

Dallas County 21st Century Community Learning Center Evaluation Summary 2022-2023 School Year

Afterschool programs are an evidence-based strategy for helping students meet challenging academic standards, improve attendance and graduation rates, and develop college and career readiness skills and behaviors. The federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program provides competitive grant funding to districts to implement before- and after-school and summer enrichment programs that support and enhance student outcomes. The afterschool program operates in two sites: Mallory Elementary and Buffalo Prairie Middle School. Combined, the two sites serve approximately 190 students, with approximately 100 students attending the program 30+ nights per year.

Each year, 21st CCLC grantees undergo an external evaluation process that reviews their progress related to three broad afterschool goals: 1) academic improvement and efficacy, 2) program quality, and 3) youth outcomes. During the 2022-2023 school year, each site recorded attendance and grades data, received a Program Quality Assessment (PQA) observation, and completed a series of afterschool surveys with responses from 123 youth, 50 families, 22 program staff, and two school administrator surveys. A certified external evaluator met with the program administrator to review data and complete a Guided Reflection Document. Results from the annual external evaluation ensure grant compliance and influence continuous quality improvement efforts, including modifying the program curricula and enrichment activities and planning professional development for staff.

Goal 1: Academic Achievement and Efficacy

Afterschool programs provide a full range of academic support, including homework help, tutoring, academic enrichment, and comprehensive, integrated units directly tied to the state standards. They provide activities that complement rather than replicate the school day.

Due to revisions in the Missouri MAP test during the academic year, MAP test data in all areas was not available and is not being used during this evaluation to track standardized test performance. However, this MAP test alignment will be used again in future years. Data was available to analyze the impact of the afterschool program on regular school day grades. Evidence is evident from the Dallas County sites that the program positively impacts students' regular school-day grades in reading/communication arts, mathematics, and science. The Dallas County sites are

considered “advanced” in these areas for helping students who attend at least 30 nights of afterschool programming to maintain and increase their academic grades. In addition, students who are academically in “need” also have benefitted dramatically in academic performance in reading/communication arts and mathematics. Overall, the Dallas County 21st Century Community Learning Center program demonstrates the ability to help students academically and provide a pathway to improved academic performance.

Goal 2: Program Quality

Research shows that high-quality afterschool programs help close the achievement gap and reduce the likelihood of youth participating in risk-taking behaviors. The 21st CCLC grant recipients participate in an ongoing quality improvement process that includes the point-of-service experience of youth, school day linkages, offering a broad array of activities, and family engagement opportunities.

Survey responses from youth participants, families, and staff demonstrate the Dallas County program is a high-quality program with responses that exceed the statewide average in nearly all areas. In addition to survey results, these high-quality indicators include data collected as part of an onsite visit (PQA) of the program by an independent external evaluator. Data collected demonstrate the 21st CCLC program is a highly organized, well-planned, professional, safe, and engaging program for students and families.

There is a need to continue working with middle school students specifically to improve their perception of the afterschool program. This area has been identified as the focus for improvement during the new academic year.

Goal 3: Youth Outcomes

The afterschool program also offers non-academic benefits that support the student’s development of life readiness skills, including positive school behaviors (e.g., regular attendance), personal and social skills (e.g., time management, teamwork, critical thinking), and commitment to learning (e.g., initiative, homework completion, study skills).

The Dallas County Schools program has very strong attendance, exceeding the proposed attendance estimation by a considerable amount. One hundred and one (101) students attended/participated in afterschool programs at least 30 times; this number exceed the grant application projection. As a result of this high level of participation, the program is “advanced” in student participation in nearly all areas. Students who attended the program demonstrate high levels of personal and social skills (“advanced”)

which demonstrates high levels of social skills like “I set goals for myself,” “I am good at using strategies to complete tasks,” “I have friends that care about me,” and “I get along well with other.”

Overall, the Dallas County 21st Century Community Learning Centers sites continue demonstrating high-quality performance and providing families with a highly qualified afterschool program.

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