

**MS 21CCLC Project**  
*Dreamers Academy*

## **2023-2024 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**

<b>ACT:</b>	American Testing Program
<b>ADA:</b>	Average Daily Attendance
<b>M-21CCLC:</b>	MS-21 <sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers
<b>CCR:</b>	College and Career Readiness
<b>CSD:</b>	Corinth School District
<b>ELA:</b>	English Language Arts
<b>ELLs:</b>	English Learners
<b>GPRA:</b>	Government Performance and Results Act
<b><u>iReady:</u></b>	Internet-based assessment and instruction program licensed to school districts by Curriculum Associates
<b>MAAP:</b>	Mississippi Academic Assessment Program
<b>MAAP-EOC:</b>	Mississippi Academic Assessment Program – End of Course
<b>MS:</b>	Mississippi
<b>STEM:</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
<b>USDA:</b>	United States Department of Agriculture

## Executive Summary

This evaluation report details the activities of the third year of programing and details the progress made in meeting program goals. 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. A portion of this plan continued to be used in 2023-2024 at all grade levels.

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 has been 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 during the third year of programming. 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 third 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**

The purpose of this evaluation is to 1) provide key stakeholders, parents and their children, teachers, and school administrators 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 their 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.

### **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 (ELL). 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 the South Corinth 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 were 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, technology, 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 were conducted at all sites designated for service: All three Corinth schools and the Boys & Girls Club of Corinth.

***After-school Program*** Activities provided 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 was offered to students; thereby giving them exposure to career options and broaden their possibilities for future employment. Credit recovery and academic tutoring emphasized 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. STEM and Code.org were provided during the summer programming. Dreamers Camps included: STEM, Code.org; 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. A Parent Café program was used to encourage parents to take responsibility for their own learning.

***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. 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-school programs 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 the 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.

**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.

### **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 355 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 411 students 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 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. Refer to the GPRA Charts, Appendix 2.

**Evaluation Question 1:** A five percent annual increase in the number of student meeting grade level expectations. See Appendix #5

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

Note: GPA data were only available for Year 2 programming at the time of the preparation of this 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 principals 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, PBIS rewards, 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. 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 meaningful positive reinforcement to the students 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 2023-24 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. See Appendix 5 for the sustainability plan for the *Dreamers Academy* Project.

## **APPENDICES**

### ***Appendix 1: List of People Interviewed***

**Tanya Nelson, Director Pre-School Program and Title IX (Homeless)**

**Hannah Montgomery, Special Projects and Federal Programs Director**

**Jay Walker, Director of Special Education**

**Yvonne Fair, Data Manager for State and Federal Programs**

**Carl Swartz, Behavioral Specialist**

**Misty Whittemore, Finance Director**

**Corinth Elementary, Middle, and High School Principals**

**Directors of Safe Havens: Boys & Girls Club of Corinth**

**Dr. Edward Lee Childress – Superintendent of Education**

**Representative Teachers - Grades K – 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Selected Parents of elementary, middle, and high school students**

## Appendix 2: Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Measures for *Dreamers Academy* Project Sites

**Table 1: Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Measures: Corinth High School \***

Hours of participation	GPRA 1: demonstrated growth in state assessments	GPRA 2: improved GPA	GPRA 3: attendance rate $\geq 90\%$	GPRA 4: decreased in-school suspensions	GPRA 5: Improved teacher reported learning engagement
	L.A. / Math				
> 15 hours	N/A	48	25	56.25	N/A
15 $\geq$ 44 hours	N/A	36.36	0	41.66	N/A
44 $\geq$ 89 hours	N/A	60	100	50	N/A

\* All data outcomes reported in percentages.

**Table 2: Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Measures: Corinth High School (Summer)\***

Hours of participation	GPRA 1: demonstrated growth in state assessments	GPRA 2: improved GPA	GPRA 3: attendance rate $\geq 90\%$	GPRA 4: decreased in-school suspensions	GPRA 5: Improved teacher reported learning engagement
	L.A. / Math				
> 15 hours	N/A	100	N/A	N/A	N/A
15 > 44 hours	N/A	100	N/A	55.56	N/A
45 > 89 hours	N/A	57.14	N/A	70	N/A
90 > 179 hours	N/A	100	N/A	42.85	N/A

\* All data outcomes reported in percentages.

