to intentionally link programming to the school day (Figure 32). This finding is common among 21st CCLC evaluations conducted by the evaluation team. Generally, we could investigate how programs use student data and where there are opportunities to identify and share best practices with the field more broadly.

Figure 32. Staff Responses to Questions About Data Use



Source. Staff survey (774 responses from 133 centers in 2016, 804 responses from 141 centers in 2017, 773 responses from 132 centers in 2018, and 647 responses from 121 centers in 2019).

Indicator 3.3: Community Context

Encouraging partnerships between schools and community organizations is a critical component of the national 21st CCLC program. We define a partner as any organization other than the grantee that actively contributes to a 21st CCLC-funded program to help programs meet their goals and objectives. Partners may play a variety of roles in supporting a 21st CCLC-funded program. For example, partners may provide programming and staff, provide physical space and facilities, and facilitate fundraising efforts. In many instances, partners can play a critical role in providing activities and services in which the grantee lacks expertise or training to enhance the variety of learning opportunities available to youth. From a quality perspective, mutually beneficial partnerships are most effective when staff from the partner organization work directly with youth and are involved in regular program processes related to staff orientation, training, evaluation, feedback, and professional development.

The leading indicator for Community Context captures the degree to which partners associated with the center are actively involved in planning, decision making, evaluating, and supporting program operations. We calculated the following metric to describe aspects of this indicator:

- **Family and Community—YPQA Form B.** The extent to which the program adopts policies and practices supportive of family and community engagement

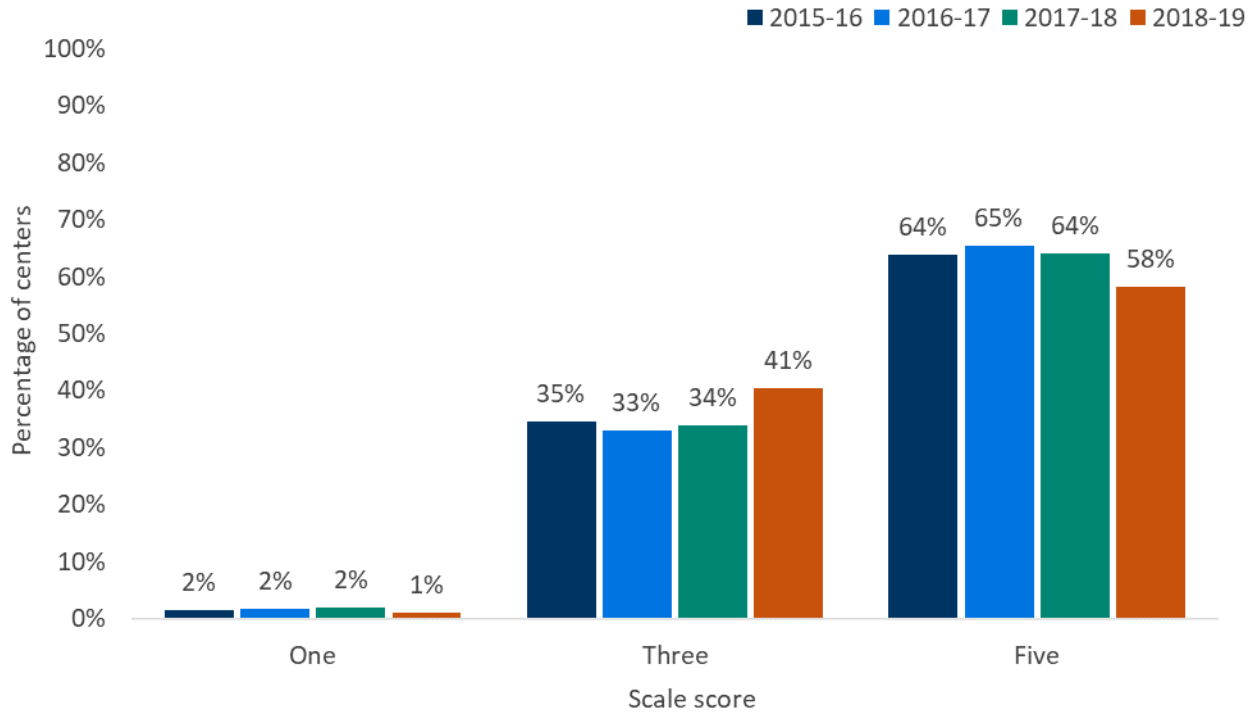
FAMILY & COMMUNITY – YPQA FORM B

Family and Community Scale

- Barriers to participation are addressed.
- The program builds linkages with families.
- The program builds linkages with the community.

Like other scores on YPQA Form B, centers were classified as falling in the 1, 3, and 5 response categories. Higher scores indicate greater adoption of the practices in question. Figure 33 shows the percentage of respondents who answered 1, 3, or 5 in 2015–16 through 2018–19.

Figure 33. Center-Level Scores on Family and Community Engagement



Source. YPQA Form B (from 127 centers in 2016, 118 centers in 2017, 124 centers in 2018, and 84 centers in 2019).

Chapter 3. Youth Motivation, Engagement, and Beliefs Survey

Although school-related outcomes have been commonly employed to assess the impact of 21st CCLC programming on participating youth, most 21st CCLC programs across the United States and specifically in Washington implement programming designed to support a broader array of more immediate youth development outcomes, including those related to the formation of positive mindsets and beliefs and social and emotional skills and competencies.

> *Evaluation Question 3: What does youth completion of the Youth Motivation, Engagement, and Beliefs Survey indicate about youth experiences in programming plus youth functioning on social and emotional skills and competencies and noncognitive factors?*

Summary of Findings

- The majority of youth respondents on the Youth Motivation, Engagement, and Beliefs (YMEB) Survey expressed having a positive, engaging, and supportive experience when attending programming. In addition, the majority of responding youth indicated that the 21st CCLC program they attended helped them improve academically and on social and emotional skills. We found a similar trend in relation to youth-reported program impact in the area of self-management. In this case, 70% of the youth indicated that they had been impacted in a positive way in this area by participating in the program.
- The evaluation team also explored change across time on youth functioning on their skills and beliefs. AIR hypothesized that youth with the most room for improvement during the 2018–19 program year would show more growth than those who were already performing well. The findings support this hypothesis.
- Our conclusion based on the domain of results summarized in this report is that some scales on the YMEB Survey continue to be promising for measuring many important elements of youth functioning that afterschool and youth development programs are seeking to cultivate and are important to youth success in school and life more broadly; however, given the latest research, OSPI might consider revamping the survey.

