

**2022-2023 Summative Evaluation**

**Corinth School District — Fiscal Agent**

**Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers**

***Dreamers Academy***

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## **List of Acronyms**

**M-21CCLC** MS-21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

**CCR:** College and Career Readiness

**CSD:** Corinth School District

**ELs:** English Learners

**iReady:** Internet-based assessment and instruction program licensed to school districts by Curriculum Associates

**MS:** Mississippi

**STEM:** Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

## **Executive Summary**

For more than two decades, the Corinth School District (CSD) has worked in partnership with business leaders, community organizers, parents, and educators to design and implement innovative approaches to closing the achievement gap that exists among its students. The *Dreamers Academy*, a MS 21<sup>st</sup> Community Learning Centers Project continues the District’s efforts to positively impact students’ learning. Through this project, the District partners with The Boys & Girls Club, one of three community programs designated as “safe havens” more than twenty years ago. Through partnerships with the safe havens, efforts continue to be focused on new and innovative ways of teaching students academic standards and social/emotional skills needed for success. The District continues to work to mitigate the negative academic effect of COVID-19. To assist in this effort, the District asked parents and stakeholders to complete a comprehensive questionnaire to assist in creating a plan that would be the best alternative way for students at all grade levels to achieve expected standards.

Through community collaboration, the *Dreamers Academy* was designed to provide Corinth schools and the Boys & Girls Club with funding dedicated to providing a range of activities and schedules that emphasize fun while learning academic, social, and emotional skills. The project’s structure and activities are designed to help the Corinth District close the achievement gap that PreK-12<sup>th</sup> grade students exhibited prior to and after the COVID quarantine. The Project also addresses the skills and concepts needed by a percentage of students to meet the college readiness skills and knowledge. Most of the project activities were designed to occur outside the regular school day and emphasize learning academic, social, and emotional skills in settings that appeal to children and youth to encourage their active participation. Through *Dreamers Academy* the District believes it can more positively impact students’ learning rates and thereby address individual student’s academic and social/emotional learning deficits, or their need for accelerated learning opportunities. The Corinth District’s evidence-based activities and interventions are designed to address learning loss and improve the academic, emotional, social, and physical well-being of students most at-risk of failing or dropping out of school. Funding is being used to provide a comprehensive array of educational

opportunities at multiple times and in multiple settings: before-school, after-school, Saturdays, summers, intersession enrichment and academic tutoring, along with mentoring and nutritional services. Activities are being implemented in innovative ways to better meet the needs of students who come to school from communities highly impacted by poverty and stressful interpersonal relationships.

The primary goals of the *Dreamers Academy* are to: (1) Improve student achievement through provision of a variety of expanded learning experiences designed to increase the number of students meeting grade-level expectations and eliminate achievement gaps among groups of students; (2) Improve the attendance of high school students; (3) Improve graduation rates among ED and male subgroups of student; and (3) Promote family engagement in students' education to strengthen family ties to schools and be active partners in the education of their children.

A logic model is being used to evaluate the project to ensure feedback in support of mid-course corrections. The evaluation model used consists of Focus – Collect Data – Analyze and Interpret – Report. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the impact of the Corinth District's *Dreamers Academy* project on enhancing the learning and well being of students most at-risk. The program involves children and youth attending all three Corinth schools and the community safe-haven, Boys & Girls Club of Corinth, volunteers from the community in the schools, and instructional resources (print and digital) to meet the needs of students most at-risk for not attaining college and career readiness.

This evaluation report assesses the impact of the program on the improvement in students' educational, social, and emotional needs while living in communities highly impacted by poverty and stress. In general, educational assessment results suggest that students who attended the programs have exhibited growth during the past year and attained a higher academic performance level. While strong, positive growth cannot *only* be attributed to participation in the *Dreamers Academy* program, its impact cannot be underestimated. Teachers report that students have maintained or improved academic performance in the classroom each quarter a child participated in programming. This was accomplished in part as a result of the project's focus on skills and concepts presented in interesting formats and schedules during the

full year. These academic and social/emotional building activities extended students' learning opportunities to year-round and greatly extended time spent in educational and enriching activities provided outside the regular school day and at a great variety of times and locations. Results of academic, social, emotional, and enrichment programming are positive. This evaluation summary, reports on the activities and outcomes for the second year of programming for the project. Recommended areas to emphasize during future project years are: (1) key stakeholders continuing to provide a range of strategies to increase the number of students who regularly attend *Dreamers Academy* programming daily, (2) continuous emphasis on the academic, social, and emotional needs of students who live in chronic stress and poverty and (3) assist all students in meeting College and Career Standards. English Language Learners will continue being provided extra opportunities to make significant advances in English language understanding and usage. The evaluation team used available student achievement data, opinion surveys, and parent /employee interviews to estimate the impact of the program on student's overall achievement and the acquisition of standards and skills.