**Table 3: Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Measures: Corinth Middle School \***

Hours of participation	GPRA 1: demonstrated growth in state assessments	GPRA 2: improved GPA	GPRA 3: attendance rate $\geq 90\%$	GPRA 4: decreased in-school suspensions	GPRA 5: Improved teacher reported learning engagement
	L.A. / Math				
> 15 hours	71.4 / 58.95	4.5	33.33	64.7	92.3
15 > 44 hours	48.57 / 60	41.6	0	37.5	83.3
45 > 89 hours	40.6 / 59.3	40	0	57.14	68.75
90 > 179 hours	57.14 / 85.7	100	0	N/A	66.67

\* All data outcomes reported in percentages.



**Table 4: Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Measures: Corinth Middle School (Summer)\***

Hours of participation	GPRA 1: demonstrated growth in state assessments	GPRA 2: improved GPA	GPRA 3: attendance rate $\geq 90\%$	GPRA 4: decreased in-school suspensions	GPRA 5: Improved teacher reported learning engagement
	L.A. / Math				
> 15 hours	62.5 / 50	42.8	N/A	50	N/A
15 > 44 hours	37.5 / 50	54.5	N/A	68.75	66.67
45 > 89 hours	25 / 20	50	N/A	100	100

\* All data outcomes reported in percentages.

**Table 5: Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Measures: Corinth Elementary School \***

Hours of participation	GPRA 1: demonstrated growth in state assessments	GPRA 2: improved GPA	GPRA 3: attendance rate $\geq 90\%$	GPRA 4: decreased in-school suspensions	GPRA 5: Improved teacher reported learning engagement
	L.A. / Math				
> 15 hours	61.5 / 76.9	N/A	28.5	N/A	80.39
15 > 44 hours	25 / 62.5	N/A	16.6	N/A	75.6
45 > 89 hours	33.3 / 33.3	N/A	12.5	N/A	66.6
90 > 179 hours	33.3 / 60	N/A	0	N/A	72
180 > 269 hours	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	67

\* All data outcomes reported in percentages.

**Table 6: Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Measures: Corinth Elementary School (Summer)\***

Hours of participation	GPRA 1: demonstrated growth in state assessments	GPRA 2: improved GPA	GPRA 3: attendance rate $\geq 90\%$	GPRA 4: decreased in-school suspensions	GPRA 5: Improved teacher reported learning engagement
	L.A. / Math				
> 15 hours	50 / 50	N/A	N/A	N/A	81.8
15 > 44 hours	76.2 / 61.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	83.3
45 > 89 hours	50 / 75	N/A	N/A	N/A	85.7

\* All data outcomes reported in percentages.

**Table 7: Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Measures: Ripley Middle School \*\***

Hours of participation	GPRA 1: demonstrated growth in state assessments	GPRA 2: improved GPA	GPRA 3: attendance rate $\geq 90\%$	GPRA 4: decreased in-school suspensions	GPRA 5: Improved teacher reported learning engagement
	L.A. / Math				
> 15 hours	38.5 / 50	28.6	33.3	60	100
15 > 44 hours	35.7 / 50	71.4	0	50	100
45 > 89 hours	33.3 / 66.7	0	0	N/A	50
90 > 179 hours	75 / 75	N/A	0	33.3	100

\*Ripley Middle School provided programming during school year exclusively

\*\* All data outcomes reported in percentages.

**Table 8: Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Measures: Boys and Girls Club \***

Hours of participation	GPRA 1: demonstrated growth in state assessments	GPRA 2: improved GPA	GPRA 3: attendance rate $\geq 90\%$	GPRA 4: decreased in-school suspensions	GPRA 5: Improved teacher reported learning engagement
	L.A. / Math				
> 15 hours	50 / 50	0	0	100	100
15 > 44 hours	50 / 100	0	50	0	100
45 > 89 hours	N/A / N/A	0	0	0	100
90 > 179 hours	N/A / N/A	100	0	0	100
180 > 269 hours	0 / 100	0	0	0	100
$\geq 270$	40.9 / 50	66.67	37.5	77.78	100

\* Boys and Girls Club operates 12 months annually.

\*\*All data outcomes reported in percentages.

## **Appendix 3: Student and Teacher Surveys**

## **Student Survey Part I**

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers**

*Give Part 1 to students 4<sup>th</sup> grade and above before or immediately after they join the program. Give Parts I and II to students at the end of the year of program activity.*

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade/School** \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes**

**No**

Do you look forward to going to school?

Do you study hard for tests?

Do you feel safer after school?

Do your parents talk to you about school or homework?

**Student Survey Part II**

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers**

*Give Part 2 to students 4<sup>th</sup> grade and above at the end of the year or program activity*

**Name**\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of activity**\_\_\_\_\_

I attend this activity about \_\_\_\_\_ days each week.