Aligned Recommendations

1. Explore the connection between quality practice and social and emotional competencies and skills as measured on the YMEB Survey. Understanding this connection would help ensure a pathway from program quality to changes in youth beliefs, skills, and knowledge to school-related outcomes. Understanding how this pathway works and where it fails to produce the desired results would help when making needed tweaks and adjustments to optimize the outcomes derived from the 21st CCLC system.
2. The YMEB Survey is intended for use with students who are in Grades 4–12. This leaves the direct program outcomes for students in Grades K–3 largely unexplored. Consider other measures more applicable to the K–3 population to understand how the 21st CCLC program is impacting these students.

3. Revamp the YMEB Survey to include scales that have been performing well in other states in terms of predicting growth on school-related outcomes. Consider the use of retrospective pretest items on the survey.

Overview

Social and emotional skills, beliefs, and knowledge are hypothesized to be the most immediate outcomes that can emerge from participation in high-quality afterschool programs. That is, youth growth and development across these areas occurs within the program and can be observed directly by the staff leading afterschool activities, making them a natural place to start when assessing the impact of 21st CCLC programming on youth. In addition, social and emotional outcomes are increasingly gaining traction in the educational and workforce development fields as key determinants of youth success (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Farrington et al., 2012; Wilson-Ahlstrom, Yohalem, DuBois, & Ji, 2011). However, efforts to measure youth development in these social and emotional skills, beliefs, and knowledge within the afterschool programs are still new.

Consequently, measures that address social and emotional outcomes are being developed and refined. Since 2013, the Youth Development Executives of King County have worked with community-based providers of youth development programming to define how afterschool programs impact youth and developed the YMEB Survey. This tool measures the extent to which youth report having skills and dispositions that are critical for positive youth growth and development. For the past several years, AIR and OSPI have worked with the Youth Development Executives of King County to refine the tool for use with the state's 21st CCLC programs. The 2018–19 program year marked the fifth year this tool was administered in all 21st CCLC programs to understand what the survey responses indicate about youth experiences in programming, youth functioning on social and emotional skills, competencies, and noncognitive factors. Specifically, the evaluation team investigated the following questions:

1. How have youth benefited from participation in program activities?
2. To what extent do youth grow on a series of constructs related to positive social and emotional development, mindsets, and attitudes during a programming year?

Three types of scales are included on the YMEB Survey. A full copy of the survey is in Appendix B.

- **Items pertaining to how youth reported functioning at present when taking the survey on a series of areas related to positive youth development.** The purpose of these items was to gauge how well youth described themselves as doing on four key areas: (a) academic identity, (b) positive mindsets, (c) self-management, and (d) interpersonal skills. Examples of items appearing on these scales include the following: "Doing well in school is an important part of who I am" (academic identity), "I can solve difficult problems if I try hard

enough" (positive mindsets), "I can calm myself down when I'm excited or upset" (self-management), and "I work well with others on shared projects" (interpersonal skills).

- **Items pertaining to youth sense of belonging and engagement in the 21st CCLC program.** The purpose of these items was to obtain authentic feedback from youth on their experiences at the 21st CCLC program they were enrolled in during the school year. Examples of items of this type included "I fit in at this program," "This program helps me build new skills," and "What we do in this program is challenging in a good way." For all items appearing on the survey, youth were asked to respond to each item by endorsing one of the following response options: not at all true, somewhat true, mostly true, or completely true.
- **Items pertaining to youth's sense of how they may have been impacted by participation in the program.** The purpose of these items was to explore the extent to which youth believed the program might have helped them in terms of developing positive academic behaviors and better self-management skills. Examples of items of this type included "This program has helped me to become more interested in what I'm learning in school" and "This program has helped me get better at staying focused on my work."

In spring 2019, AIR administered the survey in all 21st CCLC programs serving youth in Grades 4–12. In addition to surveying students who were likely to meet the regular attendee definition for the 2018–19 program year, we advised programs to collect responses from students who also took the survey in spring 2018 to give us a sample of students who completed surveys in both years. A total of 4,096 completed surveys were collected in spring 2018 from 21st CCLC programs, with approximately 32 surveys completed per center, and 3,473 responses were collected in spring 2019, with approximately 30 surveys completed per center. In some centers, data were collected from youth who were not in Grades 4–12. These students were removed from the sample, resulting in 4,060 responses from 2018 and 3,246 responses from 2019 that could be used in analyses.

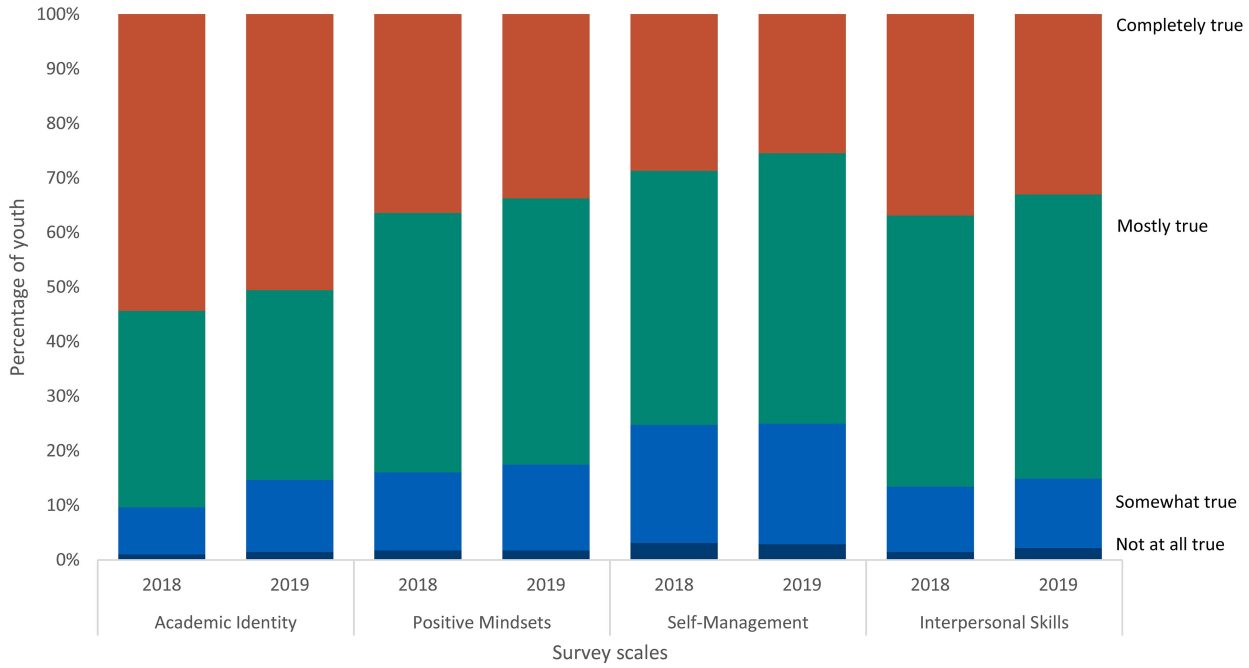
More than 92% of the completed surveys were taken by youth in Grades 4–8; most respondents were in Grades 4–6. In each year, 7% to 10% of the completed surveys were missing grade-level information for the respondent. Surveys with missing grade-level information were retained for the analyses summarized in this report because date-of-birth information was provided for these respondents. Youth who were age 9 or older at the start of the school year in question were retained as part of the study sample.