### **Evaluation Purpose and Questions**

The purpose of this evaluation is to 1) provide key stakeholders, parents and their children, teachers, and school administrations with *Dreamers Academy* results; 2) summarize the overall impact on participating students and their parents; 3) inform decisions about the strengths and areas in need of improvement, and (4) provide all stakeholders and the funding agency with a report on the project's efforts and results. Data from diverse sources (e.g. interviews, surveys, achievement tests, activity schedules, etc.) were triangulated to provide a view of the project, describe its impact on participants, and provide recommendations that can be implemented to enhance the management of the project and its resources. The results and recommendations are meant to provide key stakeholders and staff with information to promote meaningful conversations about any redesigning of the program's purpose and goals, and provide ideas for implementing changes that may lead to the project's greater impact on students and the further achievement of district/school goals and objectives. One of the primary purposes of the *Dreamers Academy* program is to improve educational, social, and emotional attainment of students who live in communities of poverty and highly stressful living situations while attending school in the Corinth District. Of great importance, is sharing the findings and

suggestions with the project's community partner and project staff to ensure participants receive the most benefit possible from the resources provided by the project funding source, both human and material resources -- whether students attended irregularly or engaged in the broad array of activities on a regular and intensive basis. The following evaluation questions guided the collection, analyses, and reporting of data to monitor the program's support of student participants.

**Question 1:** A five percent annual increase in the number of students meeting grade level expectations.

**Question 2:** Ten percent of students achieving a 5-point annual increase in GPA with "B" as the goal.

**Question 3:** Five percent annual increase in the percent of students scoring proficient on state tests.

**Question 4:** Five percent of high school students will increase in attendance in subgroup of students

**Question 5:** 5% annual increase in graduation rate among at risk subgroups.

**Question 6:** 90% school day ADA among participants and signed commitments to remain free of drugs/alcohol.

**Question 7:** 10% annual increase in the number of parents attending at least two seminars annually.

**Question 8:** Twenty-five parents volunteering to assist with activities.

### **Program Focus**

The project is intended to provide upward to 200 K through 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and 300 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students with expanded learning, including after-school, Intersession, and summer programming at four sites and provide teachers/tutors with professional development. The project is inclusive in nature and will serve all students, particularly at-risk students,

students with special needs, and English Language Learners. The program will focus on providing students with intensive tutoring, counseling, cultural enrichment, fine arts instruction, financial literacy, and study skills to enable them to succeed in school and the workplace. Corinth School District is striving to increase the educational opportunities for its students, especially those who live in distressed areas of their local community. This project is a foundational element of the District's strategic plan, designed to improve the emotional, physical, and educational well being of the students served by the District. Students will be identified for service based on (a) failure to pass the state's MAAP exams; (b) interest in the arts and cultural activities; (c) below grade-level performance in reading, math, and science content, and (d) risk factors of not graduating such as self-esteem problems, anti-social, violent, other emotional behaviors. All students receiving Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) will receive the highest priority for programming. The project will offer students high-quality, research-based instruction aligned with the District's 5-Year Strategic Plan and use state standards and national college to career standards as its foundation.

**Rationale for *Dreamers Academy* Project:** The children, early adolescents, adolescents, and families of Corinth with the greatest need are being provided programming through the Project. Research confirms that poverty contributes to academic failure because poor families often cannot afford educational resources or participate in extracurricular activities. *Dreamers Academy* focuses on providing intensive academic tutoring, counseling, cultural enrichment, study skills, physical education, etc. to enable them to better succeed in school and the workplace. The project planning team members believe that failure to address difficulties children/youth experience could result in missed opportunities for changing their academic trajectory and the development of the soft skills needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace. The Project is based on the belief that children/youth deserve to be healthy, safe, engaged, and challenged. The project is based on the philosophy of serving the whole child by developing relationships that build the protective factors needed for a healthy, balanced life.

## **Overview of *Dreamers Academy* Project Implementation**



Corinth *Dreamers Academy* addresses the needs of the representative communities as identified through local survey results. The project's proposed programs and activities are specific to the identified needs of socially, emotionally, and academically "at-risk" students.

The annotated results from a community-based survey of perceived needs indicated:

- ❖ Approximately 77% of parents desired after-school services,
- ❖ More than 68% of parents said their child/ren would attend summer camps, before/after school/intersessions educational activities, and Saturday technology sessions.
- ❖ Almost 60% of parents said they would serve as volunteers in after-school/summer programs,
- ❖ More than 55% of parents desired assistance in guiding their children's educational and career pursuits,
- ❖ Almost 60% of parents indicated they needed and would participate in family literacy and technology sessions,
- ❖ More than 80% of parents indicated they are unable to provide performing arts, educational enrichment, and physical education training for their children but would like their child(ren) to attend such activities afterschool and during District intersession periods. To meet these needs, the District has created programs that incorporate elements thought to be critical to addressing the expressed needs of families in all areas of Corinth.