*Thanks for participating in this survey. We’d like to know what you thought about it. Please fill out all parts of this survey so we know if you enjoyed it and so we know what you thought about the quality of the activity.*

<i>Enjoyable?</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>I like it.</b>		
<b>I look forward to attending the program</b>		

<b>High Quality</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
I feel comfortable talking to the 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC staff.		
I think there is someone available n the program to help when		
I need it.		
I think that I’m doing better in school since I started coming		
here.		

# Teacher Survey

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

Give this survey to each regular attendee’s teacher at the end of the year or program activity.

Name\_of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Grade/School\_\_\_\_\_

Subject taught if middle or high school:\_\_\_\_\_

Over the past \_\_\_\_\_has this student . . .

Improved in turning in her/his homework on time	YES	NO
Improved in completing homework to your satisfaction.		
Improved in participating in class.		
Improved in volunteering (e.g. for extra credit or more responsibilities.		
Improved in attending class regularly.		
Improved in being attentive in class.		
Improved in behaving well in class.		
Had classroom academic performance that was satisfactory or better.		
Improved in coming to school ready/prepared to learn		
Improved in getting along well with other students.		

## APPENDIX 4: *Reports on Stem Saturdays*

### **August 5, 2023 - Community Book Read Themed**

The Corinth School District kicked off its 2023-2024 STEM Saturday camp series on August 5 to coincide with the district's community book read program. Activities centered on themes from the book "Starry River of the Sky," by Grace Lin with over 130 students registering for the camp. This new series of Saturday camps helps students discover how STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) connects to the world around us through fun, hands-on experiments and experiences.

PreK students assembled rain sticks, exploring how sound is created through friction and movement. Students in kindergarten built working fireflies and learned how these beetles communicate through a system of light flashes.

First grade students learned the science behind why goldfish jump and created their own jumping fish. Second grade students learned about phases of the moon and constructed their own moon rocks using common household products.

Third grade students learned how and why snakes shed their skins, using glue and other products to simulate the process. Fourth grade students created mixed media art pieces to represent the book theme.

Dana McLain, Corinth Middle School teacher, led a group of fifth and sixth grade students in designing and engineering flying dragons, complete with flapping wings and simulated dragon-fire. Ms. McLain consistently volunteers to lead middle school students for this program, stating "STEM Saturdays allow staff and students to come together for fun, hands-on experiments, and experiences. These activities promote critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. One of my favorite activities was building a fully articulating Flying Dragon, where students worked together to bring the dragon to life through the motion of its wings and head. STEM Saturdays cultivate a love for learning and introduce students to various STEM concepts and careers. They allow students to apply their knowledge and skills practically and engagingly, fostering creativity and innovation."

During Makerspace, students in grades PreK through second grade designed glow-in-the-dark firefly jars. Students were able to decorate the jars using craft materials and recycled items. Students in grades three through six learned basic origami folds, constructing dragon boats. All students participated in a robotics center, exploring different types of robots. The center rolled out the district's new BeeBot, an "unplugged" robot used to improve students' skills in directional language and programming without the use of devices. Students also used iPads to program Dash robots to complete an obstacle course.

As a special activity this month, students in grades PreK through sixth grade sculpted their own pottery pieces. Second grade student, Brooks Clark, stated his favorite activity for this month's program was working with the pottery. "I loved the pottery. I got to make a cereal bowl and a spoon. The clay felt kind of weird like Jello at first, but then it was ok after I started. I want to come to every STEM Saturday, it's so much fun."

After drying, the pottery will be painted and select pieces will be available for viewing at the Corinth School District Foundation Gala, held on August 26. Everyone is invited to this fundraising event with all proceeds going toward providing innovative educational opportunities for Corinth School District students. Purchase tickets by August 21 at [www.corinth.k12.ms.us/gala](http://www.corinth.k12.ms.us/gala).

Join us for our next STEM Saturday on September 16. The theme for the next camp is "Math Maniacs," with activities designed to grow students' understanding and love of mathematics.

**September 16, 2023 - Math Maniacs**

The Corinth School District held another successful STEM Saturday on September 16, with over 130 students registered for the Math Maniacs event. This series of Saturday camps helps students discover how STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) connects to the world around us through fun, hands-on experiments and experiences.