To answer the research questions, we also must understand the distribution of students within a given response category. The evaluation team used Rasch analysis approaches to calculate a scale score for each survey scale, which was then used to determine what response category

(not at all true, somewhat true, mostly true, or completely true) best described a youth's experience in the program, perception of program impact, or current level of functioning. First, we examined youth reports on positive youth development skills and beliefs.

The percentage of youth who responded mostly true and completely true ranged from 85% for the Academic Identity scale to 75% for the Self-Management scale (see Figure 34). The scale demonstrating the most opportunity for growth is the Self-Management scale; more than 24% of the respondents replied not at all true or somewhat true.

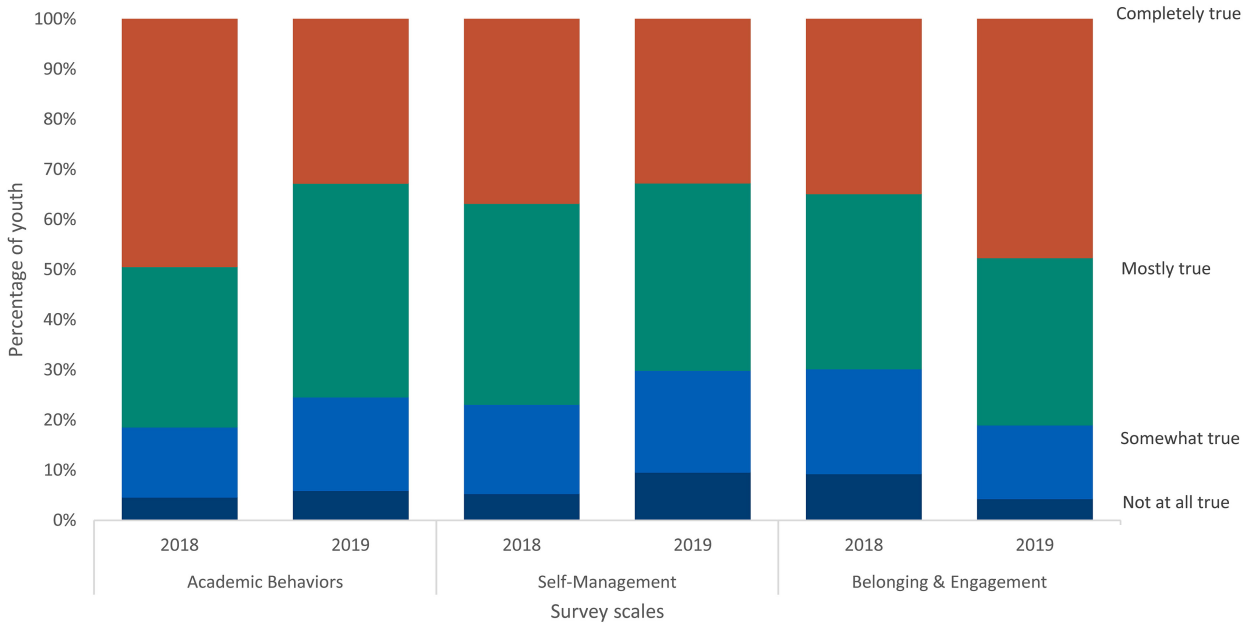
Figure 34. Frequency Distribution of Youth Responses on Academic Identity, Positive Mindsets, Self-Management, and Interpersonal Skills Scales



Our sense is that youth in the not at all true or somewhat true portions of the scale represent the domain of youth where there may be opportunities to further develop and reinforce positive beliefs and skills in each area.

We also examined the distribution of youth responses across scales related to self-reported program impact and feelings of program belonging engagement. There is more variation across the response categories for both the Academic Behaviors and Self-Management scales (see Figure 35) than what was observed in the scales outlined in Figure 34, although most responses were mostly true and completely true. In terms of the Belonging and Engagement scale, more than 70% of the youth in 2018 responded mostly true or completely true to items describing a positive experience in programming, but in 2019 that percentage rose to more than 80%.

Figure 35. Frequency Distribution of Youth Responses on Program Impact on Academic Behaviors, Self-Management, and Belonging and Engagement Scales



One purpose of the YMEB Survey is to measure growth on the domain of youth outcomes measured on the survey. However, because of the high percentage of youth who responded mostly true or completely true, the viability of using the survey for this purpose could be called into question. To explore this issue further, the evaluation team conducted a comparison of pre-post data from youth taking the survey in spring 2019. A total of 951, or 23%, of the youth in the 2018 sample took the survey in both years.

When examining the full sample of 951 youth who took the survey in both years, the overall mean scores decreased slightly from time 1 to time 2. Although these decreases were found to be significant for all four scales in question based on a paired sample *t* test, the degree of decline was, for all practical purposes, close to 0. The large sample size likely caused the

significant results. Also, the correlation between 2018 and 2019 scores was weak for each scale, ranging from .329 to .355.

Next, the evaluation team explored how changes in the survey scores might be different for youth who (a) responded not at all true or somewhat true in spring 2018 and (b) youth receiving a scale score in the bottom 50th percentile for the scale in question (i.e., students who actually had room to grow). As shown in Table 3, youth scoring in the not at all true and somewhat true response categories of the survey demonstrated substantive growth between 2018 and 2019. Improvements in the mean scores between 2018 and 2019 ranged from .25 to .35 scale score points. The 2018 and 2019 scores for this group were weakly and significantly correlated for all four scales.

Table 3. Comparison of Means and Correlations Between 2018 and 2019 for Youth Responding Not at All True or Somewhat True in Spring 2018

Subscale	Paired sample *t* test			Bivariate correlation	
	2018 mean	2019 mean	*p* value	Correlation coefficient	*p* value
Academic Identity (*n* = 240)	2.61	2.96	.000***	.060	.352
Positive Mindsets (*n* = 391)	2.59	2.84	.000***	.128	.011**
Self-Management (*n* = 499)	2.54	2.79	.000***	.208	.000***
Interpersonal Skills (*n* = 391)	2.63	2.91	.000***	.105	.037**

** $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

Table 4 shows that youth falling below the 50th percentile of each scale demonstrated substantive growth between 2018 and 2019. Improvements ranged from .14 to .25 scale score points, and all scores on the scales between 2018 and 2019 were found to be weakly and significantly correlated.