***Dreamers Academy Program Components:***

The project activities will be conducted at all sites designated for service: All three Corinth schools and the Boys & Girls Club of Corinth.

***After-school Program*** Activities will provide a combination of intensive academic tutoring and cultural exploration for students participating in the program. Students will participate in research-based academic processes. An extensive selection of project-based learning opportunities in all content areas will be offered to students; thereby giving them exposure to career options and broaden their possibilities for future employment. Credit recovery and academic tutoring will emphasize reading in the content areas, using a wide range of print materials and actively engaging in the learning process through the ACT Test Prep sessions. Students used the *IXL Learning*, *ACT Test Prep* and *iReady* to improve their conceptual development, ability to solve problems and to communicate their findings.

Tutorial sessions were available to students focusing on mastering objectives in the end of course subject areas: Algebra, Biology, US History, and English. All intervention efforts were coordinated with the curriculum and instructional processes that flow from the grade level content standards and from the classroom teacher to the tutors or support personnel. The following assessment strategies were used to determine the effects of intervention and remediation on student achievement: Universal Screen; MAAP – 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grades; class grade reports at all grades; MAAP-EOC for 9<sup>th</sup> – 12 grades.

***Summer Enrichment Program*** provided theme-based *Dreamers Camp* for students in pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Programming was provided four days per week for four weeks during the summer at all project sites. The cultural enrichment, health and nutrition, and physical fitness programs provided in the after-school program were incorporated into the summer program. High school students engaged in MAAP-EOC practice credit recovery. Students were offered the opportunity to work with project staff in design teams to plan the activities for the summer. During the enrichment program students had the opportunities to explore science. Several coding courses, intensive tutoring, and reading in the sciences were provided to students. Computer design and Apple Coding were provided during the summer programming. Dreamers Camps included: Computer Design, Apple Coding; Art & Graphic Design; Robotics; Law Enforcement/Forensics (8-12); Literacy, Art, Science, Math, ELA, and History content; and music instruction in violin, cello, rhythm, and choir. Robotics competitions were held during the summer program. Arts, mathematics, and family engagement were also provided during the summer. Six parent seminars were conducted at project sites.

**Intersession Intervention & Enrichment** provided intense intervention and enrichment for three weeks in October, and two weeks each in March and June during regular school hours. Age and grade appropriate activities included core subject tutoring, ACT prep, financial literacy, Credit Recovery and academic tutoring. K students received both instruction to **prevent regression**, and activities designed to **enhance** motor and executive function skills. For ELLs, total immersion, with appropriate translation support, was practiced. Priority was given to ELLs when scheduling and providing services. During each program component, these students received targeted English instruction from an EL interventionist and a program designed to address learning a foreign language. Corinth High and Middle School

ELLs who were significantly below grade level were enrolled in an extended block class.

**Program Sites:** Services were provided to students enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grades at the following sites: Corinth Elementary, Corinth Middle, Corinth High, and Boys and Girls Club of Corinth. All facilities meet all state and federal standards for safe and healthy facilities, such as sprinkler systems, gyms, USDA standards for breakfast and afternoon snacks, safe playground equipment, interactive boards in classrooms, etc.

### **Staff Paid with Project Funds**

All project staff employed for *Dreamers Academy* were employees of the Corinth District and worked for the project on a part-time basis outside of their regular District scheduling. The District's Federal Programs Director served as the Project Director. She was responsible for coordinating the after-school programs and regular school programs. A portion of her salary was paid by the *Dreamers Academy* Project. Time and effort were recorded daily to ensure documentation was maintained and the percentage of her workday was in accordance with the project's budget and state/federal requirements for salaried personnel. The Project Director provided direct supervision of the project staff and the overall operation of the project. She worked with the Evaluator to ensure the District's activities were in alignment with the District's project narrative/budget and as described in the project's narrative. She served as a liaison with project advisory team, partner organizations, and evaluator. She directly supervised the Data Manager/Expanded Learning Instructor who ensured all data were collected and maintained as described in the Evaluation portion of the project narrative. This position additionally was employed as an instructor in the after-school component. All project personnel were part-time and involved in a varied schedule depending on the activities they were assigned for any given week. Children and youth requiring special behavioral programming were referred to the Behavior Specialists employed by the District to design and monitor individual behavioral management plans that were implemented and monitored by the Site Coordinators. Certified teachers were employed by *Dreamers Academy* funds as Certified Tutors and Enrichment Specialists to plan and implement academic units of study and develop individualized student interventions, along with skills-reinforcement in group sessions. The tutors worked to maintain teacher to student ratios between 1:5-1:10, depending on the

number of students who participated in the programs on any given day. Site Coordinators/Lead Tutors were certified educators who were responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school and external sites. Coordinators were responsible for all administrative duties in the operation of the project centers. They supervised employees, coordinated schedules, tutored children, met with school staff, and completed reports to ensure accurate and complete data regarding activities, participation, and results of programming. The site coordinators worked each day at the sites. Schedules were varied and appropriate for the variety of program offerings. Snacks were supervised by the Coordinators and Tutors, with snacks provided by the Corinth District through its USDA food allotments.