Pre-K students worked to create patterns and identify how shapes can combine to form new shapes. Students in kindergarten learned about graphing using “M&M Math,” while also practicing counting and basic addition and subtraction skills using concrete manipulatives. Melanie Mills, Corinth Elementary teacher and co-leader of the STEM Saturday kindergarten group stated, “I love STEM Saturdays because we always have fun. It gives us opportunities to create unique, meaningful, and engaging lessons that we don’t get to plan in our day-to-day lessons. I enjoy seeing the excitement of the kids as they get hands on learning experiences.” Students in first grade created geometric shapes using perler beads and discovered how heat transfer can melt objects. Students also used marshmallows and pretzel sticks to create and compare 3D geometric structures.

Second grade students build a Rubik’s cube and worked to solve the challenging puzzle, discussing strategies and potential ways to solve it. Students in the second and third grade were also challenged to build the tallest and sturdiest structure using cups and various items to weigh the structures down.

Third grade students used craft supplies to create a monarch butterfly containing math facts. Students in the fourth grade had a “glow in the dark” math contest, racing to win various math challenges. Fifth and sixth grade students participated in the “Numbers Games,” competing across several fun math stations. These games worked to improve students’ math proficiency, retention, and motivation to engage with math.

Approximately fifteen members of the Alcorn Civil Air Patrol assisted STEM Saturday participants with completing a paper airplane challenge. Mia Nickels, Deputy Commander for Cadets and Recruiting Officer for the Civil Air Patrol explained, “The Alcorn County Civil Air Patrol cadets took turns teaching the student groups about the four forces acting on an airplane in flight: lift, gravity, thrust, and drag. The students were all given a ‘pilot’s license’ and assigned to flight instructors who helped them create their paper airplanes, while explaining the parts of a plane. Once the planes were folded, the cadets organized flight races where they encouraged experimenting with control and angles to improve the performance of the paper airplanes. The students seem to really enjoy racing their planes and learning about the CAP cadet program. Many were surprised to learn that the cadets teaching them were between the ages of 12-16. Our cadets enjoyed learning about the student’s career goals, seeing the joy on their faces when their planes took flight, and sharing their personal experiences in the air, as many of them had flown their first Orientation flights that same week.”

All STEM Saturday students participated in a robotics center, using iPad apps to create pathways and navigating the Dash and Dot robots around obstacles towards a set location based on solving math challenges. All students also participated in math-based STEM Makerspace activities. Students in grades Pre-K through second grade created tessellations using paper and other craft items. Students in third through sixth grades created their own functioning “model clocks.”

Join us for our next “Spooktacular STEM” Saturday on October 21, featuring Halloween and fall-themed activities.

The camps are open only to Corinth School District students in grades preK-6. Parents must pre-register their child on the Corinth School District website ([www.corinth.k12.ms.us](http://www.corinth.k12.ms.us)).



**October 21, 2023 “Spooktacular STEM”**

On October 21, the Corinth School District hosted a Halloween-themed, “Spooktacular STEM Saturday.” Over 140 students registered to attend this Saturday camp that helps students discover how STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) connects to the world around us through fun, hands-on experiments and experiences.

Students in Pre-K designed “monster puppets,” practicing gross and fine motor skills, while discussing colors, shapes, and following directions. Kindergarten students learned about the life cycle of a pumpkin, exploring how seeds become vines, which turn into flowers and eventually pumpkins.

First grade students learned about parts of the skeleton, constructing their own models using Q-tips. These students also designed fall-themed door hangers, discussing seasons and weather conditions typically associated with the different seasons. Students in second grade designed and crafted their own cobs of corn, discussing how corn is used as food, fuel, and fiber. Students also created and solved various corn mazes, demonstrating engineering and logic skills.

Students in third grade investigated chemical properties and states of matter through creating “Halloween slime” and an erupting “ghost pumpkin.” Students read “The Runaway Pumpkin” and created their own path and obstacles for their pumpkins to follow. Fourth grade students learned about the process of mummification and how different cultures utilized different methods of mummification. Students created their own miniature mummies to demonstrate one of the methods discussed. Fifth and sixth grade worked in teams to design a lever-based device capable of grabbing small prizes from a distance. Students then used these devices to compete to see which design could pick up the most items within a set time.

The Corinth High School Culinary Arts program facilitated a fun cupcake activity for all students in grades Pre-K through six. Students discussed how different colors are mixed to create different icing shades and how to use knowledge of shapes to create decorative structures. The high school students were on hand to assist STEM Saturday participants with assembling and decorating the cupcakes.