Table 4. Comparison of Means and Correlations Between 2018 and 2019 for Youth in the Bottom 50th Percentile of Each Scale Score in Spring 2019

Subscale	Paired sample *t* test			Bivariate correlation	
	2018 mean	2019 mean	*p* value	Correlation coefficient	*p* value
Academic Identity (*n* = 508)	2.99	3.13	.000***	.241	.000***
Positive Mindsets (*n* = 466)	2.68	2.88	.000***	.187	.000***
Self-Management (*n* = 499)	2.54	2.79	.000***	.208	.000***
Interpersonal Skills (*n* = 474)	2.72	2.94	.000***	.150	.001***

***$p < .001$.

These results suggest the following conclusions on the utility of the YMEB Survey to assess changes in youth functioning across time:

- The mean scores for the full sample with both 2018 and 2019 scores were stable, demonstrating a very slight decrease between the two administration periods; pre-post scores were found to be only moderately correlated.
- When there was room for youth to grow on the scales in question, however, significant and substantive growth was shown for youth who scored in the bottom two response categories in spring 2018 and those who were below 50th percentile of a given scale in spring 2018.

Preliminary hypotheses can be made about the nature of this positive growth for these populations. First, this growth could represent growth that occurred during this period, and participation in 21st CCLC programming may have contributed to this growth. Unfortunately, we do not have the data to rigorously explore whether this is the case now. Another possibility is that youth with lower levels of functioning in spring 2018 regressed back to the mean of the overall sample between administrations, and the survey did not capture any growth between the two time periods.

Chapter 4. Multiyear Participation Characteristics

Evaluation Question 4: To what extent do youth remain in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years?

Evaluation Question 5: What are the differences between students who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years and those who do not on student characteristics?

Evaluation Question 6: What are the characteristics of programs that have high levels of cross-year retention in programming?

Evaluation Question 7: To what extent do youth who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming show growth on the youth development-related outcomes measured on the youth survey?

Evaluation Question 8: To what extent are 21st CCLC programs in Washington meeting their local, state, and federal targets and goals?

Findings presented here are based on descriptive analyses conducted on the five evaluation questions outlined above and are meant to provide a starting point for further exploration and analyses to inform outcome analyses carried out in future years.

Summary of Findings

To what extent do youth remain in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years?

- Between the 2014–15 and 2018–19 program years, 49,181 students participated in at least one year of programming. Nearly 36% of students participated for more than one year.
- The distribution of students participating in multiple years fluctuates across each of the program years, which may be, in part, due to programs cycling on and off of funding.

What are the differences between students who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years and those who do not on student characteristics?

- There were very small differences on the demographic characteristics, indicating that there are no apparent observable differences between the students who attend for multiple consecutive years versus those who do not.
- However, there is a large difference on the average number of days a student attends within a program year between those who attend for multiple consecutive years and those who do not. Those who attend for multiple consecutive years attend, on average, approximately 15 more days within a given year than their counterparts.

What are the characteristics of programs that have high levels of cross-year retention in programming?

- There were no large differences between these two groups on many of the center characteristics such as overall demographics.

- The largest differences appear to be related to levels of program attendance and number of students served.
- Average point-of-service and organizational quality is higher for programs with high levels of cross-year retention as opposed to those who had lower levels of cross-year retention.

To what extent do youth who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming show growth on the youth development-related outcomes measured on the youth survey?

- Differences between these two groups ranged from .09 to .73 on the YMEB Survey scales, with most of the significant differences appearing for students who participated in the survey for two or three consecutive years.
- When examining change across multiple years of consecutive participation, average change on the survey scales was positive, with the largest differences recorded for students participating in the survey for four or five years. However, because of the low sample sizes, caution should be used when interpreting results.

To what extent are 21st CCLC programs in Washington meeting their local, state, and federal targets and goals?

- Most programs are on track for Program Implementation targets, but results on indicators related to program quality and program attendance highlight a need for further review. For example, all programs are expected to participate fully in all activities related to program quality listed in these indicators, but not all programs are doing so.

Aligned Recommendations

1. Continue to build a multiyear data set for students participating in programming and reanalyze demographic and youth experience characteristics to understand any shifts that may contribute to cross- and multiple-year retention.
2. Explore how sustained participation in 21st CCLC programs for more than 2 years affects youth development and school-related outcomes and how youth experiences in programming are related to these impacts.
3. Explore how youth with sustained participation in 21st CCLC programs for more than 2 years perform on a series of school-related outcomes up to 2 years *after* participating in the program compared with similar youth not participating in the program.

Overview

Most of the work done to date regarding evaluation activities has examined students participating in 21st CCLC programming within a single program year in question. However, as findings on outcomes for students participating in the program for one year have remained relatively consistent during the past several years, questions regarding the impact of multiple years of participation have surfaced. This report will not get into any causal or correlational claims about the impact of multiple years of participation in 21st CCLC on short- or long-term outcomes of involved students but will begin exploring the characteristics of both students who attend for multiple years and the programs that have higher levels of retention across multiple years. As such, the evaluation questions guiding this chapter are as follows:

1. To what extent do youth remain in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years?
2. What are the differences between students who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years and those who do not on student characteristics?
3. What are the characteristics of programs that have high levels of cross-year retention in programming?
4. To what extent do youth who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming show growth on the youth development-related outcomes measured on the youth survey?
5. To what extent are 21st CCLC programs in Washington meeting their local, state, and federal targets and goals?

To examine these questions, we created a data set that included student demographic, outcome, and participation data over multiple years. For the purposes of this report, we included students who participated in program years 2014–15 through 2018–19.

To what extent do youth remain in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years?

The first step in this process was identifying the students who participated in multiple years of 21st CCLC programming. Across the 2014–19 program years, there were 49,181 students who participated in at least one year. As noted in Table 5, the majority of students attended for just one year; however, nearly 36% of students participated for more than one year. We traced their participation back to the 2014–15 program year to get a full picture of multiyear participation for all students who attended in any year and also students who attended for multiple consecutive years (*n* = 15,900).

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Students Participating for Multiple Years, Any Year, and Consecutive Years

	All Students, Any Year		All Students, Multiple Consecutive Years	
Years of Participation	Number of Students	Percentage of Students	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
One Year	31,612	64.3%	NA	NA
Two Years	11,781	24.0%	10,134	63.7%
Three Years	4,242	8.6%	4,220	26.5%
Four Years	1,286	2.6%	1,268	8.0%
Five Years	278	0.6%	278	1.7%
Total	49,181	100.0%	15,900	100.0%

We also wanted to get a sense of the how many students within each program year that attended program in consecutive years. As shown in Table 6, the distribution of students participating in multiple years fluctuates from year to year, which may be, in part, because of programs cycling on and off of funding.