Regular-school-day Bus Drivers, with commercial certifications, were paid with grant funds to provide students with transportation home from the school-based after-school programs. Drivers started at 4:45 p.m. (after completing their District routes) and concluded when Dreamers Academy routes were completed. Completion times were flexible due to bus routes and number of students riding the buses.

All professionals paid by the project for their work outside their regular school duties were licensed teachers who meet the "No Child Left Behind" highly qualified designation. They were responsible for planning and delivering the instructional components of the extended programming. They met with general education teachers to coordinate the activities taking place in the programs. Classroom Teachers provided tutors with students' learning needs and concepts/academic skills requiring attention during the "outside school-day activities. All project teachers were responsible for planning and coordinating the small groups in which instruction took place. The teachers provided instruction after the end of the school day until 5:15 p.m. and during Intersession periods and Before School sessions. These individuals worked to provide specific enrichment activities and tutorials in language arts and mathematics for students by incorporating activities such as art, music, physical education, and other skills into the academic instruction. All activities focused on integrating these activities into reading, language arts and mathematics instruction. The enrichment specialists provided instruction from fifteen minutes after the end of the school day until 5:15 and for forty-five minute prior to the beginning of the school day.

**Project Sites for *Dreamers Academy***

Project sites were: Corinth Elementary, Middle, and High School, along with the community partnership site the Boys & Girls Club of Corinth. The agency site has been an active partner with the Corinth District in providing after-schooling programming for *more than two decades*. The Director of the *Boys & Girls Club* served as the Dreamers Academy Coordinator. He was responsible for maintaining appropriate staff to operate programs, financial management of contract dollars to support the center, supervision of staff, planning of activities, and the management of specific programs operated at each center. A cadre of community volunteers supported both the school and B&GC centers in their efforts to provide the project's goals and objectives.

### **Initial and Follow-up Staff Meetings**

The Project Director provided the overall coordination for the project. Site Coordinators, were responsible for individual site coordination, the staff orientation process, and convening regular staff meetings. The Project Director emphasized the importance of regularly scheduled staff meetings to coordinate activities and programs to meet the ever-changing needs of students throughout the school year.

The Project Director conducted an orientation process with all project staff upon initial employment and at the opening of each center at the start of the year. Specific goals and objective, programmatic activities, and grant requirements were reviewed in these meetings. Project Staff meetings and Site Staff meetings were held monthly. A staff meeting was called when a specific issue was brought to the attention of the coordinator or director. Site Coordinators held orientation sessions for their individual centers and conducted regular staff meetings to provide appropriate programming for each center. The Project Director monitored at least one meeting at each of the sites during project implementation.

Additional professional development sessions were conducted throughout the school year for project staff. Additionally, all certified teachers employed by *Dreamers Academy* attended professional development provided by the Principals/Directors of the district. The Corinth District provided a total of ten days of professional development throughout the school year.

**Participants** – The Corinth sites targeted children, early adolescents, and adolescents for programming. The program targeted students who were in the greatest need of acceleration and/or remedial interventions in the areas of reading/language arts, and mathematics. Technology was used to engage students, thereby making the activities more relevant to each child. The focus of the language-based interventions was on word analysis, comprehension, and vocabulary. The project addressed these issues by providing structured academic intervention. Students were engaged in a range of literacy activities, from using Lexile-level guided reading materials, vocabulary building activities, word-based exploration, creative/expository writing and book publication, and self-selected reading activities. All participants used iPads, laptops, and personal computers, as well as a range of learning software applications to engage in interactive lessons, projects, and curriculum-based materials. Educators used the regular Corinth curriculum as a foundation for their interventions. Educators strived to personalize each child’s program.

### **Adequacy of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Sites**

The sites in this project more than adequately met the needs of students who were eligible for this program's service. The sites were scattered throughout the district and in areas where students could attend a site either at their home school or in their community. The school sites had facilities that included classrooms, gymnasiums, playgrounds, libraries, computer laboratories, and cafeterias. All of these facilities were available for use by the project. All of the school sites were fully accessible to individuals with disabilities and all of the sites met the Title IV - Safe and Drug Free Schools requirements. Each project site had an outdoor recreation space, classrooms, and access to technology in a facility meeting safety and accessibility requirements. Sites provided before, during, after-school services, intersessions, and morning and afternoon summer camps. STEM Saturdays were provided at Corinth Elementary. The hours of operation for the community centers were especially beneficial to the children and parents who lived in those areas. Each of the centers established operating hours for the school year, summer, and intersession periods and followed these hours, except for district holidays.