All STEM Saturday students participated in a Robotics and Engineering center led by Wilson Jones, Corinth Middle School STEM and Cyber Foundations teacher. Mr. Jones stated, “During our October STEM Saturday session, our students delved into the realms of physics and engineering, emerging as triumphant Pumpkin Chunkin' champions. They got the opportunity to craft miniature catapults, a hands-on adventure that brought the worlds of physics and engineering to life for our new generation of scientists. STEM Saturday ignites curiosity in the minds of our students, transforming weekends into journeys of discovery.”

All STEM Saturday students also participated in Halloween-themed Makerspace activities, with a specialized focus on spiders. Students in grades Pre-K through second grade created “spider parachutes,” structures that were small enough to support a plastic spider. These students discovered what types of designs created the most optimal deceleration. Students in third through sixth grade created realistic spider webs using dental floss. The webs had to meet three criteria: strength, stickiness, and durability. Students were able to select supporting materials to meet these criteria.

Join us for our next “Holly Jolly STEM Saturday” on December 9, featuring holiday-themed activities.

### **December 9, 2023 Holiday STEM**

On December 9, the Corinth School District hosted a holiday themed STEM Saturday. Over 130 students registered to attend this Saturday camp that helps students discover how STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) connects to the world around us through fun, hands-on experiments and experiences. Students in Pre-K designed snow globes and stockings, practicing gross and fine motor skills, while discussing colors, shapes, and following directions. Kindergarten students created magic bending candy canes and competed to see who could create a Christmas tree through stacking cups. Through these activities, students explored concepts of chemical reactions, physical properties of matter, and design engineering principles.

First grade students built a sleigh, flying reindeer, and chimney using recycled and craft materials. Husband and wife teaching duo, Craig and Abby Strickland, led the first grade team. "I usually work at the high school, but I really enjoy the chance I get to work with my wife and the elementary kids," said Craig Strickland. "They are so excited about learning and I love to see them enjoy their time at STEM Saturday. My favorite part of the December STEM Saturday was our kids building a flying reindeer and Santa's sled. They were so creative with their ideas. We had so many awesome ideas and the kids worked so hard. It was a great day." Students in second grade designed their own keepsake ornament through melting and shrinking plastic cups. Students also participated in a reindeer race, sliding a recycled craft reindeer along a cable, using balloons as "fuel."

Students in third grade designed and constructed 3D trees and participated in the "Tallest Snowman" challenge. Fourth grade students created a Christmas wreath and a Christmas tree that lit up using a working circuit composed of graphite, a battery, and a LED light. Fifth and sixth grade invented their own toys for "Santa's workshop" using the Makerspace cart. Students also explored chemical reactions through making "Bubble Christmas lights."

All STEM Saturday students participated in a Robotics and Engineering center. Students were able to use the new Sphero BOLT robots, learning programming through embedded color-changing LED lights and sound sensors.

All STEM Saturday students also participated in holiday-themed Makerspace activities.

Students in grades Pre-K through second grade worked to silence a jingle bell, exploring which materials dampened sound the most. Students in third through sixth grade created "reindeer necklaces," that had to meet three criteria: user functionality, durability, and style. Students were able to select supporting materials to meet these criteria.

Join us for our next STEM Saturday, "Once upon a Time- Fairytales and Superheroes" to be held on January 20. Register today at <https://forms.gle/6dEd56EpPqZLyd2K6>

The camps are open only to Corinth School District students in grades preK-6. Parents must pre-register their child on the Corinth School District website ([www.corinth.k12.ms.us](http://www.corinth.k12.ms.us)).

**January 2, 2024 Superheroes and Fairytales Themed**

On Jan. 27, the Corinth School District hosted a superheroes and fairytales-themed STEM Saturday. Over 120 students registered to attend this Saturday camp that helps students discover how STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) connects to the world around us through fun, hands-on experiments and experiences.

Students in Pre-K made superhero and fairy masks, practicing fine motor skills, while discussing colors, shapes, and following directions. Kindergarten students loved creating snowstorms in a jar and frozen snowman necklaces. Through these activities, students explored concepts of chemical reactions and the properties of matter.

First grade students built Rapunzel's Towers. Then, they tested the validity of their tower-building abilities by sliding objects down the handmade slides.

Students in second grade designed and created their superhero pool noodle pom pom and confetti launchers. They loved launching confetti all over the classroom. Students in third grade designed and constructed houses made out of straw, sticks and bricks and attempted to "blow" the houses down. Using teamwork, they learned how the basics of engineering and house design. "Given limited supplies, students used their imagination and creativity to design houses that could withstand the power of 'wolf-blowing,'" said Katosha Drewery, STEM Saturday teacher. "I loved watching them problem-solve and communicate with their teammates! As a result, each team engineered their own unique design that could not be brought down by their huffing and puffing!"