Table 6. Frequency Distribution Within Program Year of Students Participating for Multiple Years

Years of Participation	2014–15 Program Year (*n* = 14,675)	2015–16 Program Year (*n* = 15,136)	2016–17 Program Year (*n* = 15,995)	2017–18 Program Year (*n* = 14,968)	2018–19 Program Year (*n* = 13,570)
One Year	60.2%	36.2%	39.7%	41.1%	59.9%
Two Years	21.4%	36.9%	28.6%	36.9%	26.4%
Three Years	12.4%	17.8%	23.2%	12.9%	8.1%
Four Years	4.1%	7.2%	6.8%	7.2%	3.5%
Five Years	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%	1.9%	2.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

What are the differences between students who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years and those who do not on student characteristics?

The evaluation team investigated differences in the characteristics of students who attended for multiple consecutive years versus those who did not. We first examined the differences between demographic characteristics and average program attendance. As shown in Table 7, there were very small differences on the demographic characteristics, indicating that there are no apparent observable differences between the students who attend for multiple consecutive years versus those who do not. However, there is a large difference on the average number of days a student attends within a program year between those who attend for multiple consecutive years and those who do not. Those who attend for multiple consecutive years attend, on average, approximately 15 more days within a given year than their counterparts.

Table 7. Descriptive Findings on Student Characteristics, Students Engaged in Programming for Multiple Consecutive Years Versus Those Who Were Not

	Students Engaged for Only 1 Year (*n* = 32,953)	Students Engaged for Multiple Consecutive Years (*n* = 15,900)
Gender (% male)	51.1%	50.3%
Race/ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3.2%	3.9%
Asian	3.6%	3.1%
Black/African American	6.6%	5.9%
Hispanic/Latino	46.7%	49.8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.5%	0.2%
Multiracial	6.1%	6.4%
White	31.7%	29.8%
Free or reduced-price lunch	81.0%	83.6%
English language learner	25.8%	28.8%
Special needs	14.8%	15.4%
Homeless	6.0%	5.8%
Average number of days attended	32.8	47.6

What are the characteristics of programs that have high levels of cross-year retention in programming?

After taking student characteristics and self-reported experiences into consideration, the evaluation team explored if there were any center-level characteristics that might have contributed to high levels of cross-year retention for centers operating in the 2014–15 to 2018–19 program years. To determine high levels of cross-year retention, the evaluation team determined the percentage of students for each center that participated for two or more years. We then ran descriptive analyses to determine the top and bottom 50th percentiles. The centers that were in the top 50th percentile were considered high-retention, while those in the lower percentile were considered low-retention. Because some centers had only one year of retention possible (centers that were in their last year of funding in 2014–15 or new centers that were in their first year of funding in 2018–19), they were not considered in these analyses. As shown in Table 8, the largest differences appear to be related to program attendance and number of students served, although there are small differences in point-of-service and organizational quality as well.

Table 8. Descriptive Findings on Center Characteristics, Centers With High Cross-Year Retention Versus Those With Low Cross-Year Retention

	Centers With Low Cross-Year Retention (*n* = 61)	Centers With High Cross-Year Retention (*n* = 64)
Gender (% male)	51.3%	50.9%
Race/ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2.1%	5.6%
Asian	3.8%	2.7%
Black/African American	8.4%	4.5%
Hispanic/Latino	48.2%	48.2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1.4%	1.0%
Multiracial	6.0%	6.5%
White	28.6%	31.1%
Free or reduced-price lunch	81.7%	84.6%
English language learner	26.7%	29.2%
Special needs	15.4%	16.1%
Homeless	4.4%	7.3%

	Centers With Low Cross-Year Retention (*n* = 61)	Centers With High Cross-Year Retention (*n* = 64)
Average number of students served	123.4	105.6
Average number of days attended	37.8	48.7
Percent regular attendees	49.6%	58.1%
Point-of-service quality	3.22	3.32
Organizational quality	3.57	3.67

To what extent do youth who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming show growth on the youth development-related outcomes measured on the youth survey?

Next, the evaluation team explored if there were any large differences in the percentage of students who demonstrated growth on the pre-post survey scales by comparing those who attended for multiple consecutive years and those who did not. Much like the analyses reported in Chapter 3, we focused on students who had room for improvement on the survey scales. As shown in Tables 9–12, the differences between these two groups ranged from .09 to .73, with most of the significant results appearing for students who participated in two or three years consecutively. It is important to note that there are lower sample sizes for students who took the survey for four or five consecutive years.

Table 9. Academic Identity Scale Comparison of Means and Correlations Pre to Post for Youth With Consecutive Years of Participation Responding Not at All True or Somewhat True in Baseline Year

Consecutive years of participation	Paired sample *t* test			Bivariate correlation	
	Pre-mean	Post-mean	*p* value	Correlation coefficient	*p* value
Two years (*n* = 1,052)	2.73	2.98	.000***	.206	.000***
Three years (*n* = 178)	2.74	2.93	.000***	.147	.050*
Four years (*n* = 32)	2.76	2.95	0.75	.283	.117
Five years (*n* = 8)	2.74	3.47	.007**	.340	.410

***$p < .001$.; **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$

Table 10. Positive Mindsets Scale Comparison of Means and Correlations Pre to Post for Youth With Consecutive Years of Participation Responding Not at All True or Somewhat True in Baseline Year

Subscale	Paired sample *t* test			Bivariate correlation	
	Pre-mean	Post-mean	*p* value	Correlation coefficient	*p* value
Two years (*n* = 1,554)	2.69	2.82	.000***	.224	.000***
Three years (*n* = 272)	2.71	2.82	.000***	.181	.003**
Four years (*n* = 43)	2.66	2.88	.025*	-.066	.672
Five years (*n* = 8)	2.77	2.99	.196	-.396	.332

***$p < .001$.; **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$

Table 11. Self-Management Scale Comparison of Means and Correlations Pre to Post for Youth With Consecutive Years of Participation Responding Not at All True or Somewhat True in Baseline Year

Subscale	Paired sample *t* test			Bivariate correlation	
	Pre-mean	Post-mean	*p* value	Correlation coefficient	*p* value
Two years (*n* = 1,801)	2.58	2.72	.000***	.211	.000***
Three years (*n* = 339)	2.60	2.71	.000***	.194	.000***
Four years (*n* = 49)	2.51	2.78	.003**	-.124	.398
Five years (*n* = 9)	2.39	2.79	.004**	.749	.020*