### **Assessment of Management Plan**

The management system for the project addressed in the original project proposal was efficient and effective in supporting project staff. The Project Director was responsible for managing all components/activities of the program operation. These individuals coordinated activities and the use of facilities with principals and community center directors. The director also coordinated collaboration among project staff, regular school day teachers, as well as services provided by volunteer organizations, community organizations, and the external evaluator. Site coordinators were charged with the responsibility of coordinating and planning all after school programs. These site coordinators worked with teachers to develop individualized learning programs for students and coordinated activities with regular education teachers during the regular school year.

### **Attendance**

The following attendance data represent the number of students who attended one or more days in one or more program components during the project year. The *Dreamers Academy* had a total of 465 students who attended at least one day during all programming at the three school sites; and 56 students at the *Boys & Girls Club of Corinth* for summer and/or after school programming. This represents a total of 521 students (duplicated count) at all program sites for one or more days in K through 12<sup>th</sup> grades and the partner site. Students from K through 12<sup>th</sup> grades attended programs at all ***school sites*** and students in grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> at the ***partner site***. Activities for K through 8<sup>th</sup> grades included extended day and zero period where students were provided an array of services including tutoring in core academic subjects, physical education, snacks, fine motor activities, gross motor activities, team sports, anti-bullying sessions, art projects, and technology activities. High school students were provided Cambridge Test Preparation; Intersessions blocks of instruction in core academic subjects; Extended Day Tutoring in the core academic subjects in which each student was struggling to succeed; online Credit Recovery instruction in courses in which students were struggling; Foundational Studies that covered reading, mathematics, English, and History; and Zero Period in which each student was tutored in the course/s in which they were either failing or having difficulty mastering.

### **Progress Toward Goals and Objectives**

A primary goal for the project was to increase the percentage of students who attain Performance Level 4 and 5 on the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program. Results from the assessment program suggests that students who participated in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs increased their mean scale score performance in mathematics and English Language Arts. Students average gain in scores on iReady programming in reading and mathematics ranged from 7 points to more than 35 points. Interestingly, there does not seem to be a clear relationship between performance of regular attendees, and the performance of students who attended sporadically. This could be for two reasons: (1) Sample size (i.e., fewer students attended 30 or more days) and/or (2) the composition of students who attend more or less than 30 days

**Question 1:** A five percent annual increase in the number of students meeting grade level expectations.

**Question 2:** Ten percent of students achieving a 5-point annual increase in GPA with “B” as the goal.

**Question 3:** Five percent annual increase in the percent of students scoring proficient on state tests.

**Question 4:** Five percent of high school students will increase in attendance in subgroup of students

**Question 5:** 5% annual increase in graduation rate among at risk subgroups.

**Question 6:** 90% school day ADA among participants and signed commitments to remain free of drugs/alcohol.

**Question 7:** 10% annual increase in the number of parents attending at least two seminars annually.

**Question 8:** Twenty-five parents volunteering to assist with activities.

**Evaluation Question 1:** A five percent annual increase in the number of student meeting grade level expectations

***Table: ELA Percent Proficient***

Grade	Attendance	n	Fall	Spring	Delta	Fall	Spring
Grade 1	<=30 Days	26	348	388	+40.1	0%	0%
	>= 30 Days	0 4	348	415	+67.5	0%	25%
	<= 30 Days	19	376	435	+59.5	5%	0%



Grade 2	<=30 Days	08	387	415	+27.8	0%	0%
Grade 3	>= 30 Days	26	440	456	+15.9	11.5%	0%
	<=30 Days	12	425	462	+36.8	0%	0%
Grade 4	>= 30 Days	19	482	509	+27.5	0%	0%
	<=30 Days	02	463	447	-15.0	0%	0%
Grade 5	>= 30 Days	13	503	544	+41.1	0%	0%
	<=30 Days	5	535	577	+45.2	0%	0%
Grade 6	>= 30 Days	13	547	558	+11.0	7.7%	7.7%
	<=30 Days	02	485	577	-7.6	50%	0%
Grade 7	>= 30 Days	22	562	559	-3.6	18.2%	
	<=30 Days	0					
Grade 8	>= 30 Days	25	566	553	-12.9	12.0%	8.0%
	>= 30 Days	01	553	592	+40.0	0%	0%

**Table: Math Percent Proficient**

	Attendance	n	Fall	Spring	Delta	Fall	Spring
Grade 1	<=30 Days	26	343	367	+24.8	0%	0%
	>= 30 Days	04	337	375	+37.8	0%	0%
Grade 2	<=30 Days	19	360	402	+42.5	0%	0%
	>= 30 Days	08	365	385	+20.0	7.7%	0%
Grade 3	<=30 Days	26	398	418	+19.5	0%	0%
	>= 30 Days	12	402	431	+29.3	7.7%	0%
Grade 4	<=30 Days	19	423	550	+26.5	0%	0%
	>= 30 Days	02	379	432	+53.0	0%	0%
Grade 5	<=30 Days	13	446	479	+32.9	0%	0%
	>= 30 Days	05	446	.69	+23.2%	0%	0%
Grade 6	<=30 Days	13	461	418	+19.5	0%	0%
	>= 30 Days	02	402	431	+29.3	0%	0%

**Note:** High school students do not participate in the Mississippi Testing Program. Cambridge scores were not available during preparation of this evaluation report.