Fourth grade students created rubber band powered cars. Fifth and sixth grade students made superhero capes, masks and shields. All STEM Saturday students participated in a Robotics and Engineering center. Also, students enjoyed in a social/emotional learning station where they talked through the different emotions that superheroes have.

All STEM Saturday students also participated in superhero Makerspace activities. Students in grades Pre-K through second grade created superhero squeeze bottle rocket launchers. Students in third through sixth grade created Cinderella carriages. "MakerSpace allows students to be creative while still using problem solving and critical thinking skills," said Beverly Shanks, STEM Saturday teacher. "My students enjoyed building these Cinderella carriages and competing against their classmates in a carriage race. I believe that STEM Saturday activities give students real-world, hands-on experience that they can use in their everyday lives now and in the future."

Join us for our next STEM Saturday, STEM=LOVE, to be held on Feb. 10. The camps are open only to Corinth School District students in grades preK-6. Parents must pre-register their child on the Corinth School District website ([www.corinth.k12.ms.us](http://www.corinth.k12.ms.us)).

## **February 10, 2024 STEM=LOVE**

The Corinth School District hosted another fun-filled STEM Saturday camp on February 11. Over 120 students registered to attend the Valentine-themed, “STEM=LOVE,” Saturday camp that helps students discover how STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) connects to the world around us through fun, hands-on experiments and experiences.

Pre-K students demonstrated creativity and worked on enhancing their fine motor skills through creating and painting a wooden heart keepsake. Kindergarten students explored solubility through “candy science,” using various liquids to dissolve candy hearts. Students in kindergarten and first grade learned the basics of binary coding, creating Valentine’s bracelets with secret, coded messages. First grade students also created “dancing hearts,” utilizing the carbon dioxide from soda lift conversation hearts to the top of containers.

Students in second grade learned about and constructed heart-shaped thaumatropes, a once popular optical toy invented in the 1800’s. Students drew different pictures on each side of the instrument, which appeared to blend into one image when the thaumatrope was spun. Third grade students created a replica of a working heart using recycled materials, learning about how the heart functions. Students also constructed a model of blood, including plasma (corn syrup), red blood cells (cinnamon candies), white blood cells (lima beans), and platelets (white rice).

Fourth grade students practiced design-based engineering, constructing several iterations of “Cupid’s bow and arrow.” Once designs were finalized, students launched arrows (Qtips) using their bows, competing to see who could obtain the greatest distance. Students in fifth and sixth grade created Valentine-themed keychains using perler beads, observing melting points and physical changes from heat transfer.

All STEM Saturday students participated in a Robotics and Engineering center. Students maneuvered Sphero BOLT robots using iPads and specialized apps that allow the robot to be controlled through block or text-based programming. STEM Saturday students also participated in Valentine-themed Makerspace activities. Students in grades Pre-K through second grade created hidden messages in Valentine hearts and constructed thumbprint heart glass magnets. Students in third through sixth grade created “heart spinners” using a variety of supporting materials.

The Corinth High School (CHS) Culinary Arts students baked and cut out allergy-friendly cookies for all students to participate in a “Love Letter” engineering and design activity. The high school students were on hand to assist STEM Saturday participants with constructing and decorating the layered treats, which contained a secret, hidden message.

The February STEM Saturday incorporated physical education as a part of their community and career awareness outreach. Crossroads Martial Arts instructor Phil Lee demonstrated martial arts techniques, teaching students their ABC’s: Aim, Backup, Confidence, Speed. Students observed a wood breaking demonstration, learning the key is in aim and confidence in yourself.

One of the district’s STEM Saturday Coordinators, Kristen Barnett, attributes the program’s success to the teachers and program staff. “The teachers make STEM Saturday such a fun learning experience. They work hard to identify and create age-appropriate STEM activities that foster student’s curiosity and love for STEM. The staff are so welcoming and encouraging to students. We have several students who have attended nearly every single STEM Saturday camp that we have offered.”

Join us for our next STEM Saturday, “Spring is in the Air” to be held on April 13.

The camps are open only to Corinth School District students in grades preK-6. Parents must pre-register their child on the Corinth School District website ([www.corinth.k12.ms.us](http://www.corinth.k12.ms.us)).

**April 13, 2024 - Spring is in the Air**

The Corinth School District hosted another exciting STEM Saturday camp on April 13. Over 100 students registered to attend the Spring-themed, “Spring is in the Air,” Saturday camp that helps students discover how STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) connects to the world around us through fun, hands-on experiments and experiences.