***$p < .001$.; **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$

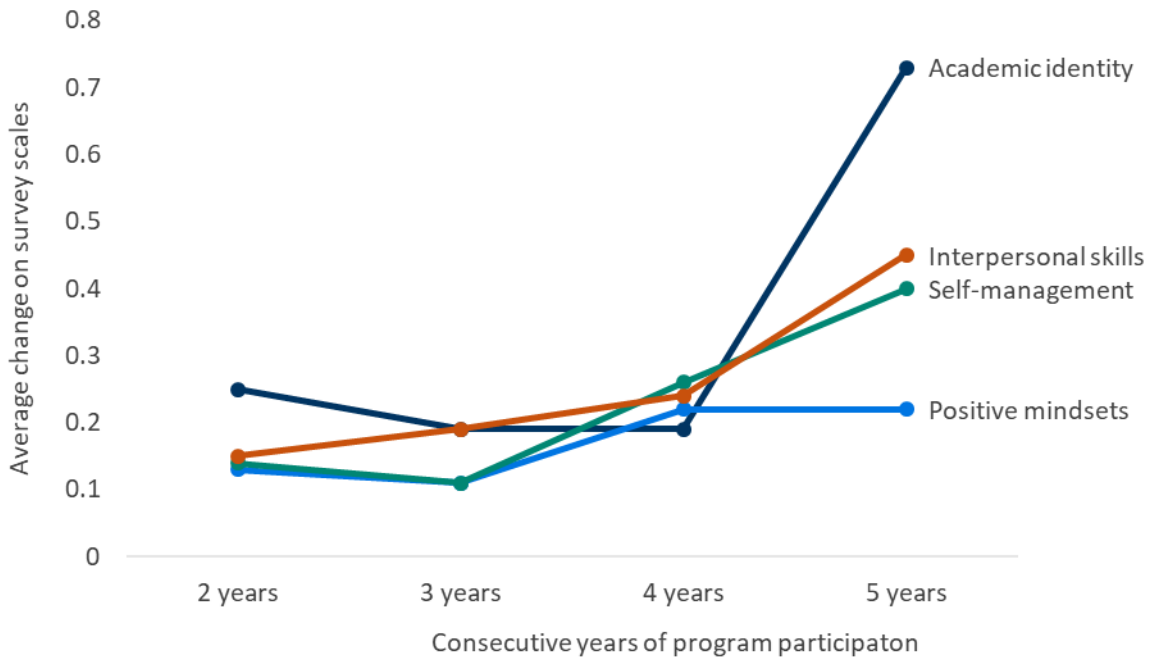
Table 12. Interpersonal Skills Scale Comparison of Means and Correlations Pre to Post for Youth With Consecutive Years of Participation Responding Not at All True or Somewhat True in Baseline Year

Subscale	Paired sample *t* test			Bivariate correlation	
	Pre-mean	Post-mean	*p* value	Correlation coefficient	*p* value
Two years (*n* = 1,563)	2.68	2.83	.000***	.182	.000***
Three years (*n* = 281)	2.68	2.87	.000***	.269	.000***
Four years (*n* = 46)	2.62	2.86	.010*	.191	.203
Five years (*n* = 11)	2.67	3.11	.032*	-.121	.723

***$p < .001$.; **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$

For the students who took the survey during the 2014–15 to 2018–19 program years, the evaluation team explored the change on each survey scale across multiple consecutive years of participation for students who had room to grow in their baseline year. Data sets from multiple years were merged together, and scale scores were recalibrated using Rasch analysis methods to account for baseline scores in different program years. As shown in Figure 36, for all scales, average change was positive from the baseline year, with the largest growth from baseline happening for students who attended for five consecutive years. However, because of the low sample sizes, caution should be used when interpreting results.

Figure 36. Average Growth on YMEB Scales by Number of Consecutive Years of Participation for Students Who Had Room to Grow



To what extent are 21st CCLC programs in Washington meeting their local, state, and federal targets and goals?

The last evaluation question AIR explored was related to aggregate statewide performance on a series of key performance indicators (KPIs). During the past two years, AIR and OSPI have worked together to revise the state performance targets in a series of domains. These KPIs were developed with consideration to current federal Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) indicators, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 legislation, Washington's updated accountability framework in response to ESSA, and feedback from the Evaluation Advisory Group (EAG), which consists of project directors, local evaluators, and other key community stakeholders to the 21st CCLC program in Washington. Table 13 outlines the four domains of the KPIs (Program Implementation, Program Quality, Program Attendance, and Student Outcomes), associated indicators within each domain, statewide targets for each indicator, and the 2018–19 results for each indicator.

Table 13. Statewide Progress on Key Performance Indicators

Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	2018–19 Results
Program Implementation (PI)			
PI 1	The percentage of centers providing opportunities for academic enrichment[2]	100%	99%
PI 2	The percentage of centers offering students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities[3]	100%	100%
PI 3	The percentage of centers offering families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development	100%	100%
PI 4	The percentage of centers offering services at least 12 hours a week on average during the school year.	100%	91%
PI 5	The percentage of centers offering a summer program for 20 hours per week and lasting at least four consecutive weeks	100%	79%
Program Quality (PQ)			
PQ 1	The percentage of centers submitting at least **one completed** consensus program self-assessment using the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) or the School-Age Program Quality Assessment (SAPQA)	100%	65%
PQ 2	The percentage of centers submitting at least **two completed** external assessments using the YPQA) or the SAPQA	100%	76%
PQ 3	The percentage of centers submitting **one** Program Quality Assessment Form B Interview	100%	66%
PQ 4	The percentage of centers participating in **either** the Planning with Data workshop (live training for new cohorts) or the Advanced Planning with Data training (webinar training for continuing cohorts)	100%	Data not available
PQ 5	The percentage of centers submitting **at least one** program improvement plan annually	100%	91%

[2] Tutorial services to help students, particularly students who attend low-performing schools, to meet the challenging state academic standards.

[3] Youth development activities, service learning, nutrition and health education, drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, arts, music, physical fitness and wellness programs, technology education programs, financial literacy programs, environmental literacy programs, mathematics, science, career and technical programs, internship or apprenticeship programs, and other ties to an in-demand industry sector or occupation for high school students that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students.

Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	2018–19 Results
Program Attendance (PA)			
PA 1	The percentage of youth enrolled in 21st CCLC programming more than 30 days (or 80 hours) during the school year and summer of interest	80%	59%
PA 2	The percentage of youth enrolled in 21st CCLC programming more than 60 days (or 120 hours) during the school year and summer of interest	60%	33%
PA 3	The percentage of youth enrolled in 21st CCLC programming in the prior school year/summer for 60 days (or 120 hours) or more that also participated in 60 days (or 120 hours) or more of programming in the school year and summer of interest	TBD	4%
PA 4	Percentage of youth participating in 21st CCLC programming in both the fall and spring semesters of the school year of interest	TBD	62%
Student Outcomes (SO)			
SO 1	The percentage of students regularly participating in the program who were in need of improvement and increased in their student growth percentile (SGP) for reading Grades 4–8	Not applicable	Data yet not available
SO 2	The percentage of students regularly participating in the program who were in need of improvement and increased in their SGP for ***mathematics*** Grades 4–8	Not applicable	Data yet not available
SO 3	The percentage of students regularly participating in the program who are identified as English language learners (ELLs) and show progress toward English language proficiency Grades K–8	Not applicable	Data not available
SO 4	The percentage of students regularly participating in the program who had unexcused school-day absences in the prior school year and demonstrated fewer absences Grades 6–12	Not applicable	Data yet not available
SO 5	The percentage of students regularly participating in the program who are earning less than 100% of credits attempted in the prior school year and demonstrated a higher percentage of credits earned Grades 9–12 (*N* = 372)	Not applicable	28%

Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	2018–19 Results
SO 6	The percentage of students regularly participating in the program who earned a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or less in the prior year and demonstrated an increase in cumulative GPA in the current year Grades 9–12 (*N* = 413)	Not applicable	51%
SO 7	The percentage of students regularly participating in the program who had school-day disciplinary incidents in the prior school year and demonstrated fewer incidents as compared with the previous school year Grades 1–12	Not applicable	Data yet not available
SO 8	The percentage of students regularly participating in the program promoted to the next grade Grades K-3	Not applicable	98%

Most programs are on track for program implementation targets, but results on indicators related to program quality and program attendance highlight a need for further review. For example, all programs are expected to participate fully in all activities related to program quality listed in these indicators, but not all programs are doing so. This warrants further investigation into why these targets were not met in the 2018–19 program year.