**Evaluation Question 2:** Ten percent of students achieving a 5-point annual increase in GPA with “B” as the goal.

Note: GPA data were not available at the time of the preparation of the evaluation report. However, data from teacher-surveys indicate more than half of students attending project activities improved in turning in homework, staying on task, and increased positive attitude toward school for approximately 75% of students. School attendance was subjectively reported by teachers to have improved during the year for a majority of students who attended project

programming. Evidence of performance on this question is available in attendance records and subsequent performance of assessment, such as iReady.

**Evaluation Question 3:** Five percent annual increase in the percent of students scoring proficient on state test. Please note: State test data were not available at the time of preparation of the evaluation report.

**Evaluation Question 4:** Five percent of high school students will increase in attendance.

High school students had a significant decrease in number of days they missed school. Also, more high school students attended *Dreamers Academy* activities than in previous 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Projects. A total of two hundred eighty-two students in 9 – 12 attended one of more program offerings during the regular school year and summer. Twenty-eight students attended Cambridge Test Preparation Classes; 140 students attended Intersession Blocks; 85 students attended Foundational Studies and Credit Recovery Classes; 17 students attended Zero Period in which they received tutoring in courses in which they were struggling; and 22 students attended Extended Day in which tutoring was provided for students in courses for which they had a C or lower grade.

**Evaluation Question 5:** 5% annual increase in graduation rate among at risk subgroups. While attendance in the District's at risk subgroups improved by several percentage points, the goal of 5% increase in graduation rate was not met. Continued efforts will be made in upcoming years to meet this evaluation question.

**Evaluation Question 6:** 90% school day ADA among participants and signed to remain free of drug/alcohol.

School day attendance did not reach an average of 90% for project attendees throughout the school year. However, students in middle and high schools did meet the goal of signing to remain free of drugs/alcohol. Subjective oral and written teacher reports and teacher survey results

indicate that more than 75% of students attending a variety of available project activities improved in their school behaviors, i.e, turning in homework; improvement in classroom behavior, responding to questions asked in class, school attendance, and attitude toward school.

While formal data were not collected to evaluate this question, anecdotal evidence from educators across the district and frequency counts of office behavior referrals suggest that *Dreamers Academy* positively impacted at a minimum 75% of students who regularly attended.

**Evaluation Question 7:** 10% increase in number of parents attending two seminars.

Based on attendance records, parent surveys, and attendance at school events, this question was met. On satisfaction surveys completed by parents attending seminars, 100% of respondents indicated Extremely Satisfied with the activities and instructors.

**Evaluation Question 8:** *Twenty-five parents will volunteer to assist with school events.*

Attendance records maintained by classroom teachers at all schools provide ample evidence that this evaluation question was met and exceeded. Activities and events in which parents participated and assisted include: parent/teacher conferences; field trips, grade-level field day events, school programs, Senior graduation ceremony, senior projects, the annual comedy event performed by the seniors, homecoming parade, character development and special recognition parades at the elementary school, assistance with school club events at middle and high school, and assistance with snacks /food at all sporting events, and many other activities.

Quarterly surveys were provided to general education teachers who had students participating in *Dreamers Academy*. In general, teachers of participating students, reported improved academic achievement, or at least achievement did not decline, during each quarter of the project year. These findings suggests that *Dreamers Academy* extended or at least reinforced

what was being taught in the classroom - with the focus being on completion of homework and preparation for class quizzes, tests, and presentations.

*Dreamers Academy* provided attending students with a broad array of content and skills in fun and exciting activities in a multitude of learning environments. The project sites reported excellent channels of communication among the key stakeholders. The director, coordinators, educators, and interventionists seem to have built and maintained strong partnerships focused on providing each child with a warm learning environment. The principles at each site were in frequent communication, shared feedback and insights, and contributed their strengths to the project to the benefit of the target population of students.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Community Impact.** The *Dreamers Academy* funds supported a strong program that met the needs of students who live in highly stressed areas of the participating school district. The project had a strong impact on the South Corinth Community. The Boys & Girls Club of Corinth provided a safe haven for children to attend meaningful after-school, summer, and intersession activities with nutritious snacks. These activities helped to keep our most at-risk children, early adolescents, and adolescents off the streets by allowing them to be involved in academic, recreational, and technology programs. Students received additional tutoring to supplement the regular classroom instruction. The extended school year programs offered through *Dreamers Academy* have also had a dramatic effect on the community. Engaging students in these activities over the summer helps to reduce the crime in the community because students have somewhere to go and something to do. Satisfaction surveys indicate more than seventy-five percent of students and over 90% of parents greatly enjoyed all aspects of programming during the year.