Pre-K students demonstrated creativity by creating flower pinwheels and kites. Kindergarten students explored shadows and light while making a suncatcher using laminated tissue paper and glitter. Students in first grade learned the basics of flower pollination by creating a bee out of pom poms and a tongue depressor. Then, they created a paper flower with a nectar source (Cheetos). Also, they explored how flowers can change colors. “The students used food coloring to change the color of the water and over time, the carnations changed colors from white to the color of the dye,” said Bryley Clement, first grade teacher.

Students in second grade made coffee filter butterflies and also learned about bee pollination. Third grade students created a variety of different flowers out of pipe cleaners to put inside a terracotta pot.

Fourth grade students practiced design-based engineering while constructing their circuit flower pots. Students in fifth and sixth grade created hand-made kites and had several kite competitions to see whose kite flew the highest.

All STEM Saturday students participated in a Robotics and Engineering center. Students maneuvered Sphero BOLT robots using iPads and specialized apps that allow the robot to be controlled through block or text-based programming. STEM Saturday students also participated in Spring-themed Makerspace activities. Students in grades Pre-K through second grade created kaleidoscopes out of paper tubes and reflective paper. Students in third through sixth grade created dragonflies using a whisk, pipe cleaner and decorative beads.

The Corinth High School (CHS) horticulture students helped students in grades Pre-K through first grade create flower pots and then plant seedlings. Students in grades second through fourth made terrariums with succulents, moss, and decorative mushrooms and animals. Fifth and sixth grade students explored the process of blueprinting using sun print paper to create nature art. The paper reacts to light waves and a vinegar bath fixes the image to the paper.

“STEM Saturday is a great way for the younger students to learn about some of the things they might not get a lot of hands-on experience with otherwise,” said Tracey Boler, CHS Horticulture teacher. “My students and I helped them learn about some of the great things about the plants the Horticulture class works with and the overall importance of plants. Students were able to work with the plants in different ways and take home plants of their own to care for. It was also really great to see how excited they were to learn.”

Join us for our next STEM Saturday with a space theme to be held on May 18.

**May 18-, 2024 To “STEM-finity and Beyond!” Space Themed**

The Corinth School District hosted an engaging STEM Saturday camp on May 18. Over 100 students registered to attend the space-themed Saturday camp that helps students discover how STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) connects to the world around us through fun, hands-on experiments and experiences.

Pre-K students explored space with watercolors and rocket suncatchers. Kindergarten students constructed famous star constellations using marshmallows and toothpicks. Students in first grade created solar system mobiles including all the planets. They also built straw rockets. Students in second grade constructed mini lightsabers and built a droid robot. “I loved making the robots,” said student Cannon Vanderford. “The reason why I like to come to STEM Saturday is because I get to make new friends and do fun activities.”

Third grade students created pipe cleaner constellations and galaxy glitter jars using glitter, cotton balls, glue and food coloring. “STEM Saturday is fun because we get to do crafts,” said student Presley Vanderford.

Fourth grade students practiced design-based engineering while constructing their flying cup rocket. Students in fifth and sixth grade built four different STEM kits including a solar powered car.

All STEM Saturday students participated in a Robotics and Engineering center. Students maneuvered Sphero BOLT robots using iPads and specialized apps that allow the robot to be controlled through block or text-based programming. STEM Saturday students also participated in space-themed Makerspace activities. Students in grades Pre-K through second grade created lunar lander models out of paper plates and pipe cleaners. Students in third through sixth grade built rubber band slingshot rockets and then competed to see whose rocket went the furthest.

Hunter Null from the Mississippi State University Extension Center taught all the students about how astronauts can grow plants in space.

CHS student Maziya Prather helped out with STEM Saturday. “What I enjoyed most that Saturday was being able to help the students in any way I could,” said Prather. “When they needed something I could always be right there ready to help. On a day-to-day basis, [students] are too preoccupied with other things (such as technology/social media) so that when they do get to experience these activities that don’t involve any stress on grades, [they] still have fun with educational activities.”

Join us for our next STEM Saturday with an Olympics theme on June 29.

The camps are open only to Corinth School District students in grades preK-6. Parents must pre-register their child on the Corinth School District website ([www.corinth.k12.ms.us](http://www.corinth.k12.ms.us)).