No targets were defined for the Student Outcomes domain because these are primarily intended to provide descriptive information for reflection and program improvement purposes.

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Appendix A. Technical Appendix

To answer the evaluation questions, the evaluation team utilized a variety of data collection strategies and data analysis methods. We collected surveys from site coordinators, staff, and youth participants; we used the YPQA Form A and Form B to assess program quality practices at the organizational and instructional levels. We received youth-level data from the state data warehouse to examine school-related outcomes.

Methods for Data Collection and Analysis

Data Sources

Data collected and analyzed in this report come from six primary sources, including administrative data systems and surveys. We describe each data source and associated methods of data analysis in this section.

Continuation Report Data

In October of 2014, the former federal reporting system known as the Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS) went offline. PPICS was a Web-based data collection system developed and maintained by AIR on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education (ED). We collected data on the full domain of 21st CCLC programs funded nationally, including those in Washington, through this system. The online system that would replace PPICS became available in late fall 2015 but did not capture the traditional data elements we have used for reporting, and there was no data export functionality available to states. Therefore, OSPI, together with AIR, devised a plan to fold as many necessary data elements as possible into their annual continuation reporting requirements. We received a data file export from this continuation reporting process from OSPI and extracted the necessary information for this report.

Youth Outcome and Related Data From CEDARS

AIR constructed a unique data collection module for Washington that allowed for the collection of student-identifiable information that was extracted from the system and provided to OSPI. OSPI used this information to perform a series of merges against state data warehouses to obtain Smarter Balanced Assessment reading and mathematics scores, cumulative GPA, credits earned, and the number of unexcused absences and disciplinary incidents, as well as additional demographic information about the students in question from the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS), a longitudinal data warehouse of educational data maintained by OSPI. OSPI also identified students not participating in 21st CCLC programming who attended the same schools as 21st CCLC participants and provided the same testing and related CEDARS information for these students. We used these data to conduct the descriptive analyses exploring

outcomes for youth regularly attending the program as compared with youth not attending regularly and those not participating in the program.

Site Coordinator Survey

We administered an online survey of site coordinators working in 21st CCLC programs active during the 2018–19 program year in spring 2019. We define site coordinator as the individual at a given center who was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the program and was the initial point of contact for parents and staff when questions or issues arose on-site. Generally, site coordinators are important middle managers in the delivery of 21st CCLC programming at sites.

The survey addressed the extent to which centers engaged in practices that the research indicates are supportive of effective afterschool programming. We organized sets of survey questions to create scales measuring the following dimensions of program operations:

- Activity enrollment policies and recruitment approaches
- Access to and use of student data
- Linkages to the school day
- Staffing approach and challenges
- Other operational challenges
- Intentionality in activity and session design
- Internal communication designed to support program development and improvement
- Practices supportive of parent involvement and engagement

Staff Survey

The purpose of the online staff survey was to obtain information from frontline staff who worked directly with youth during the 2018–19 school year. The survey focused on practices that support both positive academic outcomes and youth development outcomes. As with the site coordinator survey, the staff survey included sets of questions associated with a given scale, as well as open-ended questions to assess dimensions of program operations. Dimensions of program operations assessed on the staff survey included the following:

- Intentionality in activity and session design
- Practices supportive of academic skill building, including linkages to the school day and using data on student academic achievement to inform programming
- Internal communication designed to support program development and improvement

- Program climate in terms of how staff view the organizational supports and structures as supporting their work with youth

As with the site coordinator survey, we used data obtained from the staff surveys to support the leading indicator process.

Youth Program Quality Assessment Data

As noted previously, OSPI, in collaboration with the Weikart Center, has taken steps to craft a quality assessment improvement system and support grantees in completing the YPQI process. As part of this process, observations were conducted by program staff as a self-assessment or by trained external observers of activities provided by 21st CCLC grantees, and YPQA Form A, a validated instrument designed to evaluate the quality of youth programs and identify staff training needs, was scored to provide an estimate of how safe, supportive, interactive, and engaging the observed session was for participating youth. In addition, although YPQA Form A is meant to measure program quality at the point of service, YPQA Form B is a rubric completed by program staff on how well the program has adopted organizational processes that are likely to engender and facilitate point-of-service quality. YPQA Form B focuses on program quality at the organizational level and assesses the quality of organizational supports for the youth program offering assessed in Form A. Data from YPQA Forms A and B were uploaded to the Weikart Center through the center's online score reporter.

OSPI mandated participation in the YPQI process for all Washington 21st CCLC grantees during the 2014–15 school year. However, PQA Form A data were available for only 115 of 127 centers in 2018–19, and Form B data were provided in relation to only 84 centers.

Youth Survey

During the 2018–19 programming period, we administered the YMEB Survey, originally developed by the Youth Development Executives of King County, in all 21st CCLC programs serving youth in Grades 4–12. The survey measures youth experiences in programming, youth perceptions of how the program impacted them, and how youth report they are functioning on a series of indicators of social and emotional skills and competencies.

The domain of characteristics assessed through the site coordinator and staff surveys reflect best practices in the field. This report will dedicate particular attention to explaining how staff responded to site coordinator and staff survey questions and what this response may mean in terms of how programs design and deliver activities in ways that are consistent with best practices.

Analytic Approach and Methods

The findings outlined in this report are primarily quantitative. We based our approach on the evaluation questions being answered and the resources available to carry out the project. The analyses highlighted in this report fall within four general categories, as follows:

1. **Descriptive analyses.** We analyzed information related to grantee, center, and student characteristics obtained from PPICS, the surveys, and the YPQA descriptively to explore the range of variation on a given characteristic. Some of the leading indicators also were calculated employing descriptive analysis techniques.