**Student Impact:** The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers programming provided K – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students with year-round quality programming that was both instructive and fun. This funding source continues to offer students opportunities that can have an impact on students' preparedness for college and career. Surveys of general education teachers and

students suggest that teachers, tutors, community volunteers, and mentors are having a positive impact on student behavior and academic performance. Secondary teachers and students report that they are selecting more rigorous courses of study, making better grades, and exhibiting positive school-related behaviors (e.g., turning in homework). Elementary and middle school students and parents indicate positive outcomes in the areas of social/emotional, academic, interpersonal relationships, and retention of concepts/skills that they attribute in large part to year-round high quality programming.

**Professional Development of Staff:** The academic, behavioral, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds of students and their parents require that project staff receive professional development to address the diversity of needs presented by children who are targeted by the project. Of special interest to educators and other project staff could be effective strategies for improving English language proficiency among children and parents/caregivers who are learning English as a second language. Research suggests that direct instruction in basic English skills (e.g., phonological awareness, phonics, comprehension) may provide a lasting impact on those who are learning English. Professional development aimed at emphasizing the well being of students who live under chronic stress is considered to be desirable for school staff. A family-based approach has the potential to increase parental engagement in their child's education, as well as enhance the economic well being of the family. It is suggested other areas for professional development that may be emphasized are: (1) Using technology to enhance literacy and numeracy skills, (2) additional hands-on STEM activities, (3) Using data to inform instructional decision-making, and (4) Using blended learning during periods outside the regular school day and year. Together, professional development, parental outreach, technology, and hands-on educational activities have the potential to increase the number of students who participate in the *Dreamers Academy* program for the maximum number of days. Incentives for attendance are recommended as attendance continues to be a significant hindrance to the program's overall impact for a number of students.

**Personnel:** The project may benefit from seeking a credentialed person or community-based person who is bilingual in Spanish and other languages spoken at home. It may be possible to allocate some of future *Dreamers Academy* funds to provide a person who could provide intensive language services to students and families learning English. Having Stem

Saturdays available to students/parents monthly throughout the year, including the summer months, will, no doubt, be widely popular with families. This is an activity that is planning and execution intensive and probably impossible for the current technology staff to manage monthly throughout the year. It is recommended that *Dreamers Academy* funds be provided to employ a person to assist the Educational Technology Coordinator plan/prepare for monthly sessions. Should funds not be available, it is recommended that efforts be made to find one or more high school students who can earn community services hours, if the District is unable to pay them for their work. Possibly, community members willing to volunteer to provide the extra personnel and support could be recruited.

**Student Attendance:** The project provided a wide-range of activities and staffing that could accommodate a large percentage of the students most in need. Unfortunately, students/parents did not take full advantage of the total number of days/sessions available to them. Taking full advantage of the opportunities afforded by the project is key to improving overall student outcomes. Staff may want to make sure that parents know that transportation is provided to interested students (with outreach in Spanish, as well). Project staff may also want to incentivize attendance by setting attainable goals for individuals and/or sub-groups of students. Special treats or field trips might be a means for increasing attendance. Another means of increasing attendance at each site could be establishing an “Attendance Wall” that provides positive reinforcement to students (i.e., individuals, sub-groups or teams). Project staff might recognize those who attain their goals by providing certificates, Cool-cash, tokens, notes to teachers and parents/caregivers. Recognition Parades are a favorite of most elementary students and there are activities currently being used to which middle-school students respond very positively (Houses concept, etc.) Using social media to advertise the various program offerings, posting short videos of students and teachers (in action at various activities) could be used to better incentivize students to attend programming. Discussions with students asking the question: “What would make you want to come to before & after school, summer, and intersession activities/programs?” Their responses could prompt project staff to reconsider some of their activities, or how they operate, and/or discover additional activities the students would enjoy. This evaluator believes the attendance issue greatly negatively influences the overall impact of an outstandingly conceived, organized, and operated comprehensive educational after-school-hours program.