## **June 29, 2024 STEM Olympics**

The Corinth School District hosted an Olympics-themed STEM Saturday camp on June 29 in honor of the upcoming Olympic Games in Paris, France. Over 100 students registered to attend the Saturday camp that helps students learn how STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) connects to the world around us through fun, hands-on experiments and activities. Pre-K students created Olympic torches and rings using fingerpaints and markers. Kindergarten students learned about balance by constructing a robot using pennies. Students in first grade made a glowing Olympic torch, built a balance beam and conducted bean bag tosses.

Students in second grade made ski jumping straw rockets and proceeded to race to see which rocket went the furthest. They also created sailing boats out of pool noodles. Third grade students participated in the Olympics events by creating and flying a javelin. They also constructed catapult bowling and archery events.

“STEM Saturday provides students a variety of experiments to work through with trial and error,” said Melissa McAlister, teacher. “The excitement of students once they complete the experiment successfully is a win-win for both the student and teachers! STEM Saturday is so much fun!”

Fourth grade students practiced design-based engineering while creating their mini basketball hoops. Students in fifth and sixth grade built Olympic torches using circuits.

All STEM Saturday students participated in a Robotics and Engineering center. Students maneuvered Sphero BOLT robots using iPads and specialized apps that allow the robot to be controlled through block or text-based programming.

STEM Saturday students also participated in Olympics-themed Makerspace activities.

Students in grades Pre-K through second grade created Olympic torches out of paper plates.

Students in third through sixth grade created their own Olympic basketball, soccer or football stadiums out of box lids and pipe cleaners.

Join us for our next STEM Saturday camp in September.

**APPENDIX 5 : Corinth District *Sustainability Plan***



### Four+ Year Plan – 2024 – 2029

#### Corinth School District, Other School Districts, and Community Organizations

Plan Component	Action Steps	Timeline
Develop Vision, Mission, Case for Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create internal staff team to guide planning process</li> <li>• Discuss with staff and community members why continued after-school programming is needed, who will benefit, and funding sources</li> <li>• Recruit community members to serve on a Planning Committee</li> </ul>	September 30, 2024
Research and identify potential stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify priorities such as community engagement, strategic communication, leadership development, governance and management.</li> <li>• Discussion with surrounding school districts regarding their desire to participate with Corinth District in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers application</li> <li>• From interested districts, solicit ideas for activities, grade levels to be served, community/faith based programs interested in serving as partners with Corinth District. Discuss funds needed by each participating entity.</li> <li>• Talk to local businesses about how 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program can benefit their interests.</li> </ul>	October 15 2024
Initiate relationship with potential stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule community/partner meetings.</li> <li>• Select team of helpful community members, agency representatives, and business people to act as advisory committee. Formulate meeting agenda.</li> <li>• Prepare invitations and ask people who recommended individuals for your committee to invite them personally.</li> <li>• Prepare written materials for participants outlining the program's purpose and vision. Language should match community interest garnered from earlier research and interviews with community members.</li> </ul>	October 31, 2024
Analyze Program Cost for All participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify financing for services and outcomes.</li> <li>• Map current spending and analyze funding gaps.</li> <li>• With staff and advisory committee, develop financing strategies, evaluate options, and develop recommendations.</li> </ul>	November – first week
Continue to cultivate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold meetings. Include shared vision exercise to get input and expand vision to</li> </ul>	November

stakeholders and create buy-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>more stakeholders.</li> <li>Invite press to cover a meeting, highlight participants and outcomes.</li> </ul>	20, 2024
Make the Ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine best strategic partnerships and key community leaders to involve.</li> <li>Determine appropriate level of collaborative commitment to ask for.</li> <li>Determine who should ask for partnership involvement. Jointly develop strong “case” for potential partner’s involvement. Be specific about level of commitment</li> </ul>	November 30, 2024
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalize relationship with MOUs, volunteer position description, and formalize advisory committee roles.</li> </ul>	December 15, 2024
Be a Good Steward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer opportunities for continued involvement in shaping the program through regular meetings and dialogue.</li> <li>Share the credit and celebrate successes.</li> <li>Make sure the program is mutually beneficial to all partners.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Create and execute fundraising plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a team and marketing plan to develop and market programs</li> <li>Identify budget items that could be provided in-kind by partners and other stakeholders.</li> <li>Select methods and teams for fundraising and resource gathering for project.</li> <li>Plan Execution: grant writing, finalize partners after-school activities, ensure projected in-kind resource availability.</li> </ul>	December 15, 2025 and Ongoing throughout project period

**Action Plan Grid** (To be completed after funding is received to ensure responsibilities and adequate program implementation throughout project period)

	Actions Steps	Timelines	Responsibility