2. **Analyses to create scale scores.** Many questions on the site coordinator and staff surveys underpinning the leading indicators were part of a series of questions designed to assess an underlying construct or concept, resulting in a single scale score summarizing performance on a given area of practice or facet of 21st CCLC afterschool implementation (e.g., practices that support linkages to the school day). We illustrate an example Figure A1, which outlines the questions making up the Intentionality in Program Design scale that appeared on the site coordinator survey.

   For scales such as this, we created Rasch scale scores using staff and site coordinator responses to a series of questions to create one overall score. These scale scores ranged from 0 to 100, where higher scores indicated a higher level or more frequent adoption of a specific quality practice or set of practices.

   We can use scale scores resulting from the application of Rasch approaches to classify what portion of the rating scale the average scale score fell within. For example, if the statewide mean value for the Intentionality in Program Design scale highlighted in Figure A1 is 59.97, then it would put the statewide average in the *"frequently"* range of the scale, indicating the typical staff member responding to the survey reported engaging in these practices on a frequent basis. This approach also allowed the evaluation team to explore the distribution of centers in light of what response option their average scale score put them in.

   The primary benefit of this approach is the capacity to distill responses from several questions into an overall score for the center, simplifying the process of interpreting how a center performed on a given element of quality compared with other programs in the state.

Figure A1. Example of a Survey Scale Calibrated Using Rasch Techniques

How often do your staff provide program activities that are...	Rarely (once or twice a semester)	Sometimes (once or twice a month)	Frequently (once or twice a week)	Always (daily for every session)	Not Sure
a. Based on written plans for the session, assignments, and projects?	○	○	○	○	○
b. Planned before the start of the session?	○	○	○	○	○
c. Tied to specific learning goals?	○	○	○	○	○
d. Meant to build upon skills cultivated in a prior activity or session?	○	○	○	○	○
e. Explicitly meant to promote skill building and mastery in relation to one or more state standard?	○	○	○	○	○
f. Explicitly meant to address a specific developmental domain (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional, civic, physical, etc.)?	○	○	○	○	○
g. Structured to respond to youth feedback on what the content or format of the activity should be?	○	○	○	○	○
h. Informed by the expressed interests, preferences, and/or satisfaction of participating youth?	○	○	○	○	○

Table A1 summarizes the methods employed to answer each evaluation question.

Table A1. Summary of Methods by Evaluation Question

Evaluation Question	Descriptive Analysis	Rasch Analysis
What were the primary characteristics associated with the grants and centers funded by 21st CCLC and the student population served by the program? (Chapter 1)	✓	
To what extent was there evidence that centers funded by 21st CCLC implement research-supported practices related to quality afterschool programming? (Chapter 2)	✓	✓
What does youth completion of the Youth Motivation, Engagement, and Beliefs Survey indicate about youth experiences in programming plus youth functioning on social and emotional skills and competencies and noncognitive factors? (Chapter 3)	✓	
To what extent do youth remain in 21st CCLC programming across multiple years? (Chapter 4)	✓	✓
What are the characteristics of youth who stay engaged in programming? What types of experiences do they report having in the programming? How are these characteristics and experiences different from youth who do not stay enrolled in 21st CCLC? (Chapter 4)	✓	
What are the characteristics of programs that have high levels of cross-year retention in programming? (Chapter 4)	✓	
To what extent do youth who stay engaged in 21st CCLC programming show growth on the youth development-related outcomes measured on the youth survey? (Chapter 4)	✓	
To what extent are 21st CCLC programs in Washington meeting their local, state, and federal targets and goals? (Chapter 4)	✓	

Appendix B. Youth Motivation, Engagement, and Beliefs Survey Measure

Scales and Items	Not at All True	A Little True	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Completely True
Academic Identity					
Doing well in school is an important part of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5
Getting good grades is one of my main goals.	1	2	3	4	5
I am the kind of person who takes pride in doing my best in school.	1	2	3	4	5
Getting a college education is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I am a hard worker.	1	2	3	4	5
It is important to me to learn as much as I can.	1	2	3	4	5
Positive Mindsets					
I plan out what I need to do to reach my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
I am good at staying focused on my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that I will be able to reach my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
I finish whatever I begin.	1	2	3	4	5
I don’t get discouraged when things don’t go the way I want them to.	1	2	3	4	5
I don’t give up easily.	1	2	3	4	5
I try things even if I might fail.	1	2	3	4	5
I can solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.	1	2	3	4	5
I can do a good job if I try hard enough.	1	2	3	4	5
I can stay focused on my work even when it's boring.	1	2	3	4	5
Self-Management					
I can stop myself from doing something when I know I shouldn’t do it.	1	2	3	4	5
When I’m sad, I can usually start doing something that will make me feel better.	1	2	3	4	5
I am usually aware of my feelings before I act on them.	1	2	3	4	5

Scales and Items	Not at All True	A Little True	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Completely True
I can calm myself down when I'm excited or upset.	1	2	3	4	5
When my solution to a problem is not working, I try to find a new solution.	1	2	3	4	5
I think of past choices when making new decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
School Belonging					
I fit in at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
People at my school care if I'm not there.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel proud to be part of my school.	1	2	3	4	5
My teachers take the time to get to know me.	1	2	3	4	5
I can count on my friends to listen when something is bothering me.	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal Skills					
I listen to other people's ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
I work well with others on shared projects.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt.	1	2	3	4	5
I respect other points of view, even if I disagree.	1	2	3	4	5
I try to help when I see someone having a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
When I make a decision, I think about how it will affect others.	1	2	3	4	5
Academic Behaviors (retrospective)					
This program has helped me to become more interested in what I'm learning in school.	1	2	3	4	5
This program has helped me to connect my schoolwork to my future goals.	1	2	3	4	5
This program has helped me to do better in school.	1	2	3	4	5
This program has helped me to complete my schoolwork on time.	1	2	3	4	5

Scales and Items	Not at All True	A Little True	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Completely True
This program has helped me to do a better job on my schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
Self-Management (retrospective)					
This program has helped me to become better at handling stress.	1	2	3	4	5
This program has helped me to become better at controlling my temper.	1	2	3	4	5
This program has helped me learn that my feelings affect how I do at school.	1	2	3	4	5
This program has helped me learn how to be patient with others.	1	2	3	4	5
This program has helped me learn how to calm myself down when I'm excited or upset.	1	2	3	4	5
This program has helped me get better at staying focused on my work even when it's boring.	1	2	3	4	5
This program has helped me learn to resist doing something when I know I shouldn't do it.	1	2	3	4	5
Revised Belonging and Engagement Scale					
I fit in at this program.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel proud to be part of my program.	1	2	3	4	5
The adults in this program take the time to get to know me.	1	2	3	4	5
What we do in this program will help me succeed in life.	1	2	3	4	5
There are things happening in this program that I feel excited about.	1	2	3	4	5
This program helps me explore new ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
This program helps me build new skills.	1	2	3	4	5
What we do in this program is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
What we do in this program is challenging in a good way.	1	2	3	4	5

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