**Personalization:** The unique profiles of strengths, areas in need of improvement, and affinities provide project staff with opportunities to personalize each child's daily activities. To achieve personalization, project staff may work on ways of communicating the results of formative and informal assessments that classroom teachers could use to provide children/youth with meaningful positive reinforcement to the children who regularly attend the program. Project staff may also survey or interview students about their profile of strengths, and areas in need of improvement. The access to technology that is available to students in *Dreamers Academy* should be emphasized to students to incentivize them to attend the project. Surveying students' interests and suggestions for program offerings could be an effective means of increasing attendance. The STEM Saturdays proved to be a great example of pairing academic/technology/teamwork/fun/parental involvement and hands-on activities to create excitement and the desire for parents and students to participate in *Dreamers Academy*. It is recommended that efforts be made to develop other activities that generate the type and amount of appeal STEM Saturdays generated to assist in increasing attendance of both students and parents in all aspects of the program.

**Intersession:** The Corinth School District continues its highly popular and successful Intersession program. Parents, students, and the community at-large are extremely pleased with this innovative and culturally enriching programming during these breaks. These intersession periods should be highly recommended by school staff to students and parents as a means of providing students extra time to achieve academic concepts. All of the current activities and programming scheduled during the 2022-23 SY appeared to be highly effective.

### **Sustainability of Project**

The Finance Project's **Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool** contains eight elements of sustainability, along with tasks specific to each element. This self-assessment is used to provide essential information about the health of a project and its sustainability potential. This self-assessment was completed prior to implementation of *Dreamers Academy*. This tool will be used to self-assess the program prior to implementation of activities for all project yearly periods.2 through 4. See Appendix for the sustainability plan for the *Dreamers Academy* Project.

## **Appendix**

### ***List of People Interviewed***

**Tanya Nelson, Federal Programs Director**

**Hannah Montgomery, Special Projects Director/Grants Specialist**

**Jay Walker, Director of Special Education**

**Yvonne Fair, Data Manager for State and Federal Program Projects**

**Carl Swartz, Behavioral Specialist**

**Misty Whitemore, Chief Financial Officer**

**Principals of Elementary, Middle, and High Schools**



**Sustainability Action Plan for *Dreamers Academy***

**Corinth – B&G Club of Corinth *Dreamers Academy* 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Sustainability Action Plan  
3 Year Plan (36 months)**

*The Corinth School District is the fiscal agent of two 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC projects. Much of the sustainability plans will be the same, due to administrative structure and policies regarding district operations. Differences will be contingent upon data outcomes, personnel differences, uniqueness of partner relationships, and projects goals and objectives.*

<b>Plan Component</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Develop Vision, Mission, & Case for Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory Committee guides planning process; re-evaluate in years 2 &amp; 3</li> <li>• Establish why program is needed</li> <li>• Who will benefit</li> <li>• Coordinate with community organizations with same mission</li> </ul>	Months 1-2; reviewed annually
Research and identify potential stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify priorities for community engagement and communication</li> <li>• Solicit ideas from agencies, schools, faith communities, &amp; clubs</li> </ul>	Months 1-3; reviewed annually
Initiate relationship with potential stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule community &amp; partner meetings</li> <li>• Formulate meeting agendas</li> <li>• Prepare outline of program's purpose and vision</li> </ul>	Months 4, 16, & 28
Analyze Program Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map current spending</li> <li>• Analyze funding gaps</li> <li>• Develop financing strategies</li> <li>• Evaluate options</li> <li>• Develop recommendations</li> </ul>	Months 5, 17, & 29
Continue to cultivate Stakeholders and create by-in for 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold meetings</li> <li>• Map current spending &amp; analyze gaps</li> <li>• Develop financing strategies</li> <li>• Evaluate options</li> <li>• Develop recommendations</li> </ul>	Months 6, 18, & 30
Make the "ASK"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine key community leaders to involve</li> <li>• Level of collaborative commitment for which to ask</li> <li>• Develop strong "case" for potential partner involvement</li> <li>• Be specific about level of commitment requested</li> </ul>	(completed by) Month 7
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalize relationships with MOUs</li> <li>• Position descriptions for volunteer; revising as needed throughout the program</li> <li>• Formalize advisory committee roles</li> </ul>	Months 8 & ongoing
Be a Good Steward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for continued involvement through regular meetings and dialogue</li> <li>• Celebrate successes through publicity</li> </ul>	Months 8 & Ongoing

<p>Create and execute fundraising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure program is mutually beneficial to all partners</li> <li>• Identify program services valued in community that could produce income to offset project expenses Create marketing plan for program</li> <li>• Identify budget items that can be provided by in-kind partners &amp; other stakeholders</li> <li>• Select methods &amp; teams for fundraising/resource gathering for future</li> <li>• Use multiple fundraising methods (grant writing, direct mail, special events, create donors clubs,</li> <li>• Meetings with administrators to discuss program funding re-alignment</li> <li>• Select members of advisory committee, school board, and other community leaders to act as fundraising committee</li> <li>• Prepare a fundraising plan with objectives and timelines</li> <li>• Launch and execute fundraising efforts</li> </ul>	<p>Month 8 and carry forward into Years 2 &amp; 3</p>